



Press Release

For immediate publication

Brussels
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Subject: The FEAP welcomes the publication of the new Strategic Guidelines for EU aquaculture by the European Commission and approves its focus

The European Commission presented yesterday its revised *Strategic Guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture*¹. These guidelines take over from the 2013 *Strategic Guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture* that were considered a reference document because of stating for the first time in an official document the causes underlying the stagnation of the European Union's aquaculture development since the turn of the century.

The new guidelines offer a common vision for the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to develop the aquaculture sector in a way that contributes directly to the European Green Deal and in particular the Farm to Fork Strategy.

The FEAP welcomes the bold and well-focused content of the new Strategic Guidelines and looks forward to their implementation as they are a good platform for further action.

The European Union's aquaculture sector is recognised by the European Commission as having a growing role to play in the European food system. This sector offers healthy food with a climate and environmental footprint well below that of land-based farming. With these guidelines, the European Commission expects to position European Union's aquaculture as the global reference for sustainability and quality, reduce the EU dependence on aquatic food imports and create more jobs, especially in coastal and rural regions.

The FEAP acknowledges that the chapters in the Guidelines reflect the real needs of the sector for growth:

1. Building resilience and competitiveness.
2. Participating in the green transition.
3. Ensuring social acceptance and consumer information.
4. Increasing knowledge and innovation.

The FEAP is pleased to notice that the European Commission, through DG MARE, has understood that besides the importance to continue refining the environmental sustainability of European aquaculture, there is an urgent need to improve the competitiveness of the EU fish farming companies, mainly comprised by small and micro-enterprises. This improved economic performance of the European Union's aquaculture

¹ European Green Deal: Commission adopts strategic guidelines for sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture: <https://bit.ly/2SYrOKr>

sector should be supported to contribute to its growth and reduce the massive annual international trade deficit of EUR 21 billion on aquatic food of the European Union.

The FEAP looks forward to the celebration of the Aquaculture Stakeholders Event that the European Commission has organised on 27-May entitled *Blue farming in the European Green Deal: A vision for sustainable aquaculture production and consumption in the European Union*. The president of the FEAP, Mrs Lara Barazi-Geroulanou, and Mrs Anna Pyć, from the Polish Trout Association, will have prominent roles in it.

There are challenges, though, in the unfolding of the Guidelines that will require working closely with the European Commission. For example, analysing why the great expectations set for Organic aquaculture in the Farm to Fork strategy will require a detailed analysis of the current underperformance of this certification scheme that could hinder any further expansion regardless of the political will.

The FEAP will also request the European Commission to take into better consideration freshwater aquaculture by ending the use of the word 'seafood' (even if it officially encompasses freshwater fish) and replace it with the more comprehensive term 'aquatic food', just like the FAO has recently started doing.

The FEAP now expects the European Union Member States to review their Multi-annual National Strategic Plans taking into consideration the new European Guidelines presented yesterday. The soon-to-be published European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) will provide support to the Member States on the implementation of their respective Multi-annual National Strategic Plans and their Operational Programmes.

The new Guidelines are complemented with a comprehensive annex that recommends actions for the European Commission, for the Member States, and for the Aquaculture Advisory Council. The FEAP expects each of these to develop those actions to full accomplishment.

Besides officially publishing yesterday the new 'Strategic Guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture', the European Commission has also published another relevant paper: 'A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU-Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future'² in which aquaculture also plays a relevant role.

About the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers is an organisation that represents the European fish farming profession and is based in Brussels. FEAP is composed of 24 national fish farming associations from 23 countries, both EU and non-EU. The combined yearly production of FEAP members surpasses 2,5 million tonnes of nutritious, safe, delicious, and environmentally sustainable fish.

² A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU: Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future': <https://bit.ly/3wqEhaq>