



Press Release

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FEAP strengthens NextGen initiative with second “Deep Dive” training for young aquaculture professionals

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP) successfully organised the second edition of its **NextGen “Deep Dive into EU Institutions” training** on 17–18 March 2026 in Brussels, bringing together a selected group of young aquaculture professionals from across Europe.

Following the successful launch of the initiative in 2025, the FEAP NextGen programme continues to support generational renewal in the sector by strengthening young professionals’ understanding of European policymaking and encouraging their active engagement in shaping the future of aquaculture in Europe.

The FEAP NextGen Class of 2026 included participants from Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Türkiye, reflecting the diversity of the European aquaculture sector and its wide range of production systems.

Two days of brainstorming and *behind-the-scene* exploration of EU policy making.

Over two days, participants were guided through the functioning of European institutions and the evolving policy framework governing aquaculture. The programme combined presentations, interactive networking sessions and study visits, offering a unique opportunity to connect theoretical knowledge with practical insights.

The training opened with an introduction to FEAP and the European aquaculture policy landscape by **Javier Ojeda, Secretary General of FEAP**, setting the scene for discussions on key sector priorities, including sustainability, competitiveness, climate resilience and the role of aquaculture in ensuring Europe’s food security.

Contributions were delivered by high-level experts including **Nikos Zampoukas (DG RTD)** and **Julien Peris (CINEA)**, highlighting EU support mechanisms and funding opportunities for aquaculture, **Alexander Döring (FEFAC)**, **Mieke Eggermont (EATiP)**, **Cynthia Benites (Aquaculture Advisory Council)**, **Pedro Reis Santos (Market Advisory Council)** and **Katarina Sipic (Seafood Europe)**, providing participants with a fully comprehensive overview of the policy and stakeholder landscape.

A central element of the training was the visit to the European Commission (DG MARE), where participants met with representatives of the aquaculture unit, including **Lorella De La Cruz Iglesias** and **Julian Garcia Baena** as well as **Antonio Basanta from the cabinet of European commissioner Kostas Kadis**. This unique opportunity allowed participants to engage in an open exchange on current policy priorities, implementation challenges and future developments for the sector.