



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

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Subject: Joint LDAC - SWWAC Letter on EC Consultation process on Farm to Fork Initiative

Dear Mr. López and Mr. Bilbao,

I would like to thank you for your letter dated 5 May 2020 regarding the consultation on the Farm to Fork Strategy.

With regard to the points raised in your letter, I would like to clarify the following:

- The Farm to Fork Strategy roadmap was published on the European Commission webpage “Have Your Say”, a dedicated website for all stakeholder consultations conducted by the European Commission. This website is widely known by stakeholders and is the sole public platform for such consultations. Feedback on the Farm to Fork Strategy roadmap was open from 17 February 2020 to 20 March 2020 (the consultation was extended for 4 additional days¹ to enable stakeholders who had encountered technical problems with the uploading of their contribution to do so). The Commission has received 654 contributions, including from some Advisory Council (AC) members – a number that shows the transparent and participatory nature of the roadmap consultation process.
- Following what was announced in the Farm to Fork Strategy roadmap, DG MARE decided to reach out to the ACs on this initiative that also concerns the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. We took the initiative to organize an information session with representatives of the ACs, entitled Dialogue on Food Systems, which took

¹ Original consultation period was 17 February-16 March.

place on 16 April. The initiative, as was explained in the meeting documents (notably the agenda), aimed at providing members of the ACs with updated information on the Farm to Fork Strategy and the overall Green Deal objectives. This meeting was also an opportunity for an exchange of views with Commission services for those that expressed interest.

- The extraordinary circumstances that surrounded the period of the meeting, namely the COVID-19 crisis and related confinement measures, had obvious implications on the time or format of that meeting. Given the virtual nature of the meeting and related limitations, each AC was invited to indicate a maximum number of 10 representatives, respecting their internal institutional balance, to attend the meeting and convey the outcome of the discussions to their respective ACs. The Dialogue on Food Systems was an information session, aiming at providing members indicated by the ACs with additional information to support the ACs in their future work. As also clarified during the meeting, this virtual meeting was not as such a formal consultation of the ACs.
- As a follow up to that meeting, the ACs were invited to provide Commission services with their recommendations on the Farm to Fork Strategy. Given the urgency in the adoption of the Strategy, in particular under the current crisis scenario, contributions were welcomed at the AC's earliest convenient date. The Farm to Fork Strategy will help ensure a more resilient and sustainable food system for Europe, and, to accelerate recovery following COVID19, it is now more needed than ever. As expressed by some NGOs, it is essential that the Farm to Fork Strategy is not postponed or delayed given its importance for the future of food production in Europe.
- The Farm to Fork strategy, adopted on 20 May² sets the vision for sustainable food systems in Europe. The initiatives announced, including those relevant for fisheries and aquaculture, will be brought forward through dedicated initiatives (e.g. the revision of the EU Sustainable Guidelines for Aquaculture or the report on the functioning of the CFP) which will feature their own consultation processes. We invite you to take part in the relevant consultation exercises at an early stage.

The success of the Farm to Fork strategy is very much linked to the active engagement of all stakeholders in the food value chain. In this regard, I would like to reassure you that we have taken due note of the individual contributions received during the Dialogue and of the formal contributions received from several ACs who decided to contribute to this initiative.

Let me also encourage you to have a look to the Commission webpage on published initiatives, which gives you the opportunity to share with us your views on laws and policies in development³. I would also encourage you to share this link with all your members.

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0381>

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives>.

May I invite you to contact Ms Pascale Colson, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu; +32 2 29 56273) should you have any question on this reply.

Yours sincerely,

Bernhard FRIESS
Acting Director-General