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Mr Costas Kadis

Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans

European Commission

Brussels, 11 March 2026

Subject: Recognition of inland aquaculture and animal welfare within the Ocean Pact and the Ocean Board

Dear Commissioner Kadis,

Further to the joint letter on the European Ocean Board recently addressed to you by several Advisory Councils and co-signed by the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC), we wish to submit the present correspondence as a complementary contribution reflecting the specific perspective of the aquaculture stakeholders.

The AAC wishes to express its support for the overarching objectives pursued under the Ocean Pact and welcomes the Commission's efforts to strengthen ocean governance and stakeholder engagement.

At the same time, the AAC would like to raise two aspects which, in our view, deserve greater consideration within the current framework:

- the recognition of inland aquaculture and
- the integration of animal welfare considerations for aquatic species.

First, the AAC notes that inland aquaculture, and in particular freshwater fish farming, appears to receive limited visibility in the current discussions surrounding the Ocean Pact and the recently published call for the European Ocean Board. Inland aquaculture is an integral part of EU aquaculture and contributes significantly to sustainable aquatic food production, rural and coastal economies resilience, and the development of the blue bioeconomy in Europe. Freshwater production systems also face specific environmental, regulatory and spatial challenges that require appropriate consideration at EU level.

Second, the AAC would like to underline the importance of ensuring that the welfare of aquatic animals is adequately reflected in future discussions related to the Ocean Pact. Sustainable aquaculture development must take into account the welfare of farmed aquatic animals alongside environmental protection, food production and economic sustainability. In this context, the AAC believes that the Ocean Pact offers an opportunity to further promote high standards for aquatic animal welfare as part of a responsible and sustainable aquatic food system.

In this context, the AAC considers that both the future Ocean Pact and the future work of the European Ocean Board should reflect the diversity of European aquaculture systems and ensure that inland production, as well as the welfare of farmed aquatic animals, are duly recognised in all discussions and future initiatives.



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We remain at your disposal to further elaborate on these considerations and to contribute constructively to ensuring that both inland aquaculture, including its specificities and challenges, and aquatic animal welfare, are appropriately integrated into the Ocean Pact framework.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Thomsen
Chair
Aquaculture Advisory Council

