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Now, five years later, even though the majority of the identified challenges appears still valid, for the European Commission time has come to analyze the progress which has been made so far, and launch a debate with all stakeholders on the further development of sustainable aquaculture in the EU which could result in the updating of the strategy.

Stakeholders should in a pro-active way influence the process now.

First applications for EGF money approved

The EGF aims to help workers made redundant as a result of changing global trade patterns to find another job. It was launched by the EU in 2007 and will provide up to 500 million Euro a year.

Starting from 1 January 2007, the EGF can fund active labour market policies focused entirely on helping the workers affected by globalisation-related redundancies. This will be done by:

- job-search assistance, occupational guidance, tailor-made training and re-training including IT skills and certification of acquired experience, outplacement assistance and entrepreneurship promotion or aid for selfemployment
- special time-limited measures, such as job search allowances, mobility allowances or allowances to individuals participating in lifelong learning and training activities,
- measures to stimulate in particular disadvantaged or older workers, to remain in or return to the labour market.

The EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Vladimír Špidla, announced that the first two applications for EGF assistance have been approved by the Commission and were put before the European Parliament and the Council for decision.

The first two EGF applications concern the French car sector and relate to suppliers of Peugeot-Citroën and Renault. The requested contributions from the EGF are € 2,558,250 in the first case and € 1,258,000 in the second one. Interested parties should therefore apply.



Cash controls

As of 15 June 2007, the Regulation adopted by the EU Council of Ministers on 12 July 2005 controlling cash movements into and out of the EU is applicable in all Member States.

The Regulation focuses on the following issues:

- It obliges travellers entering or leaving the EU and carrying any sum equal to or exceeding € 10,000 to make a declaration to the customs authorities.
- Customs authorities are empowered under the Regulation to undertake controls on natural persons, their baggage and their means of transport and detain cash that has not been declared.
- EU Member States have to initiate proceedings against persons who fail to declare cash of a value of € 10,000 or more, however ensuring that these penalties are proportionate to the offence and with a deterrent effect. EU Member States shall also notify the Commission of the penalties applicable in their country.

EU strategy on aquaculture

In spite of the strong European market for seafood and the long tradition of freshwater and marine fish and shellfish cultivation and modern technologies in Europe, the European aquaculture sector also faces a number of challenges which have an impact on production. These include limitation of space and of water of good quality, and measures to protect public health and the environment. European aquaculture is at the forefront of sustainable development in the world, in terms of social and environmental impacts, but these standards make it more difficult to compete price-wise with third-country producers. In Asia and in South-America aquaculture production growth is the highest in the world.

In 2002, the European Commission presented a Communication on a Strategy for the sustainable development of European aquaculture, giving a ten-year vision of aquaculture with the aim to reach the status of a stable industry guaranteeing long-term secure employment, which was able to cope with the main problems identified, ensuring health and environmental protection.

- Information obtained through declaration or through control shall be recorded and be made available to the authorities competent for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.
- Where there is evidence that cash is being carried for the purpose of money laundering or terrorist financing, Member States may exchange information with each other. If it appears that the sum of cash involves fraud or other illegal activity affecting adversely the financial interest of the EU, they will also have to inform the Commission.
- When the customs authorities are dealing with travellers carrying large amounts of cash, they must apply EU data protection measures appropriately.
- The Commission must present an evaluation report to the European Parliament and the Council four years after the entry into force of the regulation.



White Paper on Nutrition

The European Commission adopted a White Paper giving several proposals on how the European Union can tackle nutrition, overweight and obesity related health issues. The Paper underlines the importance of enabling consumers to make informed choices, ensuring that healthy options are available, and calls upon the food industry to work on reformulating recipes. Stressing the benefit of physical activity and encouraging Europeans to exercise more is another area to develop. In the majority of Member States more than 50% of the adult population is overweight or obese. Furthermore, it is estimated that 21,748,312 million children are overweight in the EU with this figure growing by 400,000 each year.

This White Paper builds on existing mechanisms such as the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. It aims to strengthen links with Member States, the World Health Organization and other important stakeholders. To ensure high level political support, and cross sectoral co-operation within Member States, the

White Paper proposes the creation of a new High Level Group focused on nutrition, overweight and obesity related health issues, comprising a representative from every Member State.

The plan also includes:

- The development of stronger advertising codes in the EU that build on existing European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA) codes to include the results emerging from the Commission's 2006 Advertising Roundtable
- Greater efforts by the food and retailing industry to reformulate foods
- Sport organisations to create advertising and marketing campaigns to encourage physical activity and focusing on target groups such as children

Areas where the Commission proposes new actions include a revision of nutrition labelling, programmes to promote the consumption of fruit and vegetables, a White Paper on Sport and a study to explore the potential of food reformulation to improved diet. The Commission will monitor the progress and performance of all actors with a first report due in 2010 and will collaborate with the World Health Organization to improve surveillance of nutrition and physical activity actions and health status in the EU.

Obesity is a risk factor for many serious illnesses including heart disease and certain types of cancer. Poor nutrition and insufficient exercise are among the leading causes of avoidable death in Europe, and obesity related illnesses are estimated to account for as much as 7% of total healthcare costs in the EU. Child obesity is of particular concern. An estimated three million European schoolchildren are now obese and many will follow.

Alignment of classification, labelling and packaging to UN standards

The European Commission has proposed to align the current EU system of classification of chemical substances and mixtures to the United Nations Globally Harmonised System (GHS). The internationally accepted harmonised classification criteria and labelling elements will be integrated in new EU legislation, replacing the current law on the classification, labelling and packaging of chemical substances (Directive 67/548/EEC) and mixtures (Directive 1999/45/EC).

The proposal is an important step on the EU's

part towards global efforts to enhance the protection of human health and the environment from the effects of dangerous chemicals. The harmonisation of requirements at global level will give trade and competitiveness a boost and includes new pictograms. The proposed regulation will complement the new REACH Regulation on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals. The proposal will now be discussed in the European Parliament and in the Council.

Stakeholders should influence the process now.

Safety of Toys

The European Commission intends to adopt a proposal for a revision of Directive 88/378/EEC on the Safety of Toys. Originally, Directive 88/378/EEC on the safety of toys, which harmonises the safety provisions on toys between EU Member States, was adopted in the context of the achievement of the internal market. Different safety provisions in the Member States created unnecessary costs in the transactions between EU Member States thus hampering the free movement of toys in the EU. The aim of this harmonisation measure was also to guarantee an equal high level safety of toys in the whole EU.

The revision has been discussed with the EU Member States, stakeholders and standardisation organisations within the framework of the Expert Group on Toys Safety. As with the current Toys Safety Directive, the main objective of the revision is to improve the safety of toys, in particular in order to avoid possible harmful medium and long term effects of toys on children, on the one hand, and to improve the functioning of the internal market for toys, on the other hand.

As far as the specific objectives of the revision are concerned, they can be divided into three main categories:

- Modernising the safety requirements
- Clarifying of the scope and concepts
- Improving the efficiency and coherence of enforcement.

Stakeholders that have not already participated in the process should do so as soon as possible.

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