



## Oceans in climate negotiations: What role for blue foods?



**Thursday 17 November 2022, 09:30 – 10:30 CEST European Parliament, Brussels, Room: ASP 5G1 / online**

**Hybrid event hosted by MEP Pierre Karleskind**

**Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Fisheries (PECH)**

**Speakers:**

- **MEP Pierre Karleskind**, Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Fisheries (PECH)
- **Vera Agostini**, Deputy Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO): “State of play of UN climate negotiations – implications for fisheries and aquaculture”
- **Isabelle Garzon**, Advisor for International Affairs, DG MARE, European Commission
- **Yannis Pelekanakis**, FEAP: “Driving the successful adaptation of European fish farming to climate change and its contribution to low-carbon diets”
- **Dr. Raphaëla le Gouvello**, Expert, IUCN Ecosystem-based Aquaculture Specialist Group: “Making aquaculture work for conservation, climate and food security”
- **Daniel Voces de Onáindi**, Managing Director, Europêche: “Decarbonizing the fishing industry – barriers ahead and how to overcome them”

## Welcome Remarks

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***MEP Pierre Karleskind***

**"We need to fish in ways that respect the resources and marine foods"**

**MEP Mr. Karleskind** celebrated that oceans have entered the **climate negotiations at COP27**. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the carbon footprint for marine food is lower than that of meat. MEP Mr. Karleskind believes that in order to support sustainable fishing, the oceans must be given **more Co2 storage facilities** and that they should therefore be healthy. Additionally, it was said that fishing and aquaculture should be organised in such a way, that they protect the environment through **common benefits**. MEP Mr. Karleskind calls for **cooperation between NGO's, stakeholders, public authorities as well as researchers**. He especially highlighted the need to **combine academic research with knowledge of local populations**.

## Panel discussion

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***Vera Agostini, Deputy Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)***

**"We hope that this COP will lead to more guidance and a concrete workplan on how to integrate the ocean under the UNFCCC processes"**

According to Mrs. Agostini, there is an **increasing awareness** of countries on the **nexus between the ocean and climate change**. She gave a brief **overview** of the **milestones** that were reached through **global processes**. She expressed her hope for the developments during COP27. She then proceeded with a presentation of FAO's work with special attention to the adaptation program, adaptation guidance through an adaptation toolbox and mitigation. Lastly, Mrs. Agostini highlighted key entry points in FAO's approach to climate negotiations with regards to aquatic food.

*Isabelle Garzon, Advisor for International Affairs, DG MARE, European Commission*

**“Sustainability leads to profitability”**

**Mrs. Garzon** centered her intervention around what the EU is trying to do. She summarised this in three points: firstly, the EU has set carbon **neutrality by 2050 as a target** for Europe as a whole, which means the **fisheries and aquaculture sector should be decarbonized**. Mrs. Garzon added that in this context a Commission initiative is expected. Secondly, Mrs. Garzon stated that **nature should be at the core of action** – especially with regards to carbon uptake and storage through healthy oceans. Here, she referred to the **Nature Restoration Law**. She stated that COVID-19 and the war on Ukraine have uncovered **new food security issues**. Taking all of this into account, Mrs. Garzon considered that only **effectively managed fisheries** and **unlocking the potential of sustainable aquaculture** can contribute to sustainable food systems and that **more should be done**. Finally, it was stated that policies should be science based and that **eco-system based fisheries management** is the way.

*Yannis Pelekanakis, FEAP: “Driving the successful adaptation of European fish farming to climate change and its contribution to low-carbon diets”*

**“We need a competitive licensing framework and measures at farmer and government level in order to maintain the environmental and financial sustainability to provide sustainable food”**

**Mr. Pelekanakis** shared that climate change is expected to be responsible for **significant changes in the availability and trade of aquatic food products**, with implications on social and economic levels. It was stated that these consequences will be determined by the sector’s innovation and adaptation capacities, spatial planning, and governance, as well as responsible consumer choices. Mr. Pelekanakis expects **direct impacts** on both **production and market levels** for aquaculture. In terms of **adaptation measures**, understanding **aquaculture’s dependence on the natural environment** and a **reliable assessment of climate impacts** are vital at local and global levels. Initiatives can be taken by fish farmers as well as public administration. As for mitigation, Mr. Pelekanakis joined MEP Karleskind in saying that “aquatic species production has a lower carbon footprint than terrestrial livestock”. He concluded by stating that actions are to be taken both at a farm level as well as on a sectorial level.

*Dr. Raphaëla Le Gouvello, Expert, IUCN Ecosystem-based Aquaculture Specialist Group: “Making aquaculture work for conservation, climate and food security”*

“Aquaculture will play an important role in providing sea food, inventing new blue and healthy which should be done through an integrated approach based on regional initiatives”

Dr. Le Gouvello, on behalf of IUCN, stated that there is a **need to reconcile nature conservation and sustainable development with an aquaculture component**. According to Dr. Le Gouvello, the IUCN programme together with EBCD and other actors have been able to explore **synergies between aquaculture conservation and coastal communities**, which led to full on case studies. In parallel with the studies, Dr. Le Gouvello stated that IUCN has been exploring the **Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions** as opportunity to further examine the sustainability of aquaculture systems – as the Nature-based Solutions (NbS) system is gaining momentum. Furthermore, she referred to the 8 criteria used in the NbS system. Lastly, Dr. Le Gouvello mentioned the **IMTA system** – which she briefly illustrated with an example of Valliculture in Italy.

*Daniel Voces de Onáindi, Managing Director, Europêche: “Decarbonizing the fishing industry – barriers ahead and how to overcome them”*

“We are in a nature crisis, but also in a food security crisis”

Mr. Voces de Onáindi started his intervention with a reminder regarding wild-caught fish, stating that it is the **healthiest form of animal protein** and that it has a **low carbon footprint**. Secondly, he mentioned that the ocean is facing various threats such as an **increasing sea surface temperature and sea level rise**. As for the carbon emission challenges for fishing, Mr. Voces explained that scientists are advocating for a **transition towards zero emission energy sources**, improved vessel design and a reduction in time spent at sea, among other changes. It was stated that investments are being made in this context, which was illustrated with examples of energy efficiency measures as well as technical progress. Furthermore, Mr. Voces shared Europêche’s initiatives with regards to the circular economy. He then provided an overview of the limitations Europêche faces when it comes to alternatives to fuel oil, as well as limitations on fishing capacity in the EU and policy and technology challenges.

## Q&A Session

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The Q&A started off with a question on *how the EU nature restoration law is interfering with the common fisheries policies (CFP) and how they should be revised* in that regard. Mr. Voces replied that there has to be a **balance between the environment and economic and social aspects**, adding that the **possible impact of the CFP should be analysed** – he emphasised the need for data for this comparison. Lastly, he stated that the current climate and food crises are proof that the EU should not depend on third countries for food production. Mrs. Garzon chimed in saying that the Commission will propose an **action plan on biodiversity and fisheries**, geared at proposing ways of **compatibilizing** the interaction between marine area protection and restoration and fishing activities. The second attendee also showed concerns regarding the EU Nature Restoration Law and the CFP – by questioning *how the upcoming action plan complements the EU Nature Restoration Law and asking whether Article 11 will be addressed*. Mrs. Garzon took the floor stating she **could not disclose the content of the action plan**, as it has not yet been adopted by the Commission. She did mention that **Article 11 will indeed be under review**. A third attendee inquired about *Europêche’s position to the disturbance of carbon stores in the seabed, in NPA’s and beyond*. Mr. Voces replied that there is **not enough science about carbon sinks**, adding that they cannot operate based on general statements. He therefore emphasised the **need for a specific scientific study**. Lastly, Mr. Grampas asked the speakers what they would tweet about the event. In reply, Mrs. Garzon reaffirmed the need to roll up our sleeves to accelerate the process. Mr. Pelekanakis, called for a more competitive licensing framework and measures at farm and government level in order to maintain the environmental and financial sustainability. Dr. Le Gouvello advocated for a better understanding and an integrated approach between the fishery and aquaculture sectors. Mr. Voces stated that decarbonisation is possible, but that revised policies are necessary.

## Closing remarks

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**Ilias Grampas, Deputy Director, Secretariat of the European Parliament Intergroup on “Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development”**

As for the closing remarks, Mr. Grampas stated that it was made clear by MEP Karleskind that oceans have officially entered the climate negotiations. He reemphasised that fisheries and aquaculture are heavily impacted by the consequences of climate change, but that at the same time they have the potential to contribute to climate change solutions. Mr. Grampas then repeated key points made by the speakers – such as the fact that aquatic foods should be at the centre of climate solutions and that in order to do that, well-informed and science-based policymaking, effective management and an integrated cross-sectoral approach are key.