

PRESS RELEASE 23 July 2026, Brussels:

EUSEA regrets exclusion of aquatic foods from EU protein agenda

Fisheries and Aquaculture Vision 2040 must deliver an EU Blue Foods Action Plan

Brussels, 23 July 2026

The European Union Seafood Alliance (EUSEA), bringing together EAPO, Europeche, FEAP, Seafood Europe and EMPA, welcomes the European Commission's renewed focus on protein resilience, strategic autonomy and sustainable food systems, following the publication of the **Action Plan for resilience, strategic autonomy and sustainability of the EU protein system** and the **EU Strategy on Livestock**. Together, these initiatives set an important direction for Europe's food future. They recognize the need to strengthen resilience, reduce strategic dependencies and support more sustainable food production. However, the EU Seafood Alliance stresses that Europe's protein strategy will remain incomplete if aquatic foods are not recognized.

Aquatic foods are already available, nutritious and high-quality sources of protein. They contribute to healthy diets, coastal communities, responsible production, processing activities, employment, trade, consumer choice and food-system resilience.

Seafood must be part of Europe's protein conversation. If the EU wants a resilient, sustainable and strategically autonomous protein system, aquatic foods cannot remain at the margins. Fisheries, aquaculture, processing and trade are part of Europe's food security and competitiveness agenda. EUSEA underlines that the recent shift in the Commission's approach towards livestock is particularly noteworthy¹. Whereas livestock was long considered mainly a source of emissions, it is now recognized as critical element for Europe's food security. Fisheries and aquaculture deserve the same strategic recognition.

A genuine paradigm shift is needed - one that sees aquatic food production not as part of the problem, but as an essential contributor to food security, coastal resilience, strategic autonomy and the sustainable management of marine resources. These objectives remain crucial, and the EU protein agenda should therefore ensure stronger coherence between the different Commission services.

EUSEA therefore calls once again for an **EU Action Plan for Blue Foods to be fully reflected in the forthcoming Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2040**. This Vision should be ambitious and become the Commission's main strategic framework for recognizing and strengthening the contribution of aquatic foods to Europe's food system. It should also ensure that aquatic foods are properly integrated into the

¹https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-livestock-strategy-food-security-climate-policy/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=alert&utm_campaign=The%20EU%E2%80%99s%20paradigm%20shift%20on%20cows



wider EU protein and livestock agendas, which explicitly exclude fisheries, aquaculture, and their processing sectors despite being an important source and user of protein in the EU's food and feed system.

We want to ensure that Europe's food and protein strategy reflects the full diversity of responsible protein sources available to European consumers. The Alliance highlights the potential of making full and responsible use of aquatic biological resources. EU initiatives² demonstrate how fisheries and aquaculture by-products can be transformed into high-value food ingredients, nutraceuticals, cosmetics, biomaterials, packaging, construction materials, water treatment solutions, soil amendments and bio-based fertilizers. They also illustrate the potential to create new value chains for invasive species and species with limited or no commercial demand.

The EU Seafood Alliance stands ready to work with the European Commission in the preparation of the Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2040 and in the implementation of the EU protein and livestock agenda to ensure that Europe's protein strategy reflects the contribution of all responsible food sectors, including aquatic foods.

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About EAPO, EMPA, Européche, FEAP and Seafood Europe

EAPO, EMPA, Européche, FEAP and Seafood Europe represent key parts of the European fisheries, aquaculture, seafood processing and trading value chain. Together, they work to promote responsible seafood production and trade, support resilient coastal and food systems, and advocate for policies that strengthen sustainable growth, food security and competitiveness across the European seafood sector.

² VALORISH, EcoeFISHent, WaSeaBi and SEA2LAND