

PRESS RELEASE

Stocktake+1 Conference in Brussels highlights the role of fisheries and aquaculture in EU food security

Brussels, 2 February 2026 – On Thursday 29 January the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD), in partnership with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and with the support of the Xunta de Galicia, organised the *Stocktake+1 Conference on the Contribution of Fisheries and Aquaculture to Food Security*.

The event built on the first edition held in November 2024, which brought together policymakers, scientists, industry representatives, and civil society to highlight the strategic role of Europe's blue food sectors in sustainable and resilient food systems. The Stocktake+1 Conference provided an opportunity to review progress achieved over the past year at both EU and international levels and to identify priorities for further action.

As global challenges intensify - geopolitical tensions, climate change and rising energy costs - ensuring Europe's capacity to deliver affordable and sustainable food has become a key policy priority. In this context, fisheries and aquaculture products, often referred to as "Blue Foods", offer a unique contribution thanks to their high nutritional value, low environmental footprint and strong socio-economic importance across Europe's coastal and rural regions.

Discussions focused on recent international developments, including the UN Ocean Conference, the UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake +4 and the UN Climate COP30, where aquatic foods have gained increasing recognition. At EU level, attention centred on ongoing and upcoming initiatives such as the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy, the implementation of the Ocean Pact, the future Ocean Act and the Vision for Fisheries and Aquaculture 2040. Participants underlined the need to translate political recognition into concrete, coherent policy action

Despina Symons, EBCD Director: "With this Stocktake+1 conference, we are reaffirming our commitment to make this an annual forum for dialogue and action. By coming together every year, we aim to keep Blue Foods high on the policy agenda, track progress, and ensure that fisheries and aquaculture are fully recognised for their essential contribution to food security, sustainability and resilient food systems.

Javier Garat, Member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC): "Our latest EESC Opinion on the European Oceans Pact underlines that Europe must strengthen its food autonomy by boosting internal production and

reducing reliance on external suppliers. An EU Blue Food Action Plan before 2026 is therefore essential to fully integrate blue foods into EU food policy. You can count on EESC to keep advancing these vital discussions on the role of fisheries and aquaculture in Europe's food sovereignty.

Marta Villaverde Acuña, Regional Minister of the Sea, Xunta de Galicia: "Events such as the Stocktake+1 Conference give us the opportunity to highlight the strategic role that blue foods play in ensuring a more sustainable, resilient and healthy European food system. Fisheries and aquaculture provide foods with high nutritional value and a low environmental footprint. As a major fishing power and the leading European region in seafood production, Galicia is ready to contribute to this discussion through its experience, innovation, and responsible ocean management."

The conference concluded that stronger cooperation, policy coherence and inclusive dialogue are essential to fully unlock the potential of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and climate action.



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