

PRESS RELEASE: Stakeholders unite to call for an EU Action Plan on Blue Foods

On **3 September**, a coalition of leading organisations active in fisheries and aquaculture - **EBCD, Européche, EAPO, FEAP, and AIPCE.CEP** - formally launched a **joint call for an EU Action Plan on Blue Foods** at the European Parliament (Brussels – Belgium). The organisations urged EU policymakers to take decisive action to integrate aquatic foods into Europe’s broader food and sustainability strategies.

The [launch event](#), hosted by the **Chair of the Committee of Fisheries of the European Parliament – Carmen Crespo Diaz**, brought the spotlight on aquatic products – often overlooked in European food policy debates. At a time when **climate disruptions, conflict, and geopolitical shifts** are putting immense strain on global food systems, the message is clear: **an EU Action Plan for Blue Foods is not an option – it is a necessity!**

“Blue foods must be at the core of the EU’s Ocean Pact and its sustainable food strategy. They are healthy, low-carbon, and essential for the resilience of our coastal regions. This action plan is a timely and science-based roadmap — we now call on the European Commission to move from vision to action by supporting responsible aquaculture, fair market conditions, and a competitive, future-oriented fisheries sector. There is no truly ambitious Ocean Pact without a strong commitment to blue food systems” said **Carmen Crespo Diaz**.

Javier Garat, rapporteur on the [opinion](#) of the **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)** on the Ocean Pact, informed that the EESC has supported the call for a Blue Food Action Plan as a vital step to modernise fisheries and aquaculture, secure Europe’s food supply and boost the resilience of coastal communities.

The **European Commission (DG MARE - Felix Leinemann)** was also present to react to the call and to inform on the latest developments in that regard.

Blue foods – which include wild-caught and farmed fish and seafood – provide essential nutrients such as omega-3s, vitamins, and minerals, while often having a **lower carbon and resource footprint** than many land-based proteins. At the same time, these foods support **millions of jobs in coastal and rural communities**, connecting the ocean to Europe’s social fabric.

Europe’s aquatic food sector faces significant challenges. According to the FAO, Europe is the only continent experiencing a decline in local aquatic production. In addition, EU per capita consumption of wild-caught seafood has reached its lowest level in a decade, according to the EUMOFA market observatory. This, despite of the fact that most European stocks are managed sustainably. This decline comes at a time when obesity and diet-related diseases are increasing across Europe.

Ilias Grampas, EBCD: *“Our food systems must evolve! Environmental resilience, and Europe’s ability to feed its people must go hand in hand – and blue foods are a key part of that equation”.*

Tim Hedddema, Europêche: *‘Fish and seafood are nature’s original superfoods - packed with essential nutrients, among the most climate-friendly proteins on the planet, and – in the case of the EU – produced within one of the world’s best fisheries management systems. It should be at the top of everyone’s shopping list. To put more sustainable seafood on European plates, EU policies must strengthen supply - and that starts with ensuring a competitive EU fleet.’*

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, EAPO: *“An action plan is vital to enable our fishermen to continue producing nutritious low-carbon sustainable seafood and attract new generations, while renewing equipment so that European fisheries can thrive”.*

Szilvia Mihalfy, FEAP: *“Europe cannot afford to ignore its own capacity to produce aquatic food. At a time when imports dominate and production at home stagnates, we need a dedicated EU Action Plan that recognises fish farming as strategic for food security, jobs, and sustainability. Blue foods are not the future – they are here, and Europe must act now.”*

Guus Pastoor, AIPCE.CEP: *“We need to support responsible fisheries and aquaculture within Europe, while also securing open, rules-based trade with reliable international partners. Trade agreements, partnerships in the field of science, product quality, institutional structures and management schemes are some examples of actions we can take to secure our supplies.”*

The initiative calls on the European Commission to deliver a **dedicated Action Plan placing aquatic foods where they belong: at the centre of the table.**

Organisations

EBCD: The European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD) is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) founded in 1989 and based in Brussels (Belgium). EBCD supports science-based solutions, full stakeholder participation, due consideration for the socio-economic aspects and respect for cultural diversity, while specializing in maritime affairs, fisheries, aquaculture and oceans governance. EBCD promotes the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources both in Europe and worldwide.

Europêche: Europêche is the representative body for fishermen in the European Union.

EAPO: The European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO) was founded in 1980 and is unifying 31 Producers Organisations among 12 EU Member States. As an association of European recognised Producers Organisations, our key

role is to assist our members, and the people onboard the 4.000 fishing vessels they represent in achieving the objectives of the Common Fishery Policy (CFP) and the Common Market Organisation (CMO) for fishery and aquaculture products. EAPO aims to strengthen the cooperation between European POs by looking for common grounds in addressing the challenges for European fisheries, such as securing sustainable food production through socio-economic viability, with respect for the environment, cultural heritage and livelihoods.

FEAP: The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP) is the united voice of professional fish farmers in Europe. Representing 24 national associations and around 14,000 enterprises, FEAP promotes sustainable aquaculture by engaging with EU institutions, international organisations, and stakeholders to secure a competitive and responsible future for Europe's fish farming sector.

AIPCE.CEP: AIPCE (EU Fish Processors and Traders Association) and CEP (European Federation of National Organizations of Importers and Exporters of Fish) were established in 1959 and collaborate on the basis of a Co-operation Agreement. Today the associations represent 15 National Associations from 9 Member States and 2 Third countries (UK, Norway), account for more than 3,900 enterprises and 128,000 persons (more than 80% representativeness at EU level). The value of the output of the industry represented by AIPCE.CEP amounts to around EUR 34 billion.