



Leonardo da Vinci



*The PISCES Project*

**The European Forum for Aquaculture Education and Training [www.pisccestt.com](http://www.pisccestt.com)**

**Hot Topic Information Leaflet No. 2**

### **POLICIES FOR AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT**

*Feeding the world's population is one of the most critical issues for the survival and development of the human race and is defined as 'food security'. Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Attaining food security is the prime goal of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.*

*The 1996 World Food Summit Plan of Action included specific objectives to help those living in developing countries, in particular the low-income food deficit countries (LIFDCs), to improve their food security through rapid increases in food production and productivity, by reducing year-to-year variability in food production on an economically and environmentally sustainable basis and by improving people's access to food. This pledge was reaffirmed in the subsequent meeting held in 2002 in order to monitor the progress achieved in the 5-year period.*

*In the developed countries, such considerations have been influenced less by supply criteria and more by food safety and environmental issues, where policy generation is influenced by the desire for a high level of protection of human life and health.*

*Fishing is one of the most ancient human activities for procuring food, particularly in coastal areas, and remains today as virtually the only source of wild food that is obtained from hunting. The domestication of cattle, poultry, pigs and other animal protein sources has allowed the hunting of wild animals for food supply to virtually disappear in the developed countries.*

*The gathering of edible 'wild' shellfish, such as oysters and mussels, is also a practice that has existed from ancient history. It is perhaps surprising that, given this position, it has taken so long for aquaculture to develop into a significant supplier of food at the global level.*

*Carp farming is the oldest fish farming activity in Europe, having been introduced for diet improvement in Germany in the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century. Shellfish cultivation is equally an early activity (the Romans knew about the qualities of oysters). The potential for further development of fish farming was recognised with the advent of trout farming (in fresh water) in the early part of the 20th century but it was not until the 1970s that a better understanding of husbandry requirements, particularly concerning improved nutrition, was able to allow important expansion of the sector.*

*In 1983, the fisheries of the Member States of the European Union (EU-12) provided a total of 6 million tons of fish and shellfish, while aquaculture supplied 750 thousand tons - just over 12% of the fisheries yield. By 1999, European Union fisheries (EU-15) captured 6.4 million tons while European aquaculture provided 1.4 million tons (22%). The European Union also had a net deficit of 2.5 million tons of fishery products in 1999, worth €8.1 million, due to the import of nearly 8.2 million tons of products.*



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*The growth in fish farming represents the most spectacular change, moving from 57,000 tons in 1970 (consolidated statistics for all of the Member States of EU-15) to nearly 600,000 tons in 2001 (source: FEAP) - a ten-fold increase in 30 years. This position has been mirrored in other European countries, most notably Norway, which now produces more than 500,000 tons of salmon and trout compared to the 10,000 tons reared in 1982.*

*Such significant developments cannot be achieved in a vacuum, and it has been the combination of successful scientific research with encouraging policies at European, National and local levels that stimulated the private and public sector investments which constitute European aquaculture's development.*

*In the European Union, fisheries and aquaculture are both governed by the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP); Article 14 of Council Regulation (EEC) 3760/92 established the Community Framework, following the reform of the original CFP that was defined in Regulation CEE 170/83. At present, the European Commission is undergoing a complete review of the current CFP for a new reform that will be put into action from January 2003 (see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/doc\\_et\\_publ/cfp\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/doc_et_publ/cfp_en.htm) for complete and multilingual information).*

*The Common Fisheries Policy tends, as its name implies, to be dominated by fisheries issues, particularly those concerning stock management, the protection of specific stocks and the reduction of the overcapacity of the European fleet in the face of what can actually be fished in European waters. Sustainable development and responsible management are the key issues for the present and the immediate future of the CFP. Nonetheless, these facets have to be combined with other aspects of European legislation to provide a more complete understanding of the legislative framework that governs European aquaculture.*

*In respect of aquaculture, the discussion paper on the reform of the CFP, the Green Paper, was notable for the lack of focused attention given to the sector, which is the only element of European fisheries to have grown substantially in the past 10 years.*

*A separate Communication<sup>2</sup> has already stated that the European Community's role is to provide the best conditions for the sustainable development of European aquaculture. Support for research and the development of appropriate environment and health standards are seen as the first priorities but there is little doubt that additional developments will be required in order to have a coherent European policy that will lead to long-term success.*

*After extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, the Commission proposed a Strategy in September 2002, which aims for:*

- *The assurance of the availability of healthy products to the consumer*
- *The promotion of an environmentally sound industry*
- *The creation of employment, particularly in fishing dependent areas*

*This Strategy was welcomed by the professional sector, in advance of opinions and approval by other important bodies, particularly since it is recognition that an 'enabling environment' is required to assure the successful long-term development of this increasingly important sector.*

*In December 2002, the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament unanimously approved the report of an own-initiative Public Hearing on European Aquaculture (held on the 1st October 2002 ([http://www.europarl.eu.int/committees/pech\\_home.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/committees/pech_home.htm) - Adopted Report number 76)). This report, which complements and, in part, responds to the Commission's Strategy proposal, recognises several of the difficulties facing the professional sector and makes some significant recommendations for the future.*

*The real question now is how European and National policies will develop to give aquaculture a fair position to allow such a strategy to be interpreted.*



Education and Culture

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