

7th October 2022

To:

Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety
Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries
European Commission
Berlaymont, Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels

Cc:

Andrea Gavinelli, DG SANTE, Head of Unit, DDG2.G.5
João Aguiar Machado, DG MARE, Hors Classe Adviser
Ester Alaez Pons, DG SANTE, Policy Officer, SANTE.G.3
Valerie Tankink, DG MARE, Head of Unit, MARE D3
Felix Leinemann, DG MARE, Head of Unit, MARE.A.2
Cristina Costa Salavedra, DG Recover, Policy Officer, SG.RECOVER.B.1
Giulio Federico, DG Recover, Head of Unit, SG.RECOVER.B.1

Octopus farming ban

Dear Commissioners Kyriakides and Sinkevičius,

Dear Mr Gavinelli, Mr Aguiar Machado, Ms Alaez Pons, Ms Tankink, Mr Leinemann, Ms Costa Salavedra, Mr Federico,

We, the undersigned groups, are calling for a ban on the production and importation of farmed octopus in the European Union.

Compassion in World Farming first contacted the Commission expressing concerns about this developing industry in 2019, calling for EU funding to be diverted away from any programs researching or supporting its move to a commercial level. Since then, there has been increasing opposition to the development of octopus farming by [scientists](#), [environmental](#) and welfare [NGOs](#) and the [public](#), putting this issue in the spotlight for the past 3 years.

Octopuses are wild animals, profoundly unsuited to farming and there are serious sustainability and animal welfare problems associated with the development of such an industry. We refer to the Compassion in World Farming report [Octopus Factory Farming – A Recipe for Disaster](#), in which the scientific evidence relating to octopuses and the consequences of farming them was reviewed.

Octopus farming is in direct conflict with the strategies proposed by the Commission for sustainable food production in order to contribute to the European Green Deal. As stated previously, the “Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030” promote the diversification of aquaculture in the EU specifically to lower-trophic species with

a lower environmental footprint. They also stress the need to ensure sustainable feed systems, limiting feed producers' reliance on fishmeal and fish oil taken from wild stocks.

The feed conversion ratio for octopuses is very high at 3:1¹, which means that 3 kilos of feed are needed to obtain 1 kilo of octopus meat. Introducing yet another carnivorous species to aquaculture that relies on feed containing human-edible ingredients and so does not increase food security, is not the right way forward according to the European strategy. Given the global problems with overfishing and the intensification of aquaculture, the EU should do more to lead the way in transitioning to a truly sustainable aquaculture sector which focuses lower in the trophic chain. Greater emphasis must be made on moving away from carnivorous species; preventing new industries farming wild carnivores from being established is crucial to this objective.

Furthermore, animals farmed in the EU should be protected by welfare legislation, such as Directive 98/58/EC. Given that octopuses are sentient animals and they, as invertebrates, are specifically excluded from this protection, the farming of these animals should not be permitted.

We call upon the Commission to introduce an EU-wide ban on cephalopod farming and imports from outside the EU.

Yours sincerely,

on behalf of Compassion in World Farming and the signatories listed below.

Olga Kikou

Head of Compassion in World Farming – EU



¹ Jacquet J, Franks B, Godfrey-Smith P, Sánchez-Suárez W. The Case Against Octopus Farming. *Issues Sci Technol.* 2019;37–44.



Animal Justice Project



Animal Save Movement



AQUATIC LIFE
—INSTITUTE—

AquaticLife Institute



Barcelona Animal Save Movement



BLUE MARINE
FOUNDATION

Blue Marine Foundation



Climate Save Movement



Ecologistas en Acción



ESSEREANIMALI

Essere Animali



Eurogroup for Animals



FAADA



Freedom for Animals



Future Food 4 Climate



GhostnetWork



Green REV Institute



In Defense of Animals USA



Interfaith Vegan Coalition



La Fondation Droit Animal Ethique et Sciences



Lady Free Thinker



Menorca Preservation Fund



Ocean Born Foundation



Ocean Culture Life



OneKind



PACMA



PETA Germany



PETA UK



Plan Based Treaty



Santuario Salvando Peludos



Sea Shepherd



Sea Legacy



The Conservation Collective



The Humane League UK



The Trash Traveller



Santuario Vacaloura



Welfarm

Jennifer Jacquet, PhD

Jonathan Balcombe, PhD, biologist