

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

On 20 October, representatives from the **European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD)** and the **EU Seafood Alliance** - composed of **EAPO**, **Europêche**, **FEAP**, and **Seafood Europe (former AIPCE.CEP)** - met with the **cabinet of the Commissioner for Cohesions and Reforms, Raffaele Fitto**, to discuss the urgent need to strengthen EU's approach to blue foods.

The delegation included **Despina Symons** (EBCD), **Esben Sverdrup-Jensen** (EAPO), **Anne-France Mattlet** (Europêche), **Szilvia Mihálffy** (FEAP), and **Katarina Sipic** (Seafood Europe - AIPCE.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.**

EBCD 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.