



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels  
MARE A2/D3/XX/Ares (2021)

Mr. Javier Ojeda  
Chairman of the AAC  
Rue de la Science, 10  
B – 1000 Brussels  
Belgium

**Subject: Seaweed I – 1<sup>st</sup> general recommendation from AAC**

Dear Mr. Ojeda,

I would like to thank you for drafting and submitting to DG MARE the first AAC recommendation on seaweed. We fully agree with your argumentation that seaweed cultivation has a big potential in Europe. This is one of the reasons why DG MARE is in the process to prepare an EU Algae initiative - Commission communication “Blue bio economy – towards a strong and sustainable EU algae sector” - that is planned for the adoption during the first half of 2022.

As a first step, an open consultation on the EU Algae initiative roadmap has been launched in December and closed on 18 January this year. You can see all the contributions online<sup>1</sup>. I would like to assure you that the AAC recommendation will be taken into account during the consultation and preparation process of the EU Algae initiative.

In view of preparing your future recommendation, we would invite you to consult other similar initiatives and documents to ensure that it is based on best available information and practices. Among others, these are the *Blue Bio economy Forum* roadmap recommendations and proposed solutions<sup>2</sup>, the forthcoming Strategic guidelines on sustainable EU aquaculture<sup>3</sup>, the ASC-MSC algae standard<sup>4</sup>, ENAlgae (Interreg project) best practice guidelines for seaweed cultivation and analysis<sup>5</sup>, PHYCOMORPH (H2020 project) European guidelines for a sustainable aquaculture of seaweeds<sup>6</sup>, the Baltic blue

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12780-Towards-a-strong-and-sustainable-EU-Algae-sector>

<sup>2</sup> <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/node/4448>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12261-Strategic-Guidelines-for-EU-aquaculture-update/public-consultation>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.asc-aqua.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ASC-MSC-Seaweed-Standard.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://repository.oceanbestpractices.org/handle/11329/1282>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.phycomorph.org/pegasus-phycomorph-european-guidelines-for-a-sustainable-aquaculture-of-seaweeds>

biotechnology alliance<sup>7</sup> as well as recently the *Seaweed for Europe* report “Hidden champion of the sea”<sup>8</sup>.

Please also see below a few specific comments on the AAC recommendation.

1. As regards definitions, we would invite you to use the standard adopted by CEN/TC454 in January 2020, which defines *algae as a functional group of organisms consisting of microalgae, macroalgae, cyanobacteria and Labyrinthulomycetes*
2. We agree with your view that marine space needs to be used more effectively and that seaweed aquaculture may serve as a valid bioremediation method helping to improve nutrients and CO<sup>2</sup> balance in European Seas. Therefore, the revised EU aquaculture guidelines aim to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to further develop these practices on a European scale. We would also invite you to consult a very recent EUMOFA report on the Blue bioeconomy, which among other aspects focuses on Integrated Multi Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA)<sup>9</sup>.
3. The licensing of future marine aquaculture farms has indeed been recognised as an important barrier, limiting sustainable growth of EU aquaculture sector. The upcoming EU aquaculture guidelines foresee recommendations to streamline national procedures and legislation, to identify a single national aquaculture authority, to set up a one-stop-shop, consider long-term licensing and better monitoring and reporting. Let me recall that aquaculture, including seaweed aquaculture is an exclusive competence of the Member States.
4. As regards algae related legislation, the Commission will consider the necessary EU governance and potential legislative changes during the preparation of the EU Algae initiative mentioned above. Existing EU legislation and policies relevant to algae are summarised in a recent publication<sup>10</sup>.

Thanks again for submitting the AAC recommendation on seaweed cultivation.

Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils ([pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu](mailto:pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu); +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward it to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.submariner-network.eu/balticbluebioalliance>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.seaweedeurope.com/hidden-champion/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.eumofa.eu/market-analysis#thematic?2>

<sup>10</sup> [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-25233-5\\_16](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-25233-5_16)