



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE/A2/EG (2021)

Dear Mr. Ojeda,

Thank you for your letter with the recommendations regarding the Farm to Fork Strategy.

As you know, the Farm to Fork Strategy is at the heart of the European Green Deal and aims at making food systems fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly. The strategy recognizes that “*farmed fish and seafood generate a lower carbon footprint than animal production on land*”. It also calls to accelerate the shift to sustainable seafood production. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I read that it has been thoroughly discussed within the AAC and that you agree with the main goals and conclusions.

The strategy foresees many initiatives to ensure the transition to a sustainable food systems, and most of them cover aquaculture. Until now, the Commission has already launched an **Organic Action Plan** to boost organic production, including organic aquaculture, and adopted the new **Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030**, in the preparation of which the AAC has played an important and constructive role.

As the title and content of these Guidelines show, the proposed strategy for EU aquaculture for the years to come aims at helping the EU aquaculture sector to become more competitive and resilient, and to improve its environmental and climate performance. All these aspects are important and interlinked. The guidelines propose specific actions on a number of areas, including access to space and water, regulatory and administrative framework, human and animal health, environmental performance, climate change, animal welfare, integration in local communities and communicating on EU aquaculture. As we have been working very closely on these Guidelines, I trust the AAC and its members are very well aware of the horizontal objectives and concrete actions foreseen.

In the coming months, the Commission will launch the **contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security** which addresses the whole food value chain, including aquaculture. The European Commission is also preparing a comprehensive cross-sectoral

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**EU algae initiative.** The aim of the initiative is to increase the sustainable production, consumption and use of algae and algae-based products. It will be adopted next year.

Furthermore, the Commission is working on other initiatives also relevant for the Aquaculture producers such as the proposal for a **Regulation establishing a framework for a Union sustainable food system**. This initiative will provide an over-arching legislative framework. It will put forward general principles and objectives, requirements and responsibilities for all actors of the food system, including a framework for sustainable food labelling.

Regarding your concerns on the effectiveness and potential burden of the initiatives, the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and better regulation govern the work of the Commission. Therefore, I would like to reassure you that initiatives carried out in implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy, as any other EU initiative, take into account effectiveness and the impact they may cause.

To support the implementation of the Strategy, the Commission has ensured that the aquaculture sector can benefit from EU funding in its transition. The **European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)** does not only support a more sustainable aquaculture but also encourages Member States to create financial instruments for productive investments on aquaculture. Other funds available are structural funds such as the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF) or the European Social Fund (ESF). The Horizon Europe programme makes funding available for Research and Innovation, and the BlueInvest initiative and InvestEU will continue to support investment in innovative and sustainable solutions for the aquaculture. All these are result-oriented programmes. I would also like to mention that EU Member States accompany the development of aquaculture with support from NextGenerationEU (NGEU), which is aimed at helping rebuild a post-COVID19 Europe to become a greener, more digital and more resilient Europe.

Regarding imported aquaculture products, as you know, they have to fully comply with relevant EU regulations and standards to enter the EU market. Furthermore, the Farm to Fork Strategy also envisages taking into account social and environmental aspects of food products. *Inter alia*, this will be channelled through the upcoming framework for a Union sustainable food system, including the sustainable labelling initiative. In addition, the EU will continue promoting higher social and environmental standards for global aquaculture in its work in the context of multilateral and regional organisations, notably the FAO, and relations with third countries.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation on unleashing the potential of EU aquaculture, its contribution to the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy and the implementation of the new Strategic Guidelines for EU aquaculture. 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 them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

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