



Press Release

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Subject: The role of fish farming in the European Ocean Pact

On 5-June, the European Commission unveiled the European Ocean Pact, a flagship strategic initiative that lays the foundation for a renewed approach to the maritime sectors, including aquaculture, across the European Union. The European Ocean Pact is a framework that builds on existing legislation and is expected to drive a holistic approach across all policy areas.

FEAP welcomes this initiative and the acknowledgement of aquaculture's role in the governance of ocean resources. This federation commits to contributing constructively to the development of its different actions.

FEAP acknowledges several positive elements in the European Ocean Pact that align with the sector's objectives. Notably, the Pact recognises aquaculture's contribution to food security and proposes the launch of an EU initiative on Sustainable Aquaculture to enhance coordination across Member States and stakeholders. The introduction of the Ocean Act and its intention to improve maritime spatial planning could offer a clearer framework for the sector's development. The Pact's support for increased investment, including through BlueInvest and InvestEU, is welcome, as is the commitment to a dedicated EU-wide campaign promoting Aquatic food. FEAP also appreciates the gradual shift in terminology toward "aquatic food," which better reflects the sector's diversity. The announcement of the Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture presents a valuable opportunity to consolidate the strategic importance of fish farming within Europe's food system and blue economy.

However, **the Ocean Pact has a critical omission: freshwater aquaculture has been completely ignored.** FEAP draws attention to this glaring omission. While it might seem reasonable to its readers that a document focused on oceans and maritime issues should not necessarily cover inland aquaculture, this absence reveals a deeper, long-standing problem. One that has repeatedly hampered the development of fish farming in the Union. At the same time, measures similar to the ones outlined in the Ocean Pact would prove valuable for developing sustainable freshwater fish farming in the European Union, in which rainbow trout farming is the main fish species farmed in the Union, while carp is essential in many central European countries.

By sidelining freshwater aquaculture from this core strategy, the European Commission inadvertently exposes a fundamental mismatch between this sector and its current position in the European legal framework. Although since its beginnings aquaculture has been placed alongside capture fisheries, now that it has come of age, fish farming does