



FEAP CALLS FOR STRATEGIC CHANGE IN EUROPEAN AQUACULTURE TO CONTRIBUTE TO EU AQUATIC FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY

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The Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, in collaboration with the Hungarian Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform (HUNATiP), hosted a workshop on the future of aquaculture on October 14th in Brussels at the Permanent Representation of Hungary to the European Union. At this event, Javier Ojeda, Secretary General of FEAP, delivered a presentation **highlighting the key differences between the aquaculture policies of the European Commission and those of international organisations**, such as the FAO (United Nations).

While the European Commission bets the future of aquaculture mainly on extensive production of low trophic level species, such as the cultivation of seaweed and molluscs, **the FAO promotes a more realistic approach, in the view of FEAP, that insists on the urgent need to encourage the sustainable intensification of aquaculture** to increase food production with the most efficient use of the limited natural resources to contribute to global food security, which means doing more with less. FEAP has asked the European Commission to refocus its approach without delay and adopt those aims prioritized by FAO (United Nations). This position of FEAP does not deny the values of mollusc, seaweed and extensive finfish farming but insists that the future of mainstream aquatic food production must take into consideration a **wider vision, better fitted policies and investments in sustainable finfish production.**

FEAP expressed concerns about what it considers a short-term vision on the part of the European Commission. In his speech, Ojeda argued that the current EC policy underestimates the values of omnivorous fish farming, ignoring they are an essential food that contains unique proteins, fats, and micronutrients that are naturally packed in a convenient format and are extremely nutritional and healthy for human beings of all ages.

Moreover, the Food-Based Dietary Guidelines of 27 EU Member State authorities continue recommending eating fish 1 or 2 times a week (some even more) and one of them at least oily fish (trout, salmon, ...) as recently reminded by the European Commission's Knowledge4Policy platform. ([link](#))

According to FEAP, **current EU policies limit the sector's growth and negatively affect the public perception of sustainable intensive fish farming**, making social acceptance of these practices even more difficult to achieve. In the case of farmed finfish, where animals are fed with high-quality compound feed, the consideration of trophic levels loses all meaning since what must be analysed is the trophic origin of the raw materials that make up the feed and not the trophic position of the fish species in the wild.

In its presentation, FEAP appreciated the value of the *Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030* and DG MARE's constructive efforts and defended the need to promote innovation in finfish farming, stressing that this activity is fundamental to the European diet.

"The stagnation faced by EU aquaculture since the year 2000 can still be solved if the right decisions are now taken. It is time to change course,"

Javier Ojeda, FEAP General Secretary

FEAP warned that self-sufficiency in aquatic products within the EU will continue to decline (currently at 35%) if immediate measures are not taken to promote the growth of European intensive finfish production.

FEAP is urging that food production should become as much a priority in EU policies as environmental protection. Also, it would make no sense to limit European aquaculture to the extensive production of low-trophic level species and to import from third countries the finfish demanded by society. To be consistent, the Commission should then ban importing to the EU the finfish that it does not promote farming in the Union.

FEAP stresses that a balance between innovation, local production and environmental sustainability is key to unlocking the potential of European aquaculture, guaranteeing jobs, economic **development** and ensuring a stable food supply on the continent.

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers is an organisation that represents the European fish farming profession and is based in Brussels. FEAP is composed of 24 national fish farming associations from 23 countries, both EU and non-EU. The combined yearly production of FEAP members surpasses 2,5 million tonnes of nutritious, safe, delicious, and environmentally sustainable fish.

The presentation is available [here](#)

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