



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels, 23 March 2022
MARE/A2/LBS (2022)

Subject: AAC recommendation on aquaculture values

Dear Mr. Ojeda,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 23 December 2021 including the Recommendation on aquaculture values.

Your recommendation points out relevant characteristics and values of diverse aquaculture activities, as well as related issues. Two recent Communications from the Commission that you also refer to in your recommendation – on sustainable blue economy and on strategic guidelines for aquaculture – acknowledge the value of this sector and its potential in contributing to food security as well as to the green transition. The strategic guidelines also address main challenges and opportunities for this sector in the EU, and propose actions to make progress in all the areas identified.

As you know, the Commission is working towards developing an EU-wide communication campaign on aquaculture, where it will take into account your recommendations. This campaign should also help with bringing more transparency to the consumer about how aquaculture activities in the EU are carried out, which will hopefully help clear some exiting misperceptions about aquaculture. A brochure¹ on EU aquaculture in all official EU languages has recently been published for this purpose, as well.

The strategic guidelines also recognise the importance of social acceptance of aquaculture activities in local communities, and identify a number of aspects that can contribute to such acceptance. Among other actions, good practices on the early involvement of local stakeholders

¹ [Blue Farming in the European Green Deal](#)

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will be part of the guidance documents for spatial planning and administrative procedures that will be developed by the Commission. Such involvement provides the opportunity to communicate the value of aquaculture activities to those stakeholders and dispel unjustified concerns about their potential impact.

I agree with your recommendation to encourage continuous improvement on farming procedures to increase the social acceptability of aquaculture. The Commission commits to a number of actions in the Strategic guidelines in this respect, for example to:

- map good husbandry practices;
- develop a guidance document on environmental performance in the aquaculture sector that will include inter alia the mapping of good practices at governmental and industry level covering a broad range of aspects; and
- support the development by EU Member States, the EU aquaculture industry, EU scientific bodies and NGOs of a code of good practice on fish welfare, as well as fish-welfare indicators.

All the information resulting from these actions will be made available and easily accessible on the EU aquaculture website that will be part of the “EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism” which will be launched in May 2022. This mechanism will also provide technical support to Member States and stakeholders for the implementation of guidance documents and good practices.

Finally, regarding the support for aquaculture research activities that address the needs of the aquaculture sector, please note that “Increasing knowledge and innovation” is one of the 4 horizontal objectives and one of the 13 key areas for further work identified in the new Strategic guidelines. The guidelines acknowledge that decisive action for aquaculture is required to ensure that research and innovation responds faster to the current and future challenges and opportunities of the sector. I would like to underline that research and innovation on sustainable aquaculture is an important priority under Horizon Europe and that EU Member States can use funds under the EMFAF and other funds (e.g. regional funds) to support investments in innovative solutions by the EU aquaculture sector. In addition, the guidelines encourage aquaculture producers and other stakeholders to work together with research and innovation institutes and public authorities to find solutions to the challenges of the sustainable development of EU aquaculture.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]
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