

**Question for oral answer O-000282/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

Subject: European aquaculture

European fish resources are up to 90 % overfished, therefore European fish consumption is highly dependent on import from, and fisheries agreements with, third countries. One important solution has been the expansion of aquaculture, within as well as outside the European Union. Today, nearly one in five fish eaten in Europe is raised in aquaculture.

In its proposal for a Reform of the CFP from 13 July 2011, the Commission points to the insufficient development of aquaculture in the Union as one of the main problems of the current CFP, and qualifies aquaculture as a contribution to food security and employment. Nonetheless, in the same proposal the Commission does not provide any mention of the necessity of qualitative criteria with regard to aquaculture.

1. As general unanimity exists with regard to the importance of aquaculture, will the Commission guarantee sufficient and easy-to-access funds to enable the development of sustainable aquaculture?
2. Taking into account that:
 - aquaculture is of shared competence between the Member States and the EU, and
 - non-binding Union strategic guidelines will form the foundation for multiannual national strategic plans,how can general qualitative criteria, which take into account the social and ecological impact such as contamination of ground water, be ensured throughout the Union? How can the Commission ensure that Member States do not fall short of Union standards?
3. While welcoming the proposal on the establishment of Advisory Councils for Aquaculture, how is the European Parliament enabled to influence the process?
4. The majority of fish raised in aquaculture belong to carnivorous species. What measures could be employed to guarantee that their feeding is appropriate and does not have a detrimental impact on wild fish, especially concerning their breeding habits? Is the Commission aware of the fact that carnivorous fish are increasingly being fed crop plants foreign to their natural diets? Does the Commission anticipate any health risks as a result of this for the fish and/or the consumer?
5. Fish from aquaculture is also imported from countries where European standards, i.e. ecological standards or animal well-being, do not necessarily or effectively apply. What measures are being taken to assure European consumers that their fish are farmed in acceptable circumstances?

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