



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels, 1 March 2022
MARE/A2/BVT (2022)

Subject: AAC Recommendations on the coherence of zones concerning shellfish farming.

Dear Mr. Ojeda,

I would like to thank you for your mail of 23rd December 2021 including the “*Recommendations on the coherence of zones concerning shellfish farming*”.

Concerning the recommendation to the Commission on **EMODnet**:

After consulting with EMODnet, we can confirm that the developments you have requested are feasible and DG MARE will support the aggregation and inclusion of these data in EMODnet Human Activities, under “Aquaculture”. As there are some technical and organisational aspects of the work that need to be further discussed and decided, I would like to invite representatives of the AAC to a coordinated dialogue with DG MARE and the EMODnet secretariat, to ensure optimum results in a realistic timeline. DG MARE will coordinate this work, and will contact the AAC directly to set this discussion in motion.

Any developments in the availability of data and data products related to aquaculture in EMODnet can certainly be highlighted on the website of the “EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism” that the Commission will be setting up.

Concerning the recommendation to the Commission on the revision of the **Maritime Spatial Planning Directive**:

Directive 2014/89/EU establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning (MSP Directive) lays down the general framework for maritime spatial planning aimed at promoting the sustainable growth of maritime economies, the sustainable development of marine areas and the sustainable use of marine resources. This Directive shall not interfere with Member States’ competence to design and determine, within their marine waters, the extent and coverage of their maritime spatial plans.

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The Directive set 31 March 2021 as the deadline by which all Member States should have established a maritime spatial plan. Despite delays posed by the global pandemic, which not only slowed down the works of national administrations and the cooperation between Member States, but also negatively affected stakeholder participation and consultation, a majority of Member States have now officially submitted their plans. The Commission is currently preparing a report to Parliament and Council on this first cycle of implementation of the MSPD, outlining the progress made by Member States. In this report, the Commission will highlight how it supported the preparation of national maritime spatial plans, as well as general shortcomings and best practices from Member States in order to support them in future reviews of their plans (minimum every 10 years).

There is at this stage no plan to review the MSP Directive. As underlined above, we are still in the first year after the implementation deadline, and some Member States are still completing their very first plan. Nevertheless, the progress report on the implementation cited above will serve as a first basis to guide Member States further in the implementation of the Directive. Your recommendations are very welcome and will surely be useful if and when considering a review/revision of the MSP Directive in the future. Currently, most national maritime spatial plans do not go in much detail regarding zonings related to shellfish farming, and the MSP Directive does not offer a legal basis to ensure that your recommendations are taken on board by Member States. As announced in the “Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030”, the Commission will develop a more detailed guidance document on the planning for space and access to water for aquaculture that might include some specificities for shellfish. In this context, recommendations and concrete examples of best practice are always much appreciated.

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 it to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

[e-signed]
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