

FEAP recommendations for the action plan to follow up on the fitness check of the EU Nature Directives

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP) is the united voice of the European aquaculture production industry, being the federation of national aquaculture associations in Europe that represent professional fish farming. With 36 members drawn from 21 states across Europe, combined the FEAP represents more than 2 million tons of products, an on-farm value of over € 8 billion and about 100.000 direct jobs in coastal and rural areas.

Worldwide, aquaculture is the fastest growing food producing sector, currently providing half of all aquatic animals for human consumption.

Aquaculture's role is to "contribute to the preservation of the food production potential on a sustainable basis throughout the Union to guarantee long-term food security, including food supplies, as well as growth and employment for Union citizens, and to contribute to meeting the growing world demand for aquatic food".

Food and nutrition security is a top priority for Europe and requires a coherent and inclusive approach. For many years, the key concern of the FEAP has been how to maintain and improve the competitiveness of European aquaculture producers in the market place, while adapting to consumer preferences, legislative demands and financing the accompanying investments. The FEAP notes the high importance of the economic and social dimensions for securing the sustainability of European aquaculture.

Reference is also made to Strategic Guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture (COM 2013-229 Final on April 25-2013), that calls for a considerable growth in European aquaculture.

Overall, it is crucial that both the formulation and implementation (by Member States) of the Nature Directives secure a **balance between environmental protection and economic development** - especially in rural and coastal areas throughout the EU, where most of European aquaculture takes place (fish and molluscs). Therefore, an action plan must take social and economic objectives into account as well as environmental objectives.

In respect to the upcoming development of an Action Plan from the Commission to follow up on the fitness check of the Nature Directives, the FEAP has identified four central topics that are strongly recommended to be addressed in a future action plan.