Statistics on aquaculture

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The Commission presents a report on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 762/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the submission by Member States of statistics on aquaculture and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 788/96.

The Regulation requires submission of data in four areas, namely:

- the annual production (volume and unit value) of aquaculture;
- the annual input (volume and unit value) to capture-based aquaculture;
- the annual production of hatcheries and nurseries;
- the structure of the aquaculture sector.

Data are required annually except in the case of structure information, which is submitted every three years. The first year for which data were required to be transmitted (the reference year) was 2008 and those data had to be received by Eurostat by 31 December 2009. Seven Member States were granted a transitional period in which to implement the Regulation

Data collection and sources: in the majority of Member States, data are collected through a complete census of registered aquaculture producers using annual postal or electronic questionnaires. **Almost all countries have incorporated the requirements of European aquaculture data collection into national law.**

The report describes the system for data collection in Member States. This section is derived from the most recent annual methodological reports for aquaculture statistics (reference years 2013-2011) sent from the Member States to the European Commission in accordance with the Regulation.

Data quality: analysis of the data which have been collected under Regulation (EC) No 762/2008 shows that:

- **data quality appears to be quite high for aquaculture production for human consumption** (including eggs) at the aggregate level and for the major species, although for some countries individual species' time series are incomplete and revisions may be useful;
- **data on the input to capture based aquaculture and the production of eggs from hatcheries and nurseries are of rather poor quality.** Better consistency is shown for the number of juveniles, although the definition of juveniles in the Regulation lacks precision.

Many countries judge the quality of national aquaculture data provided to Eurostat as high. Others do not explicitly rate the quality of their data, but do not mention any shortcomings.

Relatively little estimation is involved in the production of aquaculture figures. The large **majority of Member States have an annual census with complete coverage of commercial production.** It has been acknowledged though that the quality and completeness of data depend strongly on the goodwill of the industry.

Cost-effectiveness: for the reference year 2013 only four countries (Germany, Ireland, Greece and Poland) claimed a high burden imposed by Regulation (EC) No 762/2008 in terms of time needed to

collect, process and submit the data, and two countries (Denmark and Germany) judged the production cost as high in monetary terms. By contrast, seven countries deemed the burden to be low in terms of both time and cost.

A number of countries have **suggested improvements aiming to reduce the burden of Regulation (EC) No 762/2008**, particularly for improving the cooperation with other stakeholders in the field to standardise data submission requirements, concerning primarily the FAO and (EC) No 199/2008 (the Data Collection Framework Regulation)

The report notes that the vast majority of countries **also cover national needs** with the aquaculture data compiled for Regulation (EC) No 762/2008. Altogether, 20 countries exceed 50 % coverage, with 15 countries going beyond 80 % and seven countries reaching between 95 % and 100 %.

Recommendations: the Commission wants to conduct a **review of Regulation (EC) No 762/2008**, drawing on lessons learned from the years of data collection, taking into account data needs of the revised Common Fisheries Policy and aligning with the Data Collection Framework Multiannual Programme. In particular, it suggests **finding a solution to the high quantity of confidential data**, and allowing the production and use of harmonised aquaculture data at European level. At Member State level, it should be possible to reduce the **burden of aquaculture data collection** by switching from paper to (partly pre-filled) **online questionnaires** and automating part of the validation process.