



Press Release

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FEAP welcomes Vision 2040 but warns that bold action, not only simplification, is needed to save EU aquaculture

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP) has provided its official response to the European Commission's Vision 2040 for Fisheries and Aquaculture, endorsing the initiative as a timely and essential opportunity to reverse decades of stagnation in EU fish-farming, while warning that the Vision will fail unless it confronts the root causes of the sector's decline.

FEAP sets out five core elements the Vision must include: a clear definition of a desired future state, a binding EU aquaculture production target for fish by 2040, a genuine analysis of fundamental challenges, principles for cross-administrative coordination, and a high-level policy implementation pathway with performance indicators.

"European aquaculture is at a critical juncture. After 25 years of stagnation, Vision 2040 is the last real chance to build a competitive, sustainable, and strategically relevant sector," said Javier Opela, FEAP's Secretary General. "But this cannot be another empty exercise. If the Commission delivers a timid document that ignores the real obstacles, it will only deepen the paralysis. We need boldness, not rhetoric."

FEAP emphasizes that the sector's persistent difficulties stem not from isolated administrative delays, but from an unworkable and overburdensome EU legal framework, particularly in the environmental domain, that creates a severe spatial squeeze, blocks access to new farming sites, and makes effective governance nearly impossible at national and regional levels.

According to FEAP, the European Commission has so far misdiagnosed the problem, treating lengthy procedures and red tape as causes rather than symptoms. The organization is calling for thorough, independent multi-jurisdictional checks across Member States to examine both successful and failed aquaculture initiatives.

"The current legislative simplification efforts are welcome but will not be enough," Opela added. "Competences for aquaculture lie at national and regional levels, yet those authorities are drowning in a proliferation of EU laws, often compounded by gild-plating and a disproportionate application of the precautionary principle. What we need at EU level is restraint: new regulation should be kept to what is absolutely necessary, especially given today's geostrategic realities."