



## **Second joint press release of EMPA and FEAP on the economic consequences of COVID-19 and their consideration in the draft regulation amending EMFF**



All European aquaculture, represented by the European Mollusc Producers' Association (EMPA) and the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP), is severely impacted by the public health crisis relating to the Coronavirus.

Many legitimate measures have been taken by most European states to slow the spread of the virus. These public health and restrictive measures lead to the closure of export and food service markets at the same time, as well as a more logistic difficulties in reaching available markets and finally reduced consumer demand.

European aquaculture companies are therefore facing a collapse in sales even though, at the same time, they cannot stop production. On the one hand, the aquaculture sector must, as a priority sector, remain mobilised to continue to ensure the food security of Europeans. On the other hand, the sector does not have the ability to stop the production cycle of its stock and therefore still needs labour (for example, feeding fish or turning of oyster bags) and must, moreover, deal with an increase of stock biomass (with consequences on farm capacity in terms of space and product value or the natural growth cycle of shellfish).

The whole sector is therefore in an extremely dangerous situation and urgently needs relevant support arrangements from the European Union.

We are grateful to the European Commission for agreeing to produce this second amendment to the FEAMP Regulation, following the first Regulation 2020/460 of 30 March 2020.

But this new set of measures, on the one hand, does not consider the specificity of European fish and shellfish farming and, on the other hand, displays a profound breakdown in equality between fishermen and fish or shellfish farmers. This is compounded by the apparent lack of understanding by the European Union to the needs of aquaculture producers ,, who hav not responded to the effectively to needs of the sector for the second time in 15 days - while the sector remains fully mobilised, to combat the crisis induced by this pandemic.

In order to effectively meet the needs of European aquaculture, Articles 30 and 55 of the FEAMP Regulation should therefore be amended beyond the Commission's current proposals in its 2020/0059 (COD) text.

First of all, given the specificity of the aquaculture sector, which is dependent on the natural production cycle of animals, it is essential that European fish or shellfish farmers be compensated for loss of income and not because of the loss of production as expected, since it cannot be stopped or slowed down, without omitting the. additional costs that stock management will present, and predicted market disturbances on the resumption of market activity (Article 55).

Secondly, while we welcome the opening of storage mechanisms for aquaculture products, it is important to expand entities entitled to receive financial support for this storage, including farming associations, without omitting to include shellfish species in the list of those eligible in Annex I (Article 30).



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Finally, in order to best meet the special needs of European fish or shellfish farmers and not to introduce a gap in equality with fishermen, it is important to amend Article 55 so that compensation for fish or shellfish farmers is possible not only in the event of a public health crisis, but also for any health crisis, environmental incident and other adverse climatic phenomena without reference to the specific pandemic COVID-19 (as envisaged in the new article 35 now in force for fishermen). In addition, financial support must be available not only when the harvest is suspended due to bio-toxin contamination (resulting from the proliferation of toxin-producing plankton or the presence of biotoxin-containing plankton), but also when this suspension occurs due to health, weather or environmental crises (as stipulated in Article 35 amended by Regulation 2020/460 of 30 March for fishermen).