



European Aquaculture Society: Statement of Support to the Shanghai Declaration

The European Aquaculture Society (EAS) is a member-based international non-profit association with more than 1000 members from 60 countries. Our core objectives are to promote contacts, facilitate the circulation of information; to promote multi-disciplinary research and to enhance transparency and cooperation among governmental, scientific and commercial organizations and individuals on all matters dealing with global aquaculture. Unlike other European aquaculture federations and stakeholders, we do not have a mandate to speak on behalf of our members, hence this Supporting Statement is from the EAS Board of Directors.

We very much welcome the GCA +20 Shanghai Declaration and its Strategic Objectives.

As sustainable food systems are high on the global agenda (UN Summit on Sustainable food systems) this declaration is timely. We recognise our common task to highlight food from healthy waters and oceans as natural part of future Sustainable food systems. Communicating challenges and opportunities of food from the diverse global aquaculture sector for achieving global sustainable food systems is highly supported.

We have two general comments and more specific inputs based on the Annex: Call for Action.

1. Continued, sustainable aquaculture growth will arise globally from a framework of governance based on spatial planning that is inclusive and based on sound science. Public 'buy in' from informed, factual and un-biased communication will make it desirable locally, regional and nationally. In the EU, the current level of self-sufficiency in the aquaculture products offered to European consumers (of just 42% reported in 2018 by EUMOFA) is inadequate. The diversity of aquaculture products, the high levels of quality, freshness and short circuits to market are attributes that consumers say they want – and we can deliver them.
2. The strategic priorities and goals of the Declaration and the stakeholder consensus on where we should be in 10 years are admirable, but we need to understand the current status of implementation of previous actions – especially what has been demonstrated to be successful and what has not. Before starting new actions, we should be very clear on what has been achieved and why we have been unsuccessful in implementing some of the actions.

As an association that comprises individuals and organisations from mainly the scientific community, our support mainly focuses on the strategic priorities that require further increases in knowledge and innovation, while ensuring social acceptance and consumer information.

These could be covered by every action laid out in the document, but we have focused our input on two of the strategic priorities as follows:

Integrating aquaculture with the natural environment, with agriculture, fisheries, forestry, tourism, regenerative energy and other sectors, and within food systems for increased resilience.

Over the next 10 years, EAS will play an active role in the following key actions:

1. Continuing to work across disciplines and sectors to increase knowledge, optimise land and water use and seek synergies that lead to more coherent development policy.
2. Working closely with our key partners in technology and innovation (EATiP) and production (FEAP, EMPA and FEFAC) to develop and promote multi-stakeholder platforms for consensus and co-construction of priority actions and innovation agendas that can achieve our development goals.
3. Contributing to the pathway that transforms knowledge into innovation through various activities - the Aquaculture Europe Innovation Forum and partnerships with initiatives such as the EU Blue Invest Fund – to ensure that value is identified and the interests of civil society, government policy and businesses are better shared and aligned.

Continually improve the performance of aquaculture, and its capacity to respect and better use natural resources and enhance ecosystem services in an integrated and efficient way.

Over the next 10 years, EAS will continue to actively promote and disseminate science related to the following key actions:

1. Filling knowledge gaps in the implementation of Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) for production of fish and other species for a part of or the whole cycle from egg to market. In the last two years, EAS has produced ‘in person’ and webinar events RAS@EAS that are an integral part of our Aquaculture Europe events. These knowledge sharing, multi-disciplinary and industry focussed events have proven highly popular and form a basis to identify and prioritise knowledge needs.
2. Combining breeding and genetic tools based on genomic selection with enhanced nutrition to produce more robust, healthy, nutritious and resource efficient fish. This is currently being addressed through the EU Horizon 2020 action through national research programmes in European countries and covering the main commercially important species including Atlantic salmon, rainbow trout, gilthead seabream and European seabass.
3. Continuing to optimise feed sources for production, based on a reduction of wild caught fish and utilisation of alternative ingredients such as algae, single cell proteins, insects and fish co-products. While the knowledge base has increased significantly over recent years, gaps still need to be filled and new technologies (and those used in other animal production) will assist further in the coming years to ensure economic viability and economies of scale.
4. Promoting new technologies to monitor, treat and re-use waste from production systems to ensure that valuable nutrients are not lost. For many years, EAS has promoted integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA) and disseminated information on its advantages, bottlenecks and challenges. Various sessions and workshops of our Aquaculture Europe events have focussed on this, but also on aquaponics (including urban farming systems) and initiatives to use waste products from the wood and brewing industries as inputs to aquaculture.

For sustainable growth, aquaculture still needs to be “appreciated” by those that have operations in their local areas and by those that purchase and consume aquaculture products. We are committed to play a role and team up with other organisations that can influence consumer perception and make aquaculture products more desirable locally, regionally and nationally - all over the world.