Basic information

2021/2189(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Striving for a sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture: the way forward **Subject** 3.15.02 Aquaculture 3.70.20 Sustainable development	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
PECH Fisheries	AGUILERA Clara (S&D)	22/06/2021
	Shadow rapporteur BELLAMY François-Xavier (EPP) HLAVÁČEK Martin (Renew) D'AMATO Rosa (Greens /EFA) ILČIĆ Ladislav (ECR) CONTE Rosanna (ID) HAZEKAMP Anja (The Left)	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	SINKEVIČIUS Virginijus

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
07/10/2021	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
12/07/2022	Vote in committee		
19/07/2022	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0215/2022	Summary
03/10/2022	Debate in Parliament		
04/10/2022	Decision by Parliament	T9-0334/2022	Summary
04/10/2022	Results of vote in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2021/2189(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	PECH/9/07284

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE700.420	17/01/2022	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE719.586	14/02/2022	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0215/2022	19/07/2022	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0334/2022	04/10/2022	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2022)720	16/02/2023	

Meetings with interest representatives published in line with the Rules of Procedure

Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs and Committee Chairs

Transparency

Name	Role	Committee	Date	Interest representatives
BELLAMY François-Xavier	Shadow rapporteur	PECH	11/05/2022	Etangs de France
BELLAMY François-Xavier	Shadow rapporteur	PECH	28/04/2022	FUNDACION OCEANA
BELLAMY François-Xavier	Shadow rapporteur	PECH	18/03/2022	European Anglers Alliance
BELLAMY François-Xavier	Shadow rapporteur	PECH	17/03/2022	Comité national des pêches maritimes et des élevages marins

Striving for a sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture: the way forward

2021/2189(INI) - 04/10/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 486 votes to 105, with 27 abstentions, a resolution on striving for a sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture: the way forward.

According to the Common Fisheries Policy, aquaculture should contribute to maintaining the potential for food production on a sustainable basis throughout the EU in order to ensure long-term food security, growth and employment for EU citizens, and help meet the growing global demand for aquatic products.

According to the latest data (2018), EU aquaculture production accounted for only 1.15% of world production in 2019. The EU was 41.2% self-sufficient in fish and seafood products, while only 10% of the seafood consumed in the EU comes from EU aquaculture, which represents only 2% of global production. Some Member States do not pay enough attention to the potential for aquaculture development. On the other hand, there is still significant potential for growth and diversification in terms of producing countries (Spain, France, Italy, Greece) and species farmed.

Parliament stressed that the **growth potential of the EU aquaculture sector needs to be developed in a sustainable manner**, taking all three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental – into consideration.

Aquaculture's contribution to the European Green Deal

Parliament underlined the potential contribution of the aquaculture sector to the objectives of the European Green Deal and stressed the need to ensure the long-term viability and resilience of the sector in the light of the COVID-19 crisis. As part of the transition to a sustainable food system in Europe, the aquaculture sector can play an important role in the circular economy and as a net contributor to the transformation of surplus nutrients into high-quality protein.

While welcoming the Commission's communication on strategic guidelines for more sustainable and competitive aquaculture in the EU for the period 2021-2030, Parliament stressed that these **guidelines need to be more ambitious** to stimulate sustainable production and the development of a truly successful and competitive European aquaculture sector. It called for quantitative growth targets for the sector to be set within the guidelines and stressed the importance of the Commission's supportive and coordinating role in implementation between Member States to ensure a level playing field for EU aquaculture farmers.

The resolution also stressed that EU aquaculture meets high standards in terms of product quality and animal health, but that there is **still room for improvement in terms of diversification, competitiveness and environmental performance**. The development of low-impact aquaculture and the environmental services of aquaculture could make an important contribution to the Green Deal, the 'farm to fork' strategy and a sustainable blue economy.

Parliament expressed its support for the establishment of the **new EU aquaculture assistance mechanism** as an innovative tool to help the Commission, Member States, regional authorities, industry and other stakeholders to develop new guidelines and consolidate best practices in various relevant areas. Members considered that all relevant actors, including the Parliament, should be involved in the creation of this mechanism.

The resolution stressed the need to:

- provide a sound legal framework and to make full use of the financial resources of the European Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMAF), as a funding instrument specifically dedicated to the objectives of fisheries and aquaculture management in the European Union;

- have precise data and statistics on aquaculture products;

- invest on a large scale to prevent and reduce the impact of disasters and extreme weather events on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors;

- support the creation of vocational training courses for the aquaculture sector, to attract younger people and enable the retraining of fishermen;

- provide sufficient support for environmentally friendly aquaculture, such as organic farms, closed circuit aquaculture, seaweed and shellfish farming;

- have a food traceability system in the EU that contributes to the sustainability of the aquaculture sector.

Main obstacles to aquaculture in the EU and possible solutions

Parliament urged the Commission and Member States to:

- ensure that **national plans** for the sustainable development of aquaculture take account of the main obstacles to developing the sector's potential, and recognise the need to provide space for the sector through appropriate land-use planning;

- launch **promotional campaigns** to encourage the consumption of EU aquaculture products and to raise the profile of the sector, and recognise the importance of EU-wide communication campaigns on sustainable aquaculture in the EU;

- establish a solid, reliable, clear and administratively **simple legal framework** for the use of space and licenses that provides confidence and security for investment in the sector;

- increase funding for **research and innovation** in the aquaculture sector; Members expressed strong support for innovation and progress in the cultivation of new aquaculture species;

- deepen knowledge of the potential of the aquaculture sector in the outermost regions;

- ensure a **level playing field** for EU aquaculture vis-à-vis third country producers with regard to imports of products that do not have the same market access, environmental and social sustainability or fish welfare standards as those produced in the EU.

Organic aquaculture

Lastly, Members welcomed the Commission communication on an action plan for the development of organic production and pointed out that organic aquaculture needs to play a key role in the planned growth of the aquaculture sector, given its ample untapped potential for development, in line with the transition to a sustainable food system in Europe, and which should be given assistance through the EMFAF.

Striving for a sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture: the way forward

2021/2189(INI) - 19/07/2022 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Fisheries adopted an own-initiative report by Clara AGUILERA (S&D, ES) on striving for a sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture: the way forward.

According to the report, the growth potential of the EU aquaculture sector needs to be developed in a sustainable manner, taking all three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental – into consideration. There is a need to have an attractive and market-oriented sector, also for new fish farmers, with a legal framework for attracting business investments, creating and maintaining good working conditions, and protecting the environment by using sustainable feed sources and improving aquatic health, animal welfare and biosecurity, as well as reducing the use of antimicrobials in accordance with the best available scientific advice, encouraging responsible and prudent practices, in line with the farm to fork strategy.

Aquaculture's contribution to the European Green Deal

The common fisheries policy states that aquaculture should contribute to the preservation of food production potential on a sustainable basis throughout the EU to guarantee long-term food security, including food supplies, growth and employment for EU citizens, and contribute to meeting the growing world demand for aquatic food.

While welcoming the Commission communication on the strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030 and on its contribution to the European Green Deal, Members stressed the potential of the aquaculture sector's contributions to achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal and the need to ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the sector, notably in the light of the COVID-19 crisis.

The report also underlined that EU aquaculture meets high standards in terms of product quality and animal health, but that there is still **margin for improvement in terms of diversification, competitiveness and environmental performance**. It noted that low-impact aquaculture (such as low-trophic, multitrophic and organic aquaculture), and environmental services from aquaculture can, if further developed, greatly contribute to the European Green Deal, to the farm-to-fork strategy and to a sustainable blue economy.

EU Aquaculture Assistance mechanism

The committee expressed support for the establishment of the new EU aquaculture assistance mechanism as an innovative tool to aid the Commission, Member States, regional authorities, industry and other stakeholders to develop further guidance and consolidate best practices on different relevant areas. Members considered that all relevant stakeholders, including Parliament, should be involved in the creation of this mechanism, in particular all members of the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC).

EU-wide communication campaigns

The report also stressed that another key element for the success of the aquaculture sector expansion is the organisation of EU-wide communication campaigns about the EU aquaculture sector and production with funds under direct management, in addition to other information and communication campaigns included in all operational programmes in line with the strategic guidelines objectives, on specific sectors from the EU aquaculture sector.

Funding

The Commission and the Member States are called on to provide a robust, reliable, predictable, streamlined and business-friendly **legal framework**, and making full use of the available financing resources of the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF). Member States are urged to earmark sufficient funding under the Recovery and Resilience Facility to support the innovation, sustainability and resilience of the EU aquaculture sector.

Main obstacles to aquaculture in the Union and possible solutions

The committee urged the Commission and the Member States to ensure that national plans for the sustainable development of aquaculture take into account the main barriers to the development of the potential of the sector and to recognise the need to allocate space to aquaculture through appropriate **spatial planning**. It highlighted the importance of a transparent and participative mechanism for allocating space, including to existing and new fishing grounds and aquaculture farms and marine protected areas as well as fisheries restricted areas to all stakeholders in an equitable manner. It regretted that some Member States have yet to present to the Commission their national maritime spatial plans, despite the deadline laid down in the directive and urged them to present their plans as soon as possible.

The development of aquaculture requires a solid, reliable, clear and administratively **simple legal framework** for the use of space and licences that provides confidence and security for investment in the sector. Spatial planning should result in an effective and flexible plan that considers the ever-changing marine and freshwater environments within which aquaculture functions, and that overly restrictive zoning may deter investment and development.

Research and innovation

The report stated that research and innovation are an important pillar to provide knowledge-based solutions to the main obstacles the sector is facing. The main areas to be focused on include alternative sources of nutrients, treatments, breeding and animal welfare in aquaculture. It is also necessary to promote investments in adapted polyculture and multi-trophic aquaculture systems and the promotion of hatcheries and nurseries activities for organic juveniles. In this sense, the **Open Method of Coordination for the exchange of best practices** and innovation on organic aquaculture the Commission proposes could be the platform where solutions could be found.

Organic aquaculture

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