



FEAP CALLS FOR STRATEGIC CHANGE IN EUROPEAN AQUACULTURE TO CONTRIBUTE TO EU AQUATIC FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY

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The Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, in collaboration with the Hungarian Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform (HATIP), hosted a workshop on the future of aquaculture on October 16th in Brussels at the Permanent Representation of Hungary to the European Union. At this event, Javier Costa, Secretary General of FEAP, delivered a presentation **highlighting the key differences between the aquaculture policies of the European Commission and those of international organisations, such as the FAO (United Nations).**

While the European Commission bets the future of aquaculture mostly on extensive production of low trophic level species, such as the cultivation of seaweed and molluscs, **the FEAP promotes a more realistic approach, in the view of FEAP, that insists on the urgent need to encourage the sustainable intensification of aquaculture** to increase food production with the most efficient use of the limited natural resources to contribute to global food security, which means doing more with less. FEAP has asked the European Commission to **reflexion its approach without delay and adopt those aims prioritized by FAO (United Nations).** This position of FEAP does not deny the values of molluscs, seaweed and extensive fish-like farming but means that the future of mainstream aquatic food production must take into consideration a wider vision, **better FEAP policies and investments in sustainable fish-like production.**

FEAP expressed concerns about what it considers a short-term vision on the part of the European Commission. In his speech, Costa argued that the current EC policy underestimates the values of piscivorous fish farming, ignoring they are an essential food that contains unique proteins, fats, and micronutrients that are naturally packed in a convenient format and are extremely nutritional and healthy for human beings of all ages.

However, the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines of 27 EU Member State authorities continue recommending eating fish 1 or 2 times a week (some even more) and one of them at least oily fish (mud, salmon, ...) as recently reminded by the European Commission's KnowledgePolicy platform. [\[1\]](#)

According to FEAP, **current EU policies limit the sector's growth and negatively affect the public perception of sustainable intensive fish farming.** Making social acceptance of these practices even more difficult to achieve. In the case of farmed fish-like, where animals are fed with high quality compound feed, the consideration of trophic levels loses all meaning since what must be analysed is the trophic origin of the raw materials that make up the feed and not the trophic position of the fish species in the wild.

In its presentation, FEAP appreciated the value of the Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2026 and EU H2020's constructive efforts and defended the need to promote innovation in fish-like farming, stressing that this activity is fundamental to the European diet.