



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE/A.1

**Subject: Recommendations of the Market Advisory Council concerning the European Year of Skills**

Dear Ms Bermudez,

Thank you for your email of 31 March 2023 sharing the Market Advisory Council's views on the issue of skills development in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors and your relevant recommendations as regards the European Year of Skills 2023, kicking off on 9 May.

The designation of 2023 as the European Year of Skills is our commitment to address skills shortages in the EU and ensure socially fair, green and digital transitions. The Commission – together with the European Parliament, the EU Member States, social partners, employment services, chambers of commerce, industry, education and training providers, workers and companies – will aim at stepping up and advancing skills development on the ground. In this sense, your recommendations could find fertile ground for putting forward those appropriate measures that will promote skills development according to the identified needs of the sector(s).

For the European Year of Skills, the EU will build on many ongoing initiatives, including through the funding and assistance mechanisms you refer to in your letter. In our line of work, we will launch this year a foresight project on 'Fishers of the Future', to forecast the crucial role of fishers in society. On the basis of qualitative interviews on the ground, the project will focus on people and identify the trends, opportunities and threats that determine the attractiveness of fisheries jobs.

In addition, we already address upskilling and reskilling through a dedicated EMFAF strand (Blue Careers Call), in the context of dedicated projects run under the Erasmus+ programme and through many other instruments/projects/initiatives financed under the direct or shared management part of the Fund. In their national programmes, Member States have committed to enhance skills in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, and in local coastal areas. Member States should now select projects on the ground. The Commission will continuously monitor implementation to ensure that the targets set by the Member States in their programmes are met. In this sense, I encourage you to bring

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your recommendations forward, to the attention of national authorities, and help them design appropriate measures that meet your needs.

Developing the right skills is furthermore essential for enabling the energy transition in the EU fisheries and aquaculture sector, thereby ensuring its long-term resilience and sustainability. The recent Communication on the Energy Transition in EU fisheries and aquaculture recognises skills development, through upskilling, reskilling, vocational training, as one of its main four energy transition-enabling sets of actions. As such, it features as part of the stakeholders' dialogue under this new Energy Transition Partnership.

Your members also have a role to play in the European Year of Skills (EYS), through participation in events and conferences on skills that will be organized throughout the EU to strengthen synergies between stakeholders. This can be a cost-effective way for MAC members to give more visibility to their sectoral issues, and organise and register their own events on skills on the EYS platform. More information is available from DG EMPL or national coordinators (list available on the website of the European Year of Skills).

Finally, let me urge you to take all appropriate steps to encourage your members to sign up to the Charter of the Pact for Skills and, most importantly, to form a large scale fisheries & aquaculture skills partnership under the Pact for Skills, under the relevant ecosystem and following the example of the already established ones. This will be instrumental to successfully represent your commitment towards the growth and sustainability of this sector based on well-trained and well-skilled operators, ensure stakeholders engagement and ramp up skilling measures necessary for the sector(s) to thrive. My services have been already engaged in presentations, in various instances and in many of your recent meetings, of the benefits of establishing such large-scale skills partnership for the sector(s) and for the benefit of their sustainable growth.

Let me thank you again for your valuable contribution, which will certainly be taken into consideration when preparing strategies for upskilling and reskilling facilitation in the blue economy, enabled through our programmes.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact the functional mailbox of the Advisory Councils [MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu](mailto:MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu).

Yours sincerely,

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