



## EUROPEAN AQUACULTURE

European aquaculture is stagnating by contrast with increasing rates of aquaculture production at world level. To try to dampen this trend, the Commission published two communications with strategies for developing European aquaculture, one in 2002 and another in 2009. The 2002 strategy failed to increase European production, while the global economic crisis has hit the aquaculture market and industry. This led to the publication in 2013 of a third Commission communication, aimed at achieving the sustainable development of EU aquaculture and proposing strategic guidelines.

### BACKGROUND

European aquaculture production remained relatively stable around the figure of 1.2 million tonnes over the period 1995-2012, peaking at 1.4 million tonnes in the year 2000. In 2002 it stood at 1.25 million tonnes, accounting for 20% of total fisheries production. The value of European aquaculture production reached EUR 3.6 billion in 2011: of this, 50% came from fish products and 50% from crustaceans and molluscs. EU aquaculture focuses primarily on four species: mussels (39% of total volume), trout (15%), salmon (14%) and oysters (8%). However, there has been some development in production of other species such as sea bass, sea bream and clams.

The main aquaculture producers among the EU Member States are Spain (22%) France (17%), the United Kingdom (16%), Italy (13%) and Greece (8.5%), which together accounted for around 77% of total aquaculture production in 2011. However, in terms of the value of production, the UK is the leading producer (21%), followed by France (19%), Greece (13%) and Spain (12%). Bivalve molluscs (mussels, oysters and clams) are dominant in Spain, France and Italy. The UK produces mainly salmon, while Greece produces mainly sea bass and sea bream.

### A STRATEGY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN AQUACULTURE

In order to tackle the stagnation of aquaculture production, the Commission published, in 2002, a communication ([COM\(2002\) 0511](#)) entitled 'A strategy for the sustainable development of European aquaculture'. The objectives of the strategy were:

- creating long-term secure employment, particularly in fisheries-dependent areas, and increasing employment in aquaculture by between 8 000 and 10 000 full-time job equivalents over the period 2003-2008;
- ensuring the availability to consumers of products that are healthy, safe and of good quality, as well as promoting high animal health and welfare standards;
- ensuring an environmentally sound industry.

However, the strategy did not achieve its objectives, particularly as regards increasing production and employment: neither the target of a 4% growth rate nor that of 8 000 to 10 000 new jobs was achieved.

The main problem for the aquaculture sector was the lack of production growth, in stark contrast with the high growth rate in the rest of the world. However, the sector has seen good progress in areas such as ensuring availability of quality products to the consumer and ensuring environmental sustainability.

In addition to the traditional obstacles and constraints, since 2002 European aquaculture has met with increased competition from production in third countries, and has had to face crises of governance and, most recently, the effects of the economic crisis.

## **BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR AQUACULTURE — A NEW IMPETUS FOR THE STRATEGY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN AQUACULTURE**

Only seven years later, on 8 April 2009, did the Commission publish its second communication ([COM\(2009\) 0162](#)) on aquaculture, in order to identify and address the causes of the stagnation of EU aquaculture production. This new communication was entitled ‘Building a sustainable future for aquaculture: A new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture’. It aimed to ensure that the EU remains a key player in a strategic sector, increasing production and employment by implementing the following actions:

- A.** Promoting the competitiveness of EU aquaculture production through:
  - research and technological development;
  - promoting spatial planning for aquaculture in order to tackle the problem of competition over space;
  - enabling the aquaculture business to cope with market demands;
  - promoting aquaculture development in its international dimension;
- B.** Establishing conditions for sustainable growth of aquaculture through:
  - ensuring compatibility between aquaculture and the environment;
  - shaping a high-performance aquatic animal farming industry;
  - ensuring consumer health protection and recognising the health benefits of aquatic food products;
- C.** Improving the sector’s image and governance through:
  - better implementation of EU legislation;
  - reducing the administrative burden;
  - ensuring proper stakeholder participation and the provision of appropriate information to the public;
  - ensuring adequate monitoring of the aquaculture sector.

## **STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF EU AQUACULTURE**

The Strategic Guidelines ([COM\(2013\) 0229](#)) published by the Commission on 29 April 2013 aim to assist the Member States in defining their own national targets, taking account of their relative starting positions, national circumstances and institutional arrangements. The Guidelines address four priority areas:

1. simplification of administrative procedures and reduction of licensing time for aquaculture farms;
2. coordinated spatial planning for overcoming the hindering effect of the lack of space;
3. enhancing the competitiveness of EU aquaculture;
4. promotion of a level playing field.

As established in the new basic regulation for the CFP (Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, Article 34), Member States were due to submit [multiannual national strategic plans](#) for the development of aquaculture activities on their territory for the period 2014-2020, by 30 June 2014. The Commission shall encourage the exchange of information and best practices among Member States and shall facilitate the coordination of the national measures foreseen in the multiannual national strategic plans. In addition, Member States are encouraged to carry out a mid-term assessment of the implementation of their multiannual national strategic plans for aquaculture by the end of 2017.

## **ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

Parliament has adopted numerous resolutions aimed at further strengthening the EU's aquaculture sector. The most recent ones include:

- Resolution of 16 January 2003 ([P5\\_TA\(2003\)0022](#)) on aquaculture in the European Union: present and future;
- Legislative resolution of 27 April 2006 ([P6\\_TA\(2006\)0153](#)) on the proposal for a Council directive on animal health requirements for aquaculture animals and products thereof, and on the prevention and control of certain diseases in aquatic animals ([COM\(2005\) 0362](#) — C6-0281/2005 — [2005/0153\(CNS\)](#));
- Legislative resolution of 14 November 2006 ([P6\\_TA\(2006\)0472](#)) on the proposal for a Council regulation concerning use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture ([COM\(2006\) 0154](#) — C6-0137/2006 — [2006/0056\(CNS\)](#));
- Legislative resolution of 14 November 2006 ([P6\\_TA\(2006\)0473](#)) on the proposal for a Council regulation amending Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products ([COM\(2006\)0233](#) — C6-0202/2006 — [2006/0081\(CNS\)](#));
- Resolution of 4 December 2008 on the adoption of a European Cormorant Management Plan to minimise the increasing impact of cormorants on fish stocks, fishing and aquaculture ([2008/2177\(INI\)](#));
- Resolution of 17 June 2010 ([P7\\_TA\(2010\)0243](#)) on a new impetus for the Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture ([2009/2107\(INI\)](#));

- Resolution of 8 July 2010 ([P7\\_TA\(2010\)0287](#)) on the arrangements for importing fishery and aquaculture products into the EU with a view to the future reform of the CFP ([2009/2238\(INI\)](#));
- Legislative resolution of 23 November 2010 ([P7\\_TA\(2010\)0423](#)) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 708/2007 concerning the use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture ([COM\(2009\) 0541](#) — C7-0272/2009 — [2009/0153\(COD\)](#));
- Legislative resolution of 12 September 2012 ([P7\\_TA\(2012\)0333](#)) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products ([COM\(2011\) 0416](#) — C7-0197/2011 — [2011/0194\(COD\)](#));
- Legislative resolution of 10 December 2013 ([P7\\_TA\(2013\)0538](#)) on the Council position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1184/2006 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000 (12005/2/2013 — C7-0376/2013 — [2011/0194\(COD\)](#)) (Ordinary legislative procedure: second reading);
- Resolution of 8 September 2015 ([P8\\_TA\(2015\)0291](#)) on untapping the potential of research and innovation in the blue economy to create jobs and growth ([2014/2240\(INI\)](#));
- Resolution of 12 May 2016 ([P8\\_TA\(2016\)0222](#)) on traceability of fishery and aquaculture products in restaurants and retail ([2016/2532\(RSP\)](#)).

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