



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE.A.2/BVT

Subject: MAC-AAC Recommendation on the alignment of import requirements on animal welfare for a level playing field

Dear Mr Thomsen,

I would like to thank you for the MAC-AAC recommendation on the alignment of import requirements on animal welfare for a level playing field (your reference: MAC-AAC 2026-9). This document provides relevant elements to the Commission should aquatic animals be integrated in the ongoing revision of the EU animal welfare legislation.

As announced in the Livestock Strategy, and during our recent meeting with the AAC, the Commission intends to present a targeted revision of the legislation on the welfare of animals on farm, including with the objective to follow-up on the European Citizens' Initiative "End the Cage Age", with a sector-by-sector approach. To ensure that animal welfare improvement goes hand in hand with competitiveness, the Commission intends to focus on key priority sectors: laying hens, broilers and pigs. This will focus amongst others on the phasing out of cages, practical on-farm welfare indicators, and equivalent import requirements. The modernisation of EU's animal welfare rules and the EU's trade agreements provide an essential opportunity to introduce equivalent animal welfare requirements for imported products, in line with WTO standards. The aquaculture sector is however not envisaged at this stage in this targeted revision.

With regards to the legislative proposal on the protection of animals during transport, which is currently being examined by the co-legislators, it does introduce equivalent standards for imports of animals and animal products into the EU. This legislative proposal also includes specific requirements for the transport of farmed aquatic animals.

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).

Yours sincerely,

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