



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE.A.2/BVT

Subject: AAC Recommendation on organic aquaculture

Dear Mr Brian Thomsen,

I would like to thank you for your email of 24th July 2023 in which you have shared a “*Recommendation on organic aquaculture*”.

The Recommendation refers to the “**Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030**”⁽¹⁾ that promote the development of organic aquaculture. I would like to underline that financial support is also available for conversion to organic aquaculture as laid down under Regulation (EU) 2021/1139 (EMFAF Regulation). Member States are invited to include such objectives in their Multi-annual National Strategic Plan on Aquaculture (MNSPA) and in their EMFAF Programme. Almost all Member States have included the development of organic aquaculture in their revised MNSPAs⁽²⁾ and some have included quantitative targets like Poland⁽³⁾ and Hungary⁽⁴⁾. A summary in English of the MNSPAs is available on the EU aquaculture website⁽⁵⁾.

The Recommendation also refers to the Commission’s Communication on an “**Action Plan for the development of organic production**”⁽⁶⁾ that includes an action for the Commission to “*identify and address as appropriate any specific obstacles to the growth of EU organic aquaculture*”. I would like to inform you that DG MARE and DG AGRI jointly worked on a document related to the issues that are impacting the development of EU organic aquaculture. Most of the issues raised in the abovementioned AAC Recommendation are addressed in this document that we expect to be published soon on

(1) COM(2021)236 final

(2) The Netherlands did not include organic aquaculture in its NSPA because they only have RASs and in Estonia the market for organic aquaculture is very small.

(3) The objective is to double organic aquaculture production in Poland by 2030.

(4) The objective is to reach 20% area of lakes for organic aquaculture in Hungary.

(5) [Home | EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

(6) COM(2021) 141 final

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the EU organic website⁽⁷⁾. In particular the document should clarify where the Commission has no empowerment under Regulation (EU) 2018/848.

Beyond that, with respect to the problem of “lack of juveniles”, I would like to underline that in compliance with Article 26 of Regulation (EU) 2018/848, Member States had to put in place systems for the operators who market organic juveniles to inform on the availability of organic juveniles. DG AGRI and DG MARE will follow up on the information collected by Member States for the first time in 2023. However, there is no simple solution to this matter as the Commission has no empowerment with regard to the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2018 /848 and the phase out of possible derogations was already completed.

Concerning the recommendation for the Commission “*to set up a helpdesk at the EU level to ensure that primary producers have access to clear and uncomplicated definitions/guidelines about possible designs, operational procedures and permitted new technologies that are aligned with the directions in the Strategic Guidelines for EU Aquaculture*”, I would like to refer to the “EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism”. This mechanism, among other tasks, has to provide via the EU aquaculture website⁽⁸⁾ up to date information on sustainable aquaculture including on organic aquaculture. Legal clarifications on organic aquaculture can be found in the FAQ document on the EU organic website: [organic-rules-faqs_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/organic-rules-faqs_en.pdf)

Finally, on the recommendation for the Commission “*to commission a study to assess the position of organic production for different aquatic products that should include animal welfare and primary producer income per worked hour, as well as an economic impact assessment describing the value for society delivered by farming activities as the foundation for reimbursement to farmers*”, the Commission could consider such a study in the future. I invite you to contact my services to discuss the details of such a study.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia RUBECK, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

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⁽⁷⁾ [Organic production and products \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/organic-production-and-products_en)

⁽⁸⁾ [Home | EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/aquaculture/assistance-mechanism_en)