



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE/A2/EL (2022)

**Subject:** AAC recommendation on Covid-19 Impacts and Responses

Dear Mr Thomsen,

I would like to thank you for your letter on the Covid-19 impacts on the aquaculture sector, the responses and your recommendations.

Regarding your first recommendation on the involvement of producer organisations and associations in future data collection, I share the view that surveys on the fishery and aquaculture sector, in particular on market developments, must be based on the representativeness of concerned actors. Producer Organisations (POs) play a key role in that regard, as they are the best placed to identify and mobilise the most relevant producers, according to the matters under consideration.

With respect to your second recommendation on improving data collection on aquaculture production and sales, please note that we are working in close cooperation with the sector and its representatives through the market observatory EUMOFA, to put in place rapid market data transmission routines. We are also working closely with EUROSTAT in the framework of the identification of future statistical needs and activities to be delivered from 2023.

Regarding the analysis of the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, I would like to note that, through EUMOFA, we continue to monitor market developments and to analyse market trends, in order to understand and explain underlying causes of possible market disruptions at EU, national, as well as species levels. The subsequent crises and shocks (Brexit and Russian war of aggression on Ukraine) make it difficult to disentangle the root causes of such disruptions. DG MARE also carries out regular Eurobarometer surveys on EU consumers' habits regarding fishery and aquaculture products <sup>(1)</sup>. The last

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(<sup>1</sup>) [Eurobarometers on EU Consumer habits regarding fishery and aquaculture products.](#)

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one took place in 2021. It was the first edition after the Brexit and, to a large extent, the Covid crisis. It did not show any evidence of substantial changes in consumption patterns. Given the continuous monitoring of market developments, DG MARE does not consider it necessary at this stage to prepare a specific follow up study on impacts of the crisis in the sector.

With respect to your recommendations regarding funding, as you know, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) provides flexibility to EU Member States to support projects on aquaculture provided that they are covered by their EMFAF programme and are consistent with their Multi-annual National Strategic Plan for the sector. In particular, Member States can use the EMFAF to support the marketing of aquaculture products to improve the transparency, stability, quality and diversity of the supply chain, as well as consumer information. The support facilitates the implementation of the Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030<sup>(2)</sup> and the national strategic plans for aquaculture.

In particular, the EMFAF can support the creation of producer organisations, the implementation of production and marketing plans, the promotion of new market outlets, the development and dissemination of market intelligence and promotional campaigns on sustainable aquaculture. It can also support innovation and investment in new and advanced technological solutions. Member States are responsible for selecting the eligible operations in the framework of their national programme. Therefore, I invite you to liaise with the managing authorities of the Member States concerned.

With this letter, 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](mailto:Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu); +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>(2)</sup> [EUR-Lex - 52021DC0236 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)