



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE.A.2/BVT

**Subject: AAC Recommendation “Good husbandry practices in shellfish farming”**

Dear Mr Brian Thomsen,

I would like to thank you for your email of 16 October 2023 in which you shared the ACC’s “*Recommendation on good husbandry practices in shellfish farming*”.

As you know, the “*Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030*”<sup>(1)</sup> announced that the Commission will map good husbandry practices for aquaculture and organise trainings on these practices that could be supported using EU funding. In the context of the implementation of this action, the EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism is currently working on a “*background document on good husbandry practices for aquaculture*”. This draft document was discussed with experts, including the AAC, in a workshop on 18 October 2023.

In the Recommendation, the Aquaculture Advisory Council specifically recommends to the European Commission:

- 1) *To identify and distinguish “good husbandry practices” specific to shellfish farmers from those of fish farmers, as the latter do not share the same requirements in terms of animal welfare, health and animal health constraints.*

The abovementioned “*background document on good husbandry practices for aquaculture*” includes 7 factsheets. One of these is dedicated to shellfish. We concluded at the workshop on 18 October that this specific shellfish factsheet requires further work and we therefore instructed the EU Aquaculture Assistance

---

<sup>(1)</sup> COM(2021)236 final  
Mr. Brian Thomson  
Chairman of the AAC  
Email : brian@danskakvakultur.dk  
Rue de la Science, 10  
B – 1000 Brussels  
Belgium

Mechanism to closely work in the coming weeks with the AAC shellfish experts to improve and finalise this shellfish factsheet.

- 2) *To better define “good shellfish farming practices”, by establishing precise categories of “good practices” (environmental, social, economic, zootechnical, scientific, for safety at work, etc.) during the next review of the Common Fisheries Policy or, preferably, in the next Common Aquaculture Policy, as mentioned in the AAC letter of 17 April 2023. - To consult the AAC to the definitions of these “good practices” categories, by drafting new recommendations and taking into account its previous recommendations.*

I would like to note that the CFP Regulation establishes a method of strategic coordination among EU Member States in the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector. The implementation of the ambitious Strategic guidelines for EU aquaculture adopted in 2021 and the EU Member States’ Strategic Plans for aquaculture should remain our focus in the coming months and years. This implementation provides an appropriate framework for defining good practices.

- 3) *To recognise the pathogens herpes virus (OsHV-1); Vibrio aestuarianus; Francisella halioticida, etc., as “pathogens of interest” in European regulations, and including them in Member States' animal health surveillance systems.*

The rules set out in Regulation (EU) 2016/429 (‘Animal Health Law’) <sup>(2)</sup>, apply to diseases which are listed in accordance with Article 5 of that Regulation, or which are considered to be emerging diseases, in accordance with Article 6(2) of the same Regulation. None of the diseases mentioned above are currently listed, or regarded as emerging diseases, in accordance with the Animal Health Law.

Article 269(1)(c) of the Animal Health Law does, however, provide a legal basis for Member States to take additional or more stringent measures than those set out in that Regulation, concerning disease surveillance. We believe, therefore, that the Animal Health Law provides sufficient legal powers to control diseases such as those referred to by the ACC, should Member States be minded doing so.

- 4) *To facilitate the sharing of best practices between Member States.*

The preparation of the background document on good husbandry practices for aquaculture has been a good opportunity to share best practices among Member States. The Commission will present a new version of this document to Member States’ aquaculture experts at the next Technical Seminar (23-24 January 2024).

As soon as the document on good husbandry practices for aquaculture (including the factsheet on shellfish farming) is finalised, the Commission will publish it on the EU aquaculture website ([Home | EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/eu-observatory/aquaculture/)). Furthermore, as explained above, the Commission will in the future organise trainings on these good husbandry practices. The training materials that will be developed for these trainings will be disseminated widely via the EU aquaculture website.

Of course, the Open Method of Coordination will continue providing opportunities for further sharing good practices among Member States.

---

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, p. 1.

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 (Julia.rubeck@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.296.88.89), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

Charlina VITCHEVA

c.c.: Cecile Fouquet : [cecile.fouquet@aac-europe.org](mailto:cecile.fouquet@aac-europe.org); [secretariat@aac-europe.org](mailto:secretariat@aac-europe.org);