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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Fisheries

on ‘Towards a sustainable and competitive European aquaculture sector:
current status and future challenges’
(2017/2118(INI))

Rapporteur: Francesc Gambús

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

In April 2013 the European Commission published the Strategic Guidelines for the Sustainable Development of EU Aquaculture¹ which includes a draft outline for the multiannual national plans. In May 2016 the Commission published its summary of the 27 Multiannual National Aquaculture Plans, which analyses the main objectives and challenges of the aquaculture sector identified by 27 Member States in their plans within the overall context of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

The EU accounts for less than 2% of the volume of fish farmed worldwide, but is a world leader in terms of quality and sustainability. The rapporteur is of the opinion that the EU can and should remain world leader in those terms, but still the production needs to be increased in order to cover the EUs demand for fish to a higher degree. Currently, the EUs demand for fish is only met by EU aquaculture (10%), the rest comes from EU fisheries (30%) and 60% is imported from third countries. The rapporteur believes that it is possible to increase the EU aquaculture without lowering standards and by keeping quality and sustainability. In order to use the enormous potential of the aquaculture sector, the complexity of administration, such as for licenses, authorizations and environmental analysis (i.e. impact or monitoring studies) should be lowered and put into relation to the request to have certainty for investments in this sector and to give the EU market a chance to be more competitive. Investments, whether in research, men power, new farms or other areas in the aquaculture sector, the EU would keep influence on production standards instead of losing the market to third countries with lower standards. Furthermore, as the sector is almost entirely composed of micro enterprises, this would safe, guarantee and increase jobs.

The rapporteur is therefore of the opinion, that the EU needs to take the chance now to develop its potential in this area as a role model not only in terms of quality and sustainability but also with regard to the environment and food safety.

¹ COM(2013)0229.

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Fisheries, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Believes that the EU needs to increase its production in the aquaculture sector, while taking quality, sustainability and environmental aspects into account and being a role model in this regard;
2. Is convinced that the use of different international experience and the promotion of European best practices would strengthen aquaculture and would help all Member States to increase sustainable aquaculture production;
3. Believes that the way to a sustainable and competitive European aquaculture sector is through determining the carrying capacity of the environment, in particular in open marine farming, which is the main precondition for allocation of space and the provision of licences or permits;
4. Stresses that scientific evidence should be followed to formulate and monitor management and production practices in relation to environmental impact, sanitary and veterinary conditions and food safety;
5. Calls for the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to launch an EU-wide information campaign for consumers and businesses on aquaculture in general and in particular on the differences between the high and comprehensive standards on the European market and the ones required of imported goods;
6. Believes that investments are necessary in order to use the enormous potential of the aquaculture sector, and calls therefore for an increase in funding for research, innovation and quality-orientated, sustainable production projects.