



Press Release

Brussels, November 20th, 2023.

For immediate publication.

Subject: FEAP's opinion about the ECA special report on the EU aquaculture policy

"European aquaculture holds a key to sustainable food safety, but its stagnating status must be solved within the decade."

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) released last week a special report on the EU aquaculture policy titled "Stagnating production and unclear results despite increased EU funding"¹. Simultaneously, the European Commission published a reply² to that document.

In its report, the ECA examined whether the European Commission (EC) and the Member States (MS) have promoted the sustainable development of EU aquaculture effectively. It concluded that while the EU's strategic framework for aquaculture has improved in the recent years, EU aquaculture has seen little growth, and there are no reliable indicators to track the sector's sustainability and the contribution of the increased EU funding to the development of EU aquaculture.

ECA recommends supporting MS in addressing the obstacles to the sustainable development of EU aquaculture, improving the targeting of EU funds, and enhancing the monitoring of both EU funding's performance and environmental sustainability.

In the EC's reply to ECA, released at the same time, the Commission details the work it carries out on aquaculture, including the 2021 Strategic Guidelines, the Open Method for Coordination, the Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism, and its periodic monitoring of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF). However, the EC recognises that under shared management it cannot monitor, on a continuous basis, the effectiveness of the use of EU funds nor, even more broadly, the environmental sustainability of EU aquaculture altogether. The Commission believes that there is a solid basis to allow the EU aquaculture sector to grow and reach its full potential in terms of contributing to the objectives of the European Green Deal. However, the EC considers that it is still early to

¹ https://www.european-courtauditors.eu/ECA/media/28_2023-0209-2023-03_28.pdf

² https://www.ec.europa.eu/eufund/eu-fund-replies/2023-22COM-Reply-28_2023-03.pdf