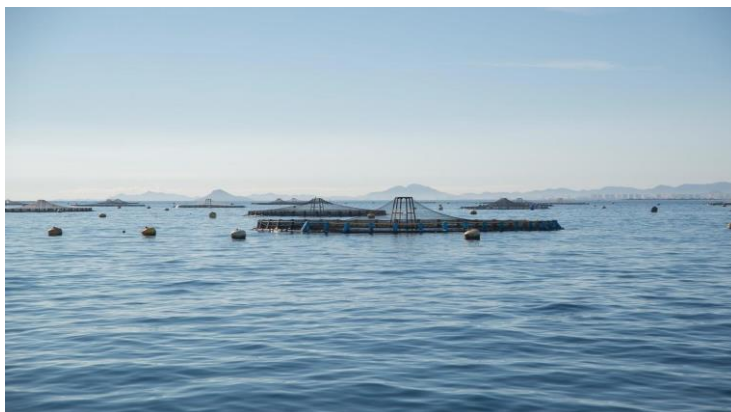




## Hybrid Event: The need for effective protection of shellfish waters – Ensuring access and quality of space



**Tuesday 12 July 2022, 17:30 – 19:00 CEST European  
Parliament, Brussels, Room: ASP 5G1 / online**

**Hybrid event hosted by MEP Pierre Karleskind**

**Chair of the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament, and  
Co-Chair of the ‘Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture’ Working Group of the European Parliament  
Intergroup on ‘Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development’**

### **Speakers:**

- **MEP Pierre Karleskind**
- **Philippe Le Gal**, President, CNC France
- **Veronica Manfredi**, Director of Dr. C on ‘Zero Pollution’, DG ENV, European Commission
- **Dr. Aad Smaal**, Professor and Chair of the Sustainable Shellfish Culture at Wageningen University
- **David Bassett**, Secretary General, EATiP
- **Bruno Guillaumie**, Secretary General, European Molluscs’ Producers Association (EMPA)

## Welcome Remarks

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***MEP Pierre Karleskind***

**“Aquaculture is a real proxy of the quality of the environment”**

**MEP Mr. Karleskind** emphasised the **crucial link between economic activities and the quality of the environment to achieve all the EU objectives**. In this regard, he stated that *“aquaculture is a real proxy of the quality of the environment”*. Moving on, he underlined that the EU depends on 70% of the importation of seafood and hence is far from being autonomous. Furthermore, he stated that the EU needs to be able to supply sustainable aquatic food and the need to obtain high environmental standards, particularly regarding the quality of the EU waters and animal welfare.

## Interventions

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***Philippe Le Gal, President, CNC France***

**“Shellfish farming needs better water quality so that the shellfish’s benefits can provide a solid basis for tomorrow’s food security in Europe”**

**Mr. Le Gal** stated that first, **shellfish has health benefits for the consumer**. As a result, shellfish account for more than 50% of EU aquaculture products. Second, **shellfish farming has a positive impact on the environment** which contributes to the EU objective of climate neutrality by 2030. Third, the social-economic impact on the coast. To conclude, Mr. Le Gal stated that *“The slow but steady degradation of Europe's coastal waters is a threat to the shellfish industry and therefore a crucial challenge for the European Union. Shellfish farming needs better water quality so that the shellfish’s benefits can provide a solid basis for tomorrow's food security in Europe”*.

*Veronica Manfredi, Director of Dir. C on 'Zero Pollution', DG ENV, European Commission*

**“There is a need for further guidance for the Member States for spatial planning and access to water for marine aquaculture”**

Ms. Manfredi stated that **the current war in Ukraine magnified the need for abundant and safe resources to water and food for a strategic economy**. Moving on, she stated the relevant frameworks and initiatives to improve the EU’s objectives in this regard. She specifically underlined the recent proposal to revise the industrial emission directive for water pollution. Moving on, **she stated the relevance of the strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and more competitive EU aquaculture** which recognises the importance of shellfish production and environmental services. Moving on, stated that *“there is a need for further guidance for the Member States for spatial planning and access to water for marine aquaculture”*.

## Panel Discussion

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*Dr. Aad Smaal, Professor and Chair of the Sustainable Shellfish Culture at Wageningen University*

**“There is a need for the EU to create specific space for shellfish culture but also to promote synergies of shellfish culture with other functions”**

Dr. Smaal stated that *“there is a need for the EU to create specific space for shellfish culture but also to promote synergies of shellfish culture with other functions”*. Indeed, he stated that space is limited for shellfish culture, in particular in the EU aims to increase its production.

*David Bassett, Secretary General, EATiP*

**“Regional collaboration plays an important role in fostering regional sharing of best practices”**

Mr. Bassett affirmed that **guaranteeing access to sites and water quality are the key issues to address**. To do so, innovative practices shall be exchanged and shared between production regions and the Member States, particularly regarding water quality management. Mr. Bassett stated that *“regional collaboration plays an important role in fostering regional sharing of best*

*practices*". Moving on, he emphasised **the necessity to apply research and innovation to small-scale businesses**.

**Bruno Guillaumie, Secretary General, European Molluscs' Producers Association (EMPA)**

**"Less than 1% of the EU coastal water is occupied for the production of shellfish water"**

Mr. Guillaumie emphasised that *"less than 1% of the EU coastal water is occupied for the production of shellfish water"*. Mr. Guillaumie called for **effective production of shellfish farming including better access to marine space**. In this regard, he presented options to improve it based on the Advisory Aquaculture Council (AAC) recommendation of 2019 where the Commission agreed to discuss the establishment of new guidelines or the revision of the existing ones. Moreover, in June 2020, the AAC published a new recommendation and proposed to integrate the first option into the guidance for 2019. The Commission accepted 95% of the recommendation but not this proposal. As of today, the bathing water quality is currently reviewed to extend its scope to shellfish waters and shellfish beds. As a last idea, Mr. Guillaumie underlined that **MEPs could consider a European Parliament resolution suggesting that the Member States consider shellfish as marine protected areas with strong protection**.

## Q&A Session

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On behalf of the EP Intergroup, **moderator Mr. Ilias Grampas** addressed the following question to all panellists: *"what would be your key takeaways from today's discussion?"* **Dr. Smaal** answered that the EU needs concrete regulations to achieve spatial planning coupled with marine protected areas. **Mr. Bassett** recalled that aquatic food is a solution for the food challenges in the EU while supporting the delivery of the EU environmental obligations and economic and regional objectives. Finally, **Mr. Guillaumie** stated that the EU needs to ensure water quality and shellfish farming protection. In reaction, **Ms. Manfredi** stated that **reviewing the WFD to offer legal status for shellfish activities is not the right path** as human activities to be carried out in a sustainable manner are already regulated in the fishery and aquaculture fields. However, she rather reflected on the need to deal with the

implementation. Moving on, she reaffirmed the eagerness of the Commission to reduce plastic pollution and its work on the framework of the implementation of the circular economy. In this regard, **Mr. Guillaumie** emphasised the need not only to focus on human health but also on animal health and the quality of the EU's products.