

**Question for written answer E-001837/2023
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Annika Bruna (ID)

Subject: Developing aquaponics in Europe

Aquaponics is a method which combines fish farming with plant cultivation. It is, in other words, a blend of aquaculture and hydroponics.

Aquaponics systems can be set up in a number of ways: one example is growing crops on floating rafts, where their roots are immersed in filtered water, and can thus absorb the nutrients contained in fish waste. Another method uses a closed water circuit, whereby crops are placed in growbeds that are filled with clay pebbles and irrigated with water used in fish farming

Because they are small-scale, aquaponics systems could be set up on the outskirts, or even within, urban areas, with a view to creating short food-supply chains. Aquaponics could also feed remote island communities that are located either off the European mainland or overseas. Moreover, aquaponics would significantly reduce fertiliser use, and require considerably less water than conventional agriculture.

However, because the plants are not grown in soil, aquaponics is not certified as a form of organic agriculture. In addition, significant sums must be invested to set up aquaponics systems.

1. Does the Commission not think that aquaponics and hydroponics deserve organic certification?
2. Because aquaponics could lead to considerable water savings, does the Commission think that this method could be eligible for funding from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund?

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