



## MAC ADVICE

# Contingency Plan for Ensuring Food Supply and Food Security

Brussels, 28 May 2021

### 1. Background

As determined by the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy, the European Commission is developing a Contingency Plan for Ensuring Food and Food Security. Under DG AGRI and DG MARE, an expert group is working on this initiative.

According to the corresponding Roadmap, the plan will be activated when there is a crisis that affects the entire or part of the food system in the EU and puts food security within the EU in danger. The plan will include the creation of a coordinated crises preparedness and response mechanism. The Commission will draw on the lessons learned from past crises, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in developing the contingency plan. The Commission will coordinate this response, with the involvement of Member States. The Market Advisory Council (MAC) previously adopted advice on the Roadmap<sup>1</sup>, welcoming the creation of a mechanism to enhance coordination at EU level and development of a set of broad guidelines and recommendations to improve coordination at EU and Member State level.

The present advice aims to contribute to work of the expert group, while also taking into account the questions raised by the Commission's public targeted consultation, by highlighting key areas and risks to be considered in the plan<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The mentioned advice was adopted on 22 January 2021 and is available online: <https://marketac.eu/en/mac-advice-food-supply-contingency-plan/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/european-commission-seeks-feedback-future-plan-ensure-food-supply-and-food-security-times-crisis-2021-mar-01\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/european-commission-seeks-feedback-future-plan-ensure-food-supply-and-food-security-times-crisis-2021-mar-01_en)

## 2. Recommendations

The MAC believes that, in work of the expert group and in the development of the Contingency Plan for Ensuring Food Supply and Food Security, the Commission should take into account:

- a) The recommendations put forward in the Advice on the Roadmap on the Contingency Plan for Ensuring Food Supply and Food Security, including:
  - i. The role of the seafood supply chain in ensuring continued seafood supply and contributed to food security in the EU as well as in the overall food supply when there is a crisis;
  - ii. The development and implementation of public support measures in relation to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, in line with previous advice;
  - iii. Proceed with the creation of a permanent forum, as a mechanism to achieve coordination at EU level, where food supply chain stakeholders should be represented and where the MAC could advantageously represent the seafood supply chain;
  - iv. Implement the considerations mentioned in the Roadmap on an effective EU food crisis preparedness and response mechanism;
  - v. Proceeding with the development of a set of broad guidelines and recommendations to improve coordination at EU and Member State level, which should ensure adequate communication with national authorities and seafood operators on available support measures, while also guaranteeing the proper functioning of the EU's Internal Market;
- b) The need to maintain all parts of the supply chain operational, including access to raw materials and other inputs, processing capacity or ability to take and transform materials into consumer ready products, routes to market, transport and logistics, and technology and support;

- c) In relation to access to raw material,
  - i. Systemic risks connected to climate change, such as depletion of oxygen levels in seas, which affects the food chains within the sea, and the warming of the oceans, which affects the movement and migration of fish stocks;
  - ii. Anthropogenic hazards, such as overfishing and pollution (plastic, chemical or agricultural runoffs from land, etc.);
  - iii. Geopolitical risks, such as protectionism, trade sanctions, and similar measures;
- d) The EU's market very low self-sufficiency rate for fishery and aquaculture products and its excessive dependency on imports as well as the restricted scope to increase domestic supply, even with the best conservation policies, and the short to mid-term capacity of the aquaculture sector, which translates into the seafood market's particular vulnerability to the dynamics of global supply chains;
- e) The role of globally dominant actors, such as China, as global hubs for container traffic and as processing countries with significant capacity and exponentially growing domestic demand for fish protein;
- f) Other risks factors, such as infrastructure and power supply, packaging and the flexibility of its legislation in times of crisis, workforce issues, and damage to consumer confidence due to food-safety issues, among others.