

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000455/25
to the Commission
Anna Maria Cisint (Pfe), Paolo Borchia (Pfe), Carlo Ciccio (ECR)
(3 February 2025)

Subject: Impact of Norwegian aquaculture on the development of EU aquaculture

The EU has always been Norway's main export market for fishery products, especially farmed Atlantic salmon, which has made it the largest competitor in our internal market.

Norway's aquaculture industry, one of the largest in the world, does not always portray a positive image of fish farming. Moreover, as 75% of EU aquaculture firms are micro and small enterprises, it is far from being a reference sector for technological innovation and sustainable development.

In view of the above:

1. What concrete actions will the Commission take to support micro and small aquaculture firms in the EU — especially in terms of technological innovation and sustainability — to reduce their competitive disadvantage in relation to Norway?
2. Norway is a major exporter in the market, yet its aquaculture is often criticised for unsustainable practices. What steps will the Commission therefore take to promote stricter sustainability standards for fishery imports in order to ensure a more level playing field for EU producers?

Submitted: 3.2.2025

Answer given by Mr Kadis on behalf of the European Commission
(13 May 2025)

1. Member States can offer support to EU aquaculture companies, including on productive investments or innovation under their European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) programmes. EU aquaculture companies can also benefit from funding opportunities under other EU programmes ⁽¹⁾.
2. Strict controls ensure that imported food adheres to high EU standards for consumer protection and safety. The high standards on environmental sustainability applicable to EU aquaculture, as well as its capacity to provide food closer to the consumer, can provide EU aquaculture products a competitive edge over products from third countries. To this end, consumers need to be informed of the origin of aquaculture products, as well as the advantages of EU aquaculture production.

The regulation on the common market Organisation in fishery and aquaculture products (CMO Regulation) ⁽²⁾ ensures that consumers receive clear mandatory information on the origin of aquaculture products. This allows consumers to differentiate between EU aquaculture products and imported ones. In the context of the evaluation of the CMO Regulation, the Commission will assess whether the existing labelling rules provide consumers with adequate information, and whether additional requirements are needed. Under the revised Fisheries Control Regulation ⁽³⁾, the control of the supply chain and traceability requirements of fishery and aquaculture products is enhanced, including imported products from third countries ⁽⁴⁾.

The Commission has recently launched an EU-wide communication campaign on EU aquaculture, to increase EU citizens and consumer awareness on the benefits of EU aquaculture ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁾ See EU funding opportunities available for aquaculture: https://aquaculture.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2024-03/AAM_WP4_EU%20Funding%20Opportunities_Background%20Paper.pdf.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1379/oj/eng>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2842/oj/eng>.

⁽⁴⁾ Operators will be obliged to digitally record and transmit traceability data for fresh and frozen fisheries and aquaculture products by 10 January 2026. By 2029, this obligation will extend to prepared and preserved products.

⁽⁵⁾ EU Aquaculture — We work for you with passion — European Union: https://eu-aquaculture.campaign.europa.eu/index_en.