



Advice

Current functioning of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and post-2020 perspectives

Brussels, 23 March 2022

I - Background

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) corresponds to the set of rules ensuring that fishing and aquaculture activities are environmentally sustainable in the long-term and are managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits, and of contributing to the availability of food supplies. As determined by Article 49 of the CFP Regulation¹, the Commission shall report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the functioning of the CFP by 31 December 2022. In order to prepare the report, the Commission launched a targeted consultation². The deadline was 14 March 2022. The Commission will follow with in-depth discussions in April 2022 and an event before Summer 2022. The report will also build on supporting studies.

The European Parliament is preparing an own initiative report on the “state of play in the implementation of the CFP and perspectives after 2020”. The report will reflect on the implementation of the current CFP, on whether the current CFP objectives and tools are still relevant to tackle current and future challenges and on whether certain aspects should be reformed, reviewed, adapted or improved. MEP Gabriel Mato (EPP, ES) was appointed rapporteur. In order to prepare the report, Mr Mato invited members of the Advisory Councils

¹ [Regulation \(EU\) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy](#)

² <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/TargetedConsultation2022ReportCFP>



to respond to a questionnaire. A hearing took place in the EP PECH Committee on 17 March 2022 and the report will be drafted in April 2022.

The present advice draws upon market-related topics raised by the Commission's targeted and MEP Mato's questionnaire, in order to contribute to the ongoing discussions on the functioning of the Common Fisheries Policy and future perspectives. The MAC aimed to avoid considerations on topics under the competence of other Advisory Councils, such as allocation of fisheries resources. The MAC will be following the process and will remain available for further reflections and collaboration.

II – General aspects – overall functioning of the CFP (objectives)

1. Achievement of the CFP objectives

The CFP set out objectives that are relevant and very ambitious, but many have not yet been fully achieved, particularly to achieve the three pillars of sustainability. Further time and actions are needed to achieve them. In the pursuit of these objectives, it is important to recognise the role and contribution of fishery producers, aquaculture producers, processors, traders, retailers, and other interest groups.

In order to meet these objectives, sustainable and sufficient supply from EU sources has to be reached, in order to achieve an optimal utilisation of a renewable resource, in line with fisheries and aquaculture management principles, guarantee the supply of a nutritious and healthy protein, avoid a loss of market opportunities, and reduce tensions between the EU catching sector and the processing sector concerning supply needs to meet consumer demand. European processors, traders, and retailers must be able to source sustainable fish in the region with confidence rooted in the knowledge that long-term, science-based management is in place, meaning that supply is secure and stable, and stocks will be healthy in the future.

2. Specific measures introduced by the CFP Regulation to keep or make aquaculture sustainable

The CFP Regulation contributed to the sustainability of aquaculture through the following measures: establishment of an Advisory Council for Aquaculture (AAC) and an Advisory Council for Markets (MAC), improvement of work safety conditions, collection data that allows for an economic evaluation of companies and data on the evolution of employment, boosting of research and innovation in aquaculture and the cooperation between industry and scientists, establishment of financial support mechanisms (EMFAF) to achieve the objectives of the CFP priorities, and by encouraging Member States to publish multi-year plans.

Nevertheless, when discussing the results of the CFP, there are challenges connected to lack of clarity on the scope of the term “sustainability” (environmental, social, economic, or all three) and its indicators. In the view of aquaculture producers, during the 2014-2020, EU aquaculture reached a remarkable result on “environmental performance”, as a merit of the CFP and other underlying drivers, but the opportunity was missed to achieve more in the social and economic targets of the CFP. As an example, the shellfish production decreased by 1.1% each year despite the objective of development set in the regulation in 2013, mainly due to the lack of binding provisions on spatial planning and due to EU rules on water quality. While the CFP highlighted the potential of aquaculture to provide food security and food safety in the EU, there was insignificant progress during the mentioned time frame.

3. Key challenges in the implementation of the CFP

The key challenges affecting the implementation of the CFP are:

- Achieving the ideal balance between the three pillars of sustainability, namely environmental, economic, and social. The development of sustainability criteria and indicators that can serve as a benchmark remains a challenge.
- Ensuring sustainable and sufficient supply from EU sources, through the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources and the sustainable growth in aquaculture, in order to meet the growing demand for safe, healthy and quality aquatic products.
- Ensuring a global approach of the supply, which includes producers, processors, traders, and retailers, in order to ensure a clear market perspective.
- Ensuring that the interests and concerns of all relevant stakeholders, including fisheries and aquaculture producers, processors, traders, retailers, consumers, and other interest groups are adequately taken into account.
- Supporting Producer Organisations (POs) and Associations of POs. These have a crucial role to achieve the objectives of the CFP and the CMO. There should be equitable application of financial aid from these associations/federations in all Member States and the creation of new organisations. In the view of the Spanish Fishermen's Guilds ("Cofradías de Pescadores"), support should be extended to non-recognised organisations that contribute effectively to the management of production and to the marketing of their members' fishery products³. Funding for non-recognised organisations should not imply a reduction for organisations currently supported.
- Accounting for the position and difficulties of micro and small enterprises in the implementation of the CFP.

³ The Spanish Fishermen's Guilds highlight that, in line with points 5 and 10 of the preamble of Directive (EU) 2019/633 on unfair trading practices in business-to-business relationships in the agricultural and food supply chain, the CMO should not promote unfair trading practices. In the case of Regulation (EU) 2020/560 regarding specific measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in the fishery and aquaculture sector, there were entities providing food supply and keeping markets open, while facing the corresponding risks, that did not receive commercial aid. For a detailed view of the MAC's position on the impact and mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic on the seafood supply chain, please see the advice adopted on 11 December 2020: <https://marketac.eu/covid-19-pandemic/>.

- Ensuring a level-playing-field in the market, especially taking into account that the majority of products placed on the EU market are imported from third countries. This is particularly relevant when it comes to labelling rules and international trade agreements.
- Improving the quality of life in coastal and inland areas by reinforcing the socioeconomic aspects of fisheries and aquaculture production (e.g., quality of life, employment, equal access to water and space, among others).
- Establishment of a mechanism among Member States to exchange good practices as well administrative simplification, for example in the national licensing process of aquaculture farms.
- Ensuring the clear definition of the competencies and responsibility of the administrations at the regional, national and local levels, especially ensuring that political decisions are fair, transparent and consistent with the objectives of the CFP.
- Promoting digitisation in every step of the fisheries and aquaculture value chain, especially in rural areas or protected areas of the Natura 2000 network.
- Facilitating the access to up-to-date, reliable, and unified economic and social data on fisheries production, aquaculture production, and processing, from the EU and from each Member State.
- In relation to aquaculture, ensuring compliance with the objectives of the Multi-Year Plans of the Member States, including the allocation of sufficient space for production.
- Guaranteeing effective control and enforcement as well as consistent implementation of the CFP and related regulations by the Member States.
- Improving the conditions of traceability and transmission of information to the final consumers concerning all fishery and aquaculture products, regardless of their place of purchase (e.g., restaurants, markets, supermarkets and multiple retailers, online), regardless of place of capture/harvest, and regardless of their presentation, enabling

consumers to take informed purchasing decisions. It is essential to avoid mislabelling and fraud in the EU market.

- Ensuring alignment and coherence of the CFP objectives with other regulations and directives, for example on environmental conservation and animal and human health matters, as well as between different objectives within the CFP. It is important to assess the level of coherence between different EU policies when approached under a sector-by-sector basis.
- Providing, under Article 4 of the CFP Regulation, a definition of “aquaculture vessel”.

4. Implementation of the principles of good governance of the CFP

Amongst the MAC’s membership, there are different views about whether the principles of good governance of the CFP have been sufficiently implemented. The following challenges and solutions should be highlighted:

- Appropriate involvement of stakeholders, in particular Advisory Councils, at all stages – from conception to implementation of the measures: The Advisory Councils are appropriately involved - *further details provided under point 7 of the present advice*.
- Transparency of data handling and availability of data: data collection of fisheries data is mandatory, but that is not the case for data on the processing sector. The trade data is made available with a delay of 3 months, which reduces the usefulness for the businesses in the sector. It is essential that data is available, valuable and up-to-date. Furthermore, the collection of trade data (volume and price) of aquaculture products should be encouraged, facilitated and implemented by the CFP to make this market segment more transparent, and make the corresponding data available to enterprises for a better management of both production and market.

- Implementation at national/regional level: The implementation of different, but overlapping, EU regulations can be complex for national and regional public administrations. Devolving responsibility can be an obstacle to broader good governance, as it implies moving away from a level-playing-field and a consistent application of rules. At the same time, it is fundamental to account for regional specificities and to gather input directly from the field through the involvement of the relevant stakeholders. In terms of solutions, competences at regional, national and local level should be better defined. Taking into account the efforts for increased regionalisation in the CFP, the regional and local levels should be more involved in the decision-making process. Training of administration personnel in matters of fisheries and aquaculture, especially in local and regional governments, could be relevant. Public decision-making should be transparent and scientifically sound.

5. Appropriate place for fisheries and aquaculture within the organisation of the European Commission's services

In the organisation of the European Commission's services, the market of fishery and aquaculture products should be recognised as strategic and receive the appropriate attention of the political hierarchy. As demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is fundamental to recognise the role of fisheries and aquaculture in the provision of sustainable, healthy and safe food to EU consumers. The different links of the supply chain, including fishery producers, aquaculture producers, processors, traders, retailers as well as other interest groups, should be consulted in measures that affect food security in the EU. The mentioned collaboration is also crucial in relation to ongoing international matters affecting the market, such as Brexit.

The coordination of national implementation of the legislative framework applicable to the market of fishery and aquaculture products is also fundamental, for example to ensuring that

support activities are at the same level in all Member States, to avoiding loss of investment realisations under the EMFAF, to promote a level-playing-field of the products marketed in the EU, to ensure a communication to the population on the benefits of the sector (e.g., carbon footprint, ecosystem services, opportunities for rural and coastal communities, animal welfare).

6. Involvement of stakeholders in the Advisory Councils

The composition rules of the Advisory Councils are fair and useful, providing the opportunity for everyone's voice to be heard and reflected in advice. For the proper implementation of the objectives of the CFP, it is fundamental to ensure that advice adopted by the Advisory Councils is heard and considered by the EU institutions. In line with the CFP, advice is submitted to the European Commission and Member States. Nevertheless, it would be relevant to hold occasional meetings, for example once per year, with the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee, in order to ensure that MEPs understand the composition and remit of the Advisory Councils as well as to be informed on our work.

In order to ensure that the advice provided is valuable, when requesting advice on specific matters, the European Commission services should provide the Advisory Councils with the sufficient time to organise meetings, exchange with experts, discuss different views, and to draft a consensual position. While the Advisory Councils do not require their own scientists, when necessary, the Advisory Councils should have the financial means to consult independent scientific experts.

In general, the Commission should reject Advisory Council's advice that undermines the objectives of the CFP and be proactive in its collaboration, including through the sharing and encouraging of good practices and governance to promote respect and a balanced representation of stakeholders. Transparency and impartiality should be supported.

II – Landing Obligation

7. Market-related challenges in the implementation and control

From a market perspective, the supply chain and the consumer must be able to rely on the legality of the product. Therefore, it is essential to have fully documented fisheries, for example through the use of electronic traceability tools that demonstrate how the fish was caught. Furthermore, Member States and the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) must undertake the necessary controls and enforcement procedures.

When analysing the impact of the landing obligation, it is essential to analyse the availability of outlets for catches below the minimum conservation reference size that may not be used for direct human consumption as well as the socioeconomic impact of the landing obligation. More information is needed, on a regional basis, on the effects of the implementation of the landing obligation. At present, it continues to be difficult to estimate the impact of the landing obligation on the EU seafood market⁴. Taking into account the contribution of the 2013 reform to achieve a more sustainable fisheries sector, in terms of availability of supply, it is important to avoid an implementation of the landing obligation that prejudices sustainable EU operators and that might benefit less sustainable operators, including products from third countries to which official controls can be more complex to carry out⁵.

⁴ On 8 March 2021, the MAC adopted advice on the annual report on the implementation in 2020 of the landing obligation, which is available online: <https://marketac.eu/2020-implementation-of-landing-obligation/>.

⁵ The Spanish Fishermen’s Guilds, in line with the Chair of the Committee on Fisheries of the European Parliament’s support for a repeal of the landing obligation, believe that the European Commission should reconsider the measure. In their view, the measure is impossible to apply and inadequate, since it makes access to the market more difficult for their internal production, which respects high commercial standards. “Choke species” make the situation particularly difficult, since it allows production of foreign fleets to cover the market share which internal producers cannot offer. They also argue that the landing obligation increased the risk of crew accidents due to increased workload. On the other hand, the environmental NGOs recall the official position of the European Parliament expressed in the [resolution of 18 May 2021 on securing the objectives of the landing obligation under Article 15 of the Common Fisheries Policy](#).

III – Scientific Advice

8. Strengthening of advice provided by STECF

In line with the CFP, the European Commission and the Member States should follow the best available scientific advice. The STECF plays a crucial role in assisting the Commission in the field of conservation of living marine resources, but also by providing high-quality scientific information to stakeholders in general. Even though the MAC does not deal with stock assessment advice, among the reports produced by STECF, the Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet, the biennial Economic Report on the EU Aquaculture Sector, and the biennial EU Fish Processing Sector Economic Report have relevance for the work of the MAC⁶. The aim should be for continuous improvement of data collection by STECF, including through genuine collaboration with experienced operators and with local scientists and through the coverage of the entire supply chain. Member States should improve data collection and timely comply with reporting obligations, as well as follow the 2017 Data Collection Framework Regulation.

IV – Aquaculture

9. Contribution of the system of strategic coordination to the sustainable growth of EU aquaculture products in the EU market

In the view of EU producers, the system of strategic coordination, including the strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture and the multi-annual strategic plans, has been positive, but was not enough to contribute to the sustainable growth of EU aquaculture, which remains at a similar level as in 2000. The latest strategic guidelines for the development of EU aquaculture (2013 and 2021) have been the best assessments available on

⁶ On 23 September 2020, the MAC adopted advice with detailed views on data collection by STECF, which is available online: <https://marketac.eu/data-collection-by-stecf/>.

the situation and bottlenecks of the sector. The guidelines are comprehensive, sound and fit for purpose to promote a sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture. Nevertheless, the publication of the communication has not been enough incentive.

The Open Method of Coordination between the European and the Member States is appreciated and should be further implemented to effectively reach out to national (and regional) public administrations that have a say on aquaculture development but are different to the fisheries/aquaculture ministries. This extended coordination is essential for streamlining national legislation and providing guidance on the regulatory framework applicable to the sector. Aquaculture is a national competence with EU-level objectives, but the sharing of EU water bodies and the transboundary influences of aquaculture (in both production and markets) make cooperation in aquaculture governance between countries a necessity. Moreover, aquaculture has a relevant role to play in food supply and food security in the EU.

The strategic guidelines can be effective through:

- Increased focus on small-scale aquaculture, particularly the impact on micro and small enterprises, whose development should be supported.
- EU-level communication on aquaculture. The Commission should conduct, with funds under direct management, EU-wide communication campaigns alongside what the Member States could do under shared management funds.
- Undertaking the proposed actions on aquaculture research and innovation, but also addressing new knowledge fields like the relevance of microbiome, the scientific monitoring of aquaculture environmental services. Additionally, there is a need for a common methodology to measure carbon footprint at aquaculture farm level.
- Transfer of knowledge to new generations, including with the involvement of POs.

- Better promotion of aquaculture products to consumers. The European Commission’s campaign “Farmed in the EU”, echoed by some Member States, has had a limited impact on consumers. Consumers should be informed of the contributions of EU aquaculture products to meet the three pillars of sustainability.

V – External Dimension

10. Negotiations with third countries, SFPAs, sustainability of imports

Following the United Kingdom’s withdrawal of the EU, the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement entered provisionally into force and, on 11 June 2021, the MAC adopted recommendations on the matter⁷, including to assess the impact on EU operators, consider the need for additional bilateral derogations on rules of origin, review the functioning of new administrative procedures, swift adoption and allocation of the Brexit Adjustment Reserve’s support, to monitor regulatory developments and cooperate to avoid divergences, analyse the impact the impact on supply of raw material, and to clarify the functioning of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries.

When undertaking negotiations with third countries, the Commission should respect the principles of the CFP. The emphasis on reaching a compromise solution or finalising the negotiations should not translate into concessions that are harmful to the interests of the EU fishery and aquaculture operators⁸. Where relevant for the EU market of fishery and aquaculture

⁷ The detailed recommendations are available online: <https://marketac.eu/brexit/>

⁸ As an example of advice in the context of trade negotiations, please see the MAC’s advice on renegotiation of market access under the EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement, adopted on 18 October 2021: <https://marketac.eu/eu-ukraine-fta/>

products, the undertaking of biodiversity impacts assessments and the inclusion of biodiversity provisions in Free Trade Agreements should be considered⁹.

Taking into account that the EU is a deficit market for fisheries products, Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) can be considered useful thanks to the opening up of fishing grounds for EU vessels and the trade opportunities for non-EU countries to potentially export to the EU, even though it can be difficult to analyse their significance due to the lack of data on trade balances. SFPAs can contribute more widely to ensuring that the objectives of the CFP are met, particularly through additional tools to ensure sustainable value chains, capacity-building and the fight against IUU fishing¹⁰. The EU should better align the internal and external CFP dimension. Furthermore, the EU should translate the CFP objectives in all SFPAs, ensure the non-discriminatory treatment of EU fleet vis-à-vis other foreign fleet, and improve transparency beyond the sole EU fleets¹¹.

In order to ensure fair competition between operators¹², imported fishery and aquaculture products should be expected to meet the same or equivalent high sustainability standards, particularly through strengthened official controls. For the development of a sustainable food system by the entire international community, it is also important that importers, processors, retailers, and consumers have access to information on environmental, social, and economic sustainability of the products marketed in the EU. The production costs faced by operators to

⁹ On 14 April 2021, the MAC adopted advice on IUU fishing and the EU's Biodiversity for 2020 Strategy, including recommendation i) on biodiversity impact assessments and provisions: <https://marketac.eu/biodiversity-strategy/>.

¹⁰ On 9 March 2021, the MAC adopted advice with detailed views on the market and trade perspective of SFPAs, which is available online: <https://marketac.eu/evaluation-of-sustainable-fisheries-partnership-agreements/>.

¹¹ On 8 October 2021, the MAC and LDAC adopted advice on fostering the EU's leadership in reducing the detrimental impact of flags of convenience in the fishing sector, which is available online: <https://marketac.eu/flags-of-convenience/>.

¹² For detailed views on achieving a level-playing-field, please see advice on the topic adopted on 30 September 2019, which is available online: <https://marketac.eu/level-playing-field/>

meet the EU's ambitious environmental and socio-economic standards should be taken into account.

VI – EMFAF

11. Good practices and projects to achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal

In order to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal, it is essential that operators of the fishery and aquaculture sector have access to funds supporting the green transition under the EMFAF and the EU state aid rules. Unfortunately, in some Member States, the processing industry has been excluded. Under the EMFAF, taking into account its carbon footprint, the Commission should continue to support the development of sustainable production and processing methods as well as research and innovation on environmental services and the digital transition. Investments in prevention of food waste, food safety, and alternative packaging, among others are also important¹³.

The Commission and the Member States should ensure EMFAF spending is in line with the environmental and sustainability objectives of the European Green Deal. Member States should use EMFAF resources to control fishing activities, to develop sustainable aquaculture, to improve data collection, innovation and research, and finding solutions to environmental problems. Member States should provide technical assistance to artisanal fishers to access EU funds. Member States should also provide state aid and design operational plans for the EMFAF that assist the just transition of the most fuel-intensive and high-impact segments of the fleet to climate-friendly, low-impact fisheries.

¹³ For detailed views on post-2020 EU funding for fisheries and maritime sectors, see: <https://marketac.eu/emff-proposal-2/>

VII – Blue Economy

12. Synergies between different human activities at sea and the EU market of fisheries and aquaculture products

The Blue Economy encompasses a wide range of activities and the fishery and aquaculture sector is one of the main contributors, since the EU is the largest market in the world for seafood products with an estimated value of €55 billion and a volume of 12 million tons. In this context, the sector plays an important role in providing a fair standard of living for coastal communities, which are often located in rural areas where few economic alternatives exist. There must be effective coordination, coherence, synergies, and a forward-looking approach between the wide range of activities and impacts taking place in the marine environment, including with connected activities taking place in the interior, such as the commercialisation of fishery products, in order to achieve the Green Deal objectives. Public authorities should promote the valuable synergies between different industries sharing the maritime space. It is also important to ensure the transfer of information and knowledge on the potential synergies through different institutions.

As highlighted in the Multi-AC advice concerning the Sustainable Blue Economy¹⁴ and to account for the supply provided by the fisheries sector, including the small-scale fisheries sector, it is desirable to take a coordinated approach and standards to include in the environmental impact assessments the relative weight of each human induced economic activity. Furthermore, to achieve a level-playing-field among Blue Economy operators and to ensure compliance with international standards, the EU should strengthen the application and coordination of ex-ante and ex-post assessments of Blue Economy projects and strategies including environmental, social and economic impact assessment.

¹⁴ On 9 December 2020, LDAC, MAC, MEDAC, PELAC, NSAC, NWWAC, BSAC, BLSAC, SWWAC, and CCRUP adopted detailed advice on the Sustainable Blue Economy: <https://marketac.eu/sustainable-blue-economy/>

VIII – Clean oceans at international level

13. Impact of pollution on operators of the seafood supply chain

In terms of environmental characteristics, in comparison with other protein sources, fisheries and aquaculture products generally have a lower carbon footprint, require little terrestrial surface and freshwater, and benefit from the biological efficiency of aquatic animals¹⁵.

The environmental impact of aquaculture production in the EU is very limited due to the fact that setting any new aquaculture farm operation requires strict impact assessments and posterior surveillance plans. Shellfish producers highlight that the development of sustainable aquaculture requires that specific states of water quality are reached before new farms are set up and begin to put new products onto the market. Therefore, these specificities should be accounted for through a clearer binding link between the CFP and the EU's environmental and health legislation. The CFP should ensure a strengthening of the collaboration between the various Member States' services and agencies responsible for the different relevant pieces of legislation.

It is essential to have clear communication on marine pollution, the impact of the different sectors of the supply chain, and the potential human and animal health risks, in comparison with the known nutritional benefits of fishery and aquaculture products.

The involvement of the seafood sector in the preservation of the environment and, in particular of the maritime ecosystem, is essential. The current context of emissions from land-based activities and from vessels, of expected increase in the average temperature of the oceans, and of eutrophication will put fish populations and marine biodiversity at risk. The sector expresses commitment to reversing this situation, in order to protect the environment, ensure food

¹⁵ For detailed advice on the health and environmental benefits of fishery and aquaculture products, please see the advice on the topic adopted on 8 October 2021: <https://marketac.eu/health-environmental-value-of-seafood/>.

security, and to preserve a way of life and business, highlighting the involvement of fishers in projects for the collection of marine litter and management of waste deposits, which should continue to be financed to ensure their effectiveness. As exemplified in previous advice concerning plastics,¹⁶ marine pollution is of significant concern for European consumers, driving their behaviour and impacting the fisheries and aquaculture supply chain.

In order to reduce the impact of pollution on the oceans, it is necessary to continuously improve processes through the promotion of training of operators about the practices in all areas of the company, including production, cleaning and disinfection, mobility, energy, packaging, waste, etc. The CFP should promote initiatives that improve training, and that allow improving information and its transmission, as well as the awareness of the final consumers. There are also actions in innovation to be implemented, such as pollution measures protocols (e.g., microplastic detection standardised method).

IX – Social and Economic Dimensions

14. Accounting for socio-economic considerations

Socio-economic considerations are presently not sufficiently taken into account. In relation to both EU and imported products, it is fundamental to continue to promote the ratification and implementation of the relevant ILO conventions. Operators and consumers should be aware of the consequences of policies, including information on employment, working conditions of producers, wage conditions, age, human rights, among others. The Commission should promote fair trade, including through due diligence requirements. In order to have the necessary transmission of information along the chain to implement these, it is also necessary to progress with the mandatory implementation of CATCH. Socio-economic considerations should cover both

¹⁶ <https://marketac.eu/plastics-and-seafood-supply-chain/>

traditional sale channels and online sales. Economic competitiveness must be promoted, and economic analysis should be done systematically before policy decisions are taken.

X – Climate change

15. Challenges faced by operators of the seafood supply chain

According to scientific consensus, the impacts of climate change will continue and intensify in the coming years and decades. Therefore, it is necessary to mitigate the contribution of the sector to global greenhouse gas emissions, to adapt operations to changed conditions, to enhance the resilience of the environment, and to ensure that the ocean continues to absorb and sequester vast quantities of carbon. Throughout the entire supply chain, operators must reduce emissions, including to shift to alternative and renewable energy, more sustainable transportation, optimisation of logistic processes, reduction of packaging generation, among other efforts to reduce the carbon footprint.

The EMFAF should include funding to promote a sustainable fishery and aquaculture products supply chain. As an example, in terms of fisheries production, operators face displacement of species and increase in water level. Under the EMFAF, there should be sufficient funding for fishers and other relevant stakeholders to participate in scientific projects to reduce the emissions of their activities and to adapt to climate change. The European Commission should consider the need for increased flexibility and responsiveness in fisheries governance to account for changed conditions – including geographical shifts in stock distribution and potential conflicts with neighbouring countries. In order to fill climate gaps in the CFP, the Commission should also use other available legal instruments, such as the upcoming Action Plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems.

In terms of aquaculture production, operators face water temperature changes, generating increasingly marked seasonal mortalities and fertility problem for certain species. Further research is needed on the biology of the farmed species, diversification of the farmed species, and on the adaptation of production systems.

XI – Post-2020

16. Further efforts needed

The CFP was reformed in 2013 with a vision of transforming EU fisheries and achieving full sustainability. The Basic Regulation's strengths are its legally binding objectives with clear timelines and its high level of ambition which sets the EU as a worldwide reference and leader in fisheries management. The CFP also allows to exert global influence via the policy's external dimension and its normative soft power. In the long-term, the CFP has improved the state of many fish populations and contributed to increasing general profitability of the EU fleets.

The CFP generally remains a good legal framework, but improved implementation, control, and enforcement are needed. In general, the main focus should be on the proper and full implementation of the CFP and on legal certainty, in order meet the established objectives, with the involvement of the operators of the fisheries and aquaculture supply chain and other relevant stakeholders. At the same time, a wide debate is relevant, in order to discuss the future of the CFP, proceed with adaptations based on lessons learnt, and exchange and promotion of best practices. The European Commission's report on the functioning of the CFP must guide better implementation of the policy, plus include a clear reference to climate action, since there are already tools available in the CFP and in other legal instruments to address implementation gaps.

As outlined in Article 34, the CFP Regulation includes provisions to promote the development of sustainable aquaculture activities. Therefore, when the opportunity arises, the Commission



should amend the title of the Regulation, in order to better distinguish this specific objective: “Common Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy”. Such an amendment would be in coherence with the welcomed change from “European Maritime and Fisheries Fund” to “European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund”.