



Press Release

Market Advisory Council (MAC)

Recommendations on European Year of Skills, especially the needs of the fisheries and aquaculture sector

Brussels, 5 April 2023

The **Market Advisory Council (MAC)** delivered recommendations to the **European Commission** on the 2023 **European Year of Skills**, an EU initiative to stimulate lifelong learning, empowering people and companies to contribute to the green and digital transitions, supporting innovation and competitiveness. To meet these objectives, the Commission will promote upskilling and reskilling opportunities and organise events and awareness campaigns across the EU.

According to MAC members, the European Commission should:

- **Set-up a roadmap to address the significant recruitment difficulties faced by the sector**, such as geographical distribution in coastal and rural areas, competition from other activities, gaps in skills, salary levels, working conditions, training costs, vocational training, attractiveness of the sector, dependency on workers from third countries.
- **Ensure lifelong learning, upskilling and reskilling** via the development of a cross-sector scheme of accreditation for existing skills, the promotion of upskilling and reskilling opportunities, formulation and adaptation of training, identification of career paths, communication campaigns, and investment in vocational training centres.
- **Promote awareness of skills relevant to the sector**, such as safety on board and at aquaculture farms, sustainability in production, fair business practices and international contracts, products valorisation, digital skills, maintenance of production tools, and business management, marketing and communication.
- **Promote the attractiveness of the sector** via measures for better awareness on the jobs, removal of the negative image of the sector, better working conditions, increased availability of housing and transport, development of production practices (automatization, robotisation, digitisation) to remove arduous aspects inherent to the professional activities.

- **Engagement of fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders**, including to increase awareness on the Pact for Skills (flagship action to engage public and private organisations), to design and implement training, upskilling and reskilling measures, and for higher attractiveness of the sector among the younger generation and other potential workers.
- **Facilitate access and take-up of available EU funding and assistance mechanisms** (e.g., European Social Fund Plus, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, EMFAF Blue Careers), including through clarification sessions, improved readability of the mechanisms, better communication – dissemination in the national languages of each Member State, and identification of liaison officers in companies and sector associations.

Pierre Commère, Chair of Working Group 2 (EU Markets), highlighted: *“Generational renewal remains a challenge for the fisheries and aquaculture value chain. Therefore, the declaration of 2023 as the European Year of Skills provides an opportunity for the European Commission and the EU Member States to tackle this problem as well as other recruitment difficulties and gaps in skills. Members are hopeful that this initiative will lead to increased engagement with stakeholders, ensuring easier access and use of public investment funds for skills development”.*

Full advice: <https://marketac.eu/european-year-of-skills/>

Information note about the MAC:

As foreseen by Article 43 of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation, the Market Advisory Council (MAC) provides advice to the European Commission and EU Member States on the market of fishery and aquaculture products. The MAC is composed of organisations representing the entire value chain (primary producers, processors, traders, suppliers, retailers, trade unions) and other interest groups (environmental and development NGOs). The MAC is co-funded by the EU.