



Press Release

For immediate publication

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Subject: **Collaboration to raise profile of European Aquaculture**

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP) are joining forces to improve the aquaculture sector in Europe and ensure it is better recognised at a political level.

The two organisations have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Wednesday 27-April) at the Seafood Expo Global in Barcelona. They pledge to work together towards their shared vision of a responsible aquaculture sector providing the solution to growing food demand.

This collaboration comes at a time of growing recognition in Europe as elsewhere of the importance of sustainable food systems. These issues are being looked at by the EU, and both ASC and FEAP have built up valuable knowledge and experience over many years that can help with these developments. FEAP members will also benefit from greater access to ASC's guidance on improving farm practices, which always bring economic as well as environmental benefits.

Chris Ninnies, ASC CEO, said: 'Aquaculture's importance to Europe can't be overstated: homegrown seafood like salmon, shellfish and seabass are vital to economies across the continent and provide food security. A more effective, and better represented, industry is better for all Europeans.

'From its inception the ASC programme has been about collaboration between diverse stakeholders, so we know how effective this can be at driving change across the industry.'

Lara Barazi-Geroulanou, FEAP's President, stated: 'European aquaculture is frontrunner on environmental and social sustainability, but is a small player in the market. The European Union's legal framework is in need of clear and sound technical screening criteria for sustainable aquaculture. Our working experience as fish farmers, teaming up with the expertise of the ASC on responsible aquaculture standards, will assure reaching valuable results'.

The collaboration will be driven by a steering group co-chaired by Chris Ninnies and Javier Ojeda (FEAP's General Secretary), which will identify opportunities and manage projects in line with the organisations' shared objectives.

According to the EU, aquaculture employs around 70,000 people across the continent, most of which are small businesses or micro-enterprises in coastal and rural areas.