



European Green Deal: Commission adopts strategic guidelines for sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture

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The Commission adopted [new strategic guidelines](#) for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture. The guidelines offer a common vision for the Commission, Member States and stakeholders to develop the sector in a way that contributes directly to the [European Green Deal](#) and in particular the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#). The guidelines will help the EU aquaculture sector become more competitive and resilient, and to improve its environmental and climate performance.

Virginijus **Sinkevičius**, Commissioner for environment, oceans and fisheries said: "*Aquaculture has a growing role to play in the European food system. The sector can offer healthy food with a climate and environmental footprint generally below that of land-based farming. With the guidelines we adopted today, we want to position EU aquaculture production as the global reference for sustainability and quality, reduce our dependence on seafood imports and create more jobs, especially in coastal regions.*"

Objectives of the Guidelines

The guidelines have been prepared in close consultation with EU Member States and stakeholders, notably those represented in the Aquaculture Advisory Council. They set four inter-related objectives for the further development of aquaculture in the Union:

- building resilience and competitiveness
- participating in the green transition
- ensuring social acceptance and consumer information, and
- increasing knowledge and innovation

The proposed guidelines will also support the substantial increase in organic aquaculture at EU level. As noted in the recently published [Organic Farming Action Plan](#), organic aquaculture production remains a relatively new sector but with a significant potential for growth.

Unlike fisheries, aquaculture is not an area of exclusive EU competence. Nevertheless, in recognition of the important role aquaculture plays in European food security, sustainable growth and employment, the Common Fisheries Policy foresees a system of strategic coordination of aquaculture policy in the EU.

Such a strategic approach has become even more relevant today, given the potential of the aquaculture sector to contribute to achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal, and the need to ensure long-term sustainability and resilience of the sector, notably in the light of the COVID-19 crisis. The new strategic guidelines have fully integrated those goals.

Looking at the challenges and opportunities of the EU aquaculture sector, the guidelines propose specific actions on a number of areas, including access to space and water, human and animal health, environmental performance, climate change, animal welfare, regulatory and administrative framework, and communicating on EU aquaculture.

In particular, the Commission proposes to develop detailed guidance documents regarding good practices in the most important areas, and foresees a dedicated Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism to support the development of those guidance documents, as well as the implementation of good practices described therein.

Among other objectives, the Commission also encourages EU Member States to include, the increase of organic aquaculture in the (ongoing) review of their national strategic plans for the aquaculture sector as well to support this type of aquaculture production with part of the funds available under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF).

Next steps

The Commission invites EU Member States to consider these new guidelines in their Multiannual National Strategic Plans for the development of the aquaculture sector, as well as their support to the sector under the future European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) and other EU funds.

Background

One in four of every seafood product consumed in Europe comes from aquaculture. However, most of seafood consumption is covered by imports, making up around 60% of the total supply. Overall, only 10% of EU seafood consumption comes from EU aquaculture. This shows a sizeable growth potential.

Despite these commercial prospects, EU aquaculture production has only increased by 6% since 2007, reaching 1.2 million tonnes in sales volume and €4.1 billion in turnover in 2018. The EU's contribution to world aquaculture production represented less than 2% of global production in 2018 (FAO 2020).

The [previous guidelines](#), adopted by the Commission in 2013, formed the basis of the EU Member States' multiannual national strategic plans for the development of aquaculture activities on their territory.

For more information

[Strategic guidelines for sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture](#)

[Press release European Green Deal: the European Commission adopts a new approach for a green recovery in the blue economy](#)

[Joint Research Centre Economic Report of the EU Aquaculture Sector](#)

[Organic Farming Action Plan](#)

[Farm to Fork Strategy](#)

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