

About the European Commission's communications on the CFP and the CMO

On February 21st 2023, ten years after the reform of the common fisheries policy, the European Commission (EC) has presented a package of measures to improve the sustainability and resilience of the European Union's fishing and aquaculture sector. At the same time, the European Commission has taken the opportunity to set its vision for the future. It includes, amongst others, a report on the functioning of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) regulation as well as a report on the Common Organisation of the Markets in fishing and aquaculture products (COMO). Both are relevant elements for the European Green Deal.

The FEAP welcomes, and values positively, the effort of the European Commission to make aquatic food as sustainable as possible from its environmental, social, and economic perspectives. The goal of the CFP should continue to be ensuring long-term sustainability for the fishing and aquaculture sectors, the availability of aquatic food supply to the EU, and a fair standard of living for fishing and aquaculture communities.

However, this federation believes that the Commission has once again missed the opportunity to place aquaculture at the centre of its vision for the future of sustainable aquatic food in the European Union.

Wild fish stocks are a European common good that must be managed at the European level. On the other hand, aquaculture management is under the shared responsibility of the Member States and the European Commission. The positioning of aquaculture at the EU level as a strategic source of sustainable aquatic food is clearly missed by the CFP. Under the current legal framework, and without the need to touch upon the Member States' responsibility to manage aquaculture, the CFP should set an inspirational target for the development of aquaculture in the EU. This would have direct impacts on both European food security and the trade balance on aquatic food of the EU with respect to Third countries.

"Aquaculture must be at the centre of the European Commission's vision for the future of sustainable aquatic food"

The FEAP is deeply concerned with the frustrating evolution of the aquaculture sector in the European Union. Since the year 2000, growth has been virtually non-existent and this situation is occurring in both finfish and shellfish production, while algae and crustacean productions are almost negligible. The reality of EU aquaculture is in deep contrast, firstly, with the thriving situation of aquaculture in other countries of Europe and worldwide, and secondly, with the exceptional properties of fish as nutritious and healthy food, the good environmental performance of EU aquaculture, the outstanding scientific production on aquaculture of EU research institutions, the innovation capabilities of the suppliers to European aquaculture, and with the education and training opportunities for aquaculture professionals in the EU.