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LETTER(25)00749

TO:

Ms Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission

Mr António Costa
President
European Council

Mr Donald Tusk
Prime Minister of Poland

Copy:

Mr Piotr Serafin
Commissioner for Budget, Anti
Fraud and Public Administration

Mr Costas Kadis
Commissioner for Fisheries and
Oceans

EU Fisheries attachés

Brussels, 19 March 2025

RE: **Future of EU's Multiannual Financial Framework**

Dear Commission President Von der Leyen,
Dear European Council President Costa,
Dear Prime Minister of Poland Tusk,

In light of the preparation of the upcoming Commission's proposals on the Union's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the post 2027 period, the undersigned organisations representing fisheries and aquaculture sectors would like to bring some particular issues to your attention.

We highlight the importance of fisheries and aquaculture which cannot be measured only in economic terms. Both the fleet, aquaculture producers and processors and traders supply one of the healthiest animal food with the lowest carbon footprint, making it an optimal choice for balanced diets and delivering on food security and climate protection.

We acknowledge the ongoing debate regarding the continuity of specific policy funds and the idea to integrate the EMFAF into a broader horizontal fund or a more comprehensive approach,

that implies the reallocation of EU expenditure within a Single Fund under a unique National programme per Member State. This discussion is not new; similar ideas were considered in the previous period around the concept of a fund for the Integrated Maritime Policy or the Blue Growth Strategy.

We believe that **the approach of a Single Fund is contrary to the targeting of support necessary** in some key policy areas, such as the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). It is acknowledged that a significant income disparity exists between the aquaculture and fisheries sector and other industries, due to the small-scale and small-size enterprises that predominate these sectors. To address this, it is paramount that the EU supports the aquaculture and fishing community to ensure a fair standard of living and allow them to contribute to food security. It is also crucial to recognize the unique characteristics of fishing and aquaculture, shaped by the sector's social fabric and the structural and natural disparities among different coastal and inland regions. These principles are reflected in Article 2 of the CFP.

Furthermore, funding is essential to adhere to the stringent standards and objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and related environmental regulations. It is important to recognize that these strict requirements impose additional costs on the sectors, making it increasingly difficult for companies to remain competitive, generate wealth, create jobs, or, in some cases, even survive.

We fully support the European Commission's assessment in its Communication¹, highlighting that *'Farmers, fishers and rural areas are increasingly affected by unfair global competition, higher energy prices, a lack of younger farmers and fishers and difficulties in accessing capital. For small-scale coastal fisheries, the average wage in 2021 was about half of the economy average wage'. Moreover, climate change is increasing the food system's exposure to risks.'*

However, the conditions for fishing and aquaculture are somewhat different from other sectors. A significant difference is that fishing takes place on a shared resource and that we compete for space with other activities, coastal states and third countries.

Such differences suggest that it is more appropriate to continue to have a separate fund for fisheries and aquaculture. With a common fund, we see a great risk that our sector will lose the flexibility it needs and that sufficient consideration will not be given to the needs of the sector.

Consequently, we strongly advocate for **prioritizing sustainable development for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, as well as enhancing fleet, aquaculture farms and its processing and trade industry competitiveness**, within the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), ensuring they remain central to EU policy objectives rather than as secondary concerns. Additionally, we urge the **restoration of the EMFAF budgetary envelope** for the next MFF program to support the sectors effectively and address the issues described.

The EU must support fisheries and aquaculture producers with respect to the challenge of climate change, providing both compensatory interventions but also the implementation of adaptive, carbon-neutral policies, such as the decarbonisation of the EU fishing fleet. This requires a high degree of flexibility that a single fund covering multiple sectors cannot provide, adding unnecessary administrative burden, uncertainty and increasing differences among Member States, resulting in the **fragmentation of the Single Market**.

¹ COM(2025) 46 final - The road to the next multiannual financial framework

That is why, the fisheries and aquaculture sectors call for a reinforced specific fund, with increased budgetary allocations.

As the European Council prepares to discuss the next MFF on 20–21 March, we call on you to effectively **prioritize fisheries and aquaculture as a fundamental pillar of Europe's future.**

Yours faithfully,



Guus Pastoor
President of AIPCE



Javier Garat
President of Europêche



Elli Tsiforou
Copa-Cogeca
Secretary General




Esben Sverdrup-Jensen
President of EAPO



Juan Manuel Trujillo Castillo
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Javier Ojeda
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