

PRESS RELEASE: EBCO and the EU Seafood Alliance engage with Commissioner Filto's Cabinet on the need for an EU Blue Foods Action Plan

On 20 October, representatives from the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCO) and the EU Seafood Alliance - composed of EAPC, Europêche, FEAP, and Seafood Europe (former APCE/CEP) - met with the cabinet of the Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, Raffaele Filto, to discuss the urgent need to strengthen EU's approach to blue foods.

The delegation included Despine Symons (EBCO), Esben Sverdrup-Jensen (EAPC), Anne-France Mullat (Europêche), Silvia Minelli (FEAP), and Katerina Syts (Seafood Europe - APCE/CEP).

The organisations reiterated their shared call for the development of an **EU Action Plan for Blue Foods**, building on the momentum generated by the recent **Ocean Pact**. The group emphasised that fisheries and aquaculture — key providers of healthy, low-carbon, and nutritious food — should be recognised as **strategic sectors** within the EU's food systems framework.

"The Commission linked agriculture and food in its *Vision for Food and Agriculture 2040*; the same ambition must now be applied to fisheries and aquaculture through a **Blue Food Action Plan** embedded in the *Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2040*," the group underlined.

During the meeting, the representatives stressed the importance of

- **Promoting competitiveness** through simplification of administrative procedures and a genuine level playing field;
- **Attracting young people** to the fishing and aquaculture sectors through targeted investment allowing for modernisation and innovation;
- **Strengthening policy cohesion and coherence** across legislation impacting food systems and blue economy; and
- **Positioning blue food products** as strategic to Europe's food security, climate and biodiversity goals, and rural and coastal development.

EBCO and the EU Seafood Alliance agreed that **many challenges could be unlocked through a comprehensive EU Action Plan on Blue Foods**, which would support innovation, research, investment, and the decarbonisation of the seafood value chain.

Such an initiative, they argued, would ensure that the EU becomes a global leader in sustainable food systems and aligns with its commitments under the Ocean Pact and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.