**FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN**

**AQUACULTURE PRODUCERS**

Avenue des Arts 56

1000 BRUXELLES

+32 43382995 / +34 659094894

secretariat@feap.info

**Press Release**

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Subject: **The FEAP welcomes the publication of the new Strategic Guidelines for  EU aquaculture by the European Commission and approves its focus**

The European Commission presented yesterday its revised *Strategic Guidelines for a more  sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture1*. These guidelines take over from the 2013  *Strategic Guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture* that were considered a reference document because of stating for the first time in an official  document the causes underlying the stagnation of the European Union’s aquaculture  development since the turn of the century.

The new guidelines offer a common vision for the Commission, Member States and  stakeholders to develop the aquaculture sector in a way that contributes directly to the  European Green Deal and in particular the Farm to Fork Strategy.

The FEAP welcomes the bold and well-focused content of the new Strategic Guidelines  and looks forward to their implementation as they are a good platform for further action.

The European Union’s aquaculture sector is recognised by the European Commission as  having a growing role to play in the European food system. This sector offers healthy  food with a climate and environmental footprint well below that of land-based farming.  With these guidelines, the European Commission expects to position European Union’s

aquaculture as the global reference for sustainability and quality, reduce the EU dependence on aquatic food imports and create more jobs, especially in coastal and rural  regions.

The FEAP acknowledges that the chapters in the Guidelines reflect the real needs of the  sector for growth:

1. Building resilience and competitiveness.

2. Participating in the green transition.

3. Ensuring social acceptance and consumer information.

4. Increasing knowledge and innovation.

The FEAP is pleased to notice that the European Commission, through DG MARE, has  understood that besides the importance to continue refining the environmental  sustainability of European aquaculture, there is an urgent need to improve the  competitiveness of the EU fish farming companies, mainly comprised by small and micro

enterprises. This improved economic performance of the European Union’s aquaculture

1 European Green Deal: Commission adopts strategic guidelines for sustainable and competitive EU  aquaculture: https://bit.ly/2SYrOKr

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sector should be supported to contribute to its growth and reduce the massive annual  international trade deficit of EUR 21 billion on aquatic food of the European Union.

The FEAP looks forward to the celebration of the Aquaculture Stakeholders Event that the  European Commission has organised on 27-May entitled *Blue farming in the European  Green Deal: A vision for sustainable aquaculture production and consumption in the  European Union.* The president of the FEAP, Mrs Lara Barazi-Geroulanou, and Mrs Anna  Pyć, from the Polish Trout Association, will have prominent roles in it.

There are challenges, though, in the unfolding of the Guidelines that will require working  closely with the European Commission. For example, analysing why the great  expectations set for Organic aquaculture in the Farm to Fork strategy will require a  detailed analysis of the current underperformance of this certification scheme that could  hinder any further expansion regardless of the political will.

The FEAP will also request the European Commission to take into better consideration  freshwater aquaculture by ending the use of the word ‘seafood’ (even if it officially  encompasses freshwater fish) and replace it with the more comprehensive term ‘aquatic  food’, just like the FAO has recently started doing.

The FEAP now expects the European Union Member States to review their Multi-annual  National Strategic Plans taking into consideration the new European Guidelines presented  yesterday. The soon-to-be published European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund  (EMFAF) will provide support to the Member States on the implementation of their  respective Multi-annual National Strategic Plans and their Operational Programmes.

The new Guidelines are complemented with a comprehensive annex that recommends  actions for the European Commission, for the Member States, and for the Aquaculture  Advisory Council. The FEAP expects each of these to develop those actions to full  accomplishment.

Besides officially publishing yesterday the new 'Strategic Guidelines for a more  sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture', the European Commission has also  published another relevant paper: 'A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the  EU-Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future'2in which aquaculture  also plays a relevant role.

**About the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers**

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.

2 A new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU: Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a  Sustainable Future': https://bit.ly/3wgEhaq

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