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Dear Sirs,

I would like to sincerely thank you for the invitation to the International Carp Conference. Unfortunately, due to the demanding schedule of work of the Council of Ministers and my duties as a Sejm deputy I am unable to participate. Nonetheless, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of representatives of the Inland Fisheries Institute in Olsztyn and Aller Aqua for organising such a prestigious meeting with the participation of distinguished guests from Poland and abroad, in one of the most beautiful places in Poland. I am convinced that the Conference will serve as an excellent platform to exchange experience and work out positions on problems of contemporary aquaculture.

In Europe, aquaculture is a very diversified sector that covers rearing and breeding of freshwater and saltwater fish, molluscs and crustacea produced in different types of water reservoirs and using different rearing methods. As aquaculture used to be considered a craft in the past, at present certain businesses in the sector display all features characteristic of industry of the newest generation.

In Poland, the specific nature of aquaculture is that it uses only fresh water (inland waters) and is based solely on fish production, of which two species, trout and carp, are of fundamental importance. In addition, Polish aquaculture has many advantages, such as the centuries-old tradition, increasing internal demand, dynamic development of research, technological competitiveness, qualified and experienced employees. Thus, aquaculture plays a very important role in Poland, both from the economic and social point of view.

I would also like to emphasise that aquaculture in Poland stands not only for tradition, but also for modernity that allows competing on the EU market. Sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture is possible and desired; it is enough to ensure appropriate conditions and funds. Undoubtedly, aquaculture that has developed in Poland has a considerable input in European aquaculture. Poland has ranked first in Europe in terms of carp production, which is in excess of 17,000 tonnes a year, for years now. As concerns rainbow trout production, which also exceeds 17,000 tonnes a year, Poland's position among EU countries is improving continuously. Many other freshwater fish species are also produced in Poland, such as catfish, sturgeon, tench and pike. There are highly specialised centres that introduce considerable quantities of restocking fish or economically or naturally valuable species to the market. It is frequently the case the restocking with fish grown in controlled conditions contributes to

maintaining populations of certain valuable fish species in a good condition in many Polish waters. Other European Union countries can draw from our rich experience of many years in the area of fish resources protection and use. We are ready and willing to share our experience in successful restitution of the population of trout and salmon and the program to rebuild the stocks of Baltic sturgeon and eel whose implementation has already started.

EU support to this particular sector of the economy and contemporary organisation of the fish market are the chances for the development of aquaculture as a very important element of inland fisheries. Yet, development may not be regulated. In the case of the EU fish market, the pace of development depends primarily on the activity of market participants. Aid from the European Fisheries Fund will help to finance new actions. Thanks to the aid from the European Union and grassroots initiatives of stakeholders, we will be able to stimulate fisheries areas and promote traditional fish rearing and breeding methods that are environmentally-friendly. Operational Programme “Sustainable Development of the Fisheries Sector and Coastal Fishing Areas 2007–2013” covers numerous aquaculture investment projects, such as building new ponds and modernisation of the existing ones. The purpose of aid is also to diversify income and to improve the conditions of pursuing fisheries economy and thus to improve the sector’s competitiveness. The limit of funds earmarked for measures connected with aquaculture for 2007–2013 is in excess of EUR 87 million. As aquaculture is a sector with a high potential, I am deeply convinced that it will be included in the priorities of the next programming period.

At present, the European Commission is working on the reform of the common agricultural policy. Poland actively participates in the work and supports a wider inclusion of the aquaculture sector in the common fisheries policy. I believe that the common fisheries policy should support the development of the sector in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable way, placing emphasis inter alia on innovation in production. Poland will present a decisive position and will take the necessary actions during work and negotiations on the new reform package to ensure appropriate legal and financial mechanisms for the future aquaculture sector support.

Finally, I would like to thank you again for your invitation and wish all the Conference participants a successful exchange of views and drawing proper conclusions that would be conducive to dynamic development of aquaculture.

Kazimierz Plocke

Secretary of State

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Republic of Poland

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Guests,

To begin, let me **thank the Polish organizers** for the possibility to participate in this timely conference and present here the views of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic on the future shape of fishery sector and its further development.

Freshwater **aquaculture and the carp farming** especially is a sector, which is enormously important for Central and Eastern Europe from the point of view economy, the environment and social situation of the regions concerned and the Czech Republic is no exception.

On the territory of today's Czech Republic **the tradition** of fish production dates back to the 14th century. Since those times, it experienced periods of growth but also moments of endangerment by its decline. Fortunately, this tradition has been going on and apart from the production of fish for human consumption it continues playing also other roles such as water management, landscape formation, cultural function or conservation function whose importance has been quite obvious in the course of the last decade when the Czech Republic was affected by repeated flooding and when we could see the importance of ponds and other water bodies for protection of health and property of our citizens. This long tradition can be seen also in the quality of **technology of fish production** examined by centuries **and consequently in the quality** of produced fish.

To give you a picture of the Czech fisheries sector, let me mention a few numbers. On the territory of the Czech Republic, there are approximately 52 000 thousand hectares of water bodies while the **fish production takes place on 42 000 hectares**. Of the total aquaculture production, reaching stably around 20.5 thousand tons, 20 thousand tons originate from fish production in ponds, clearly documenting the importance of this traditional way of fish production. In addition, approximately 700 tons of fish every year are obtained from special premises, most of which being trout production sites). Out of the total production, approximately half of the volume is consumed on the domestic market; the second part is intended for export.

The prices of fish in the Czech Republic have been stable for quite some time and their increase corresponds to demand as well as sales and inflation trends. In the last years, however, we can see a stagnation of prices compared with the increased prices of production costs. In the Czech Republic, also the **species composition** of produced market fish is stable, with a clear dominance of common carp having approximately

88-percent share. Salmon fish has 3.8-percent share while the rest of production consists of other groups of produced fish, especially herbivore and predator fish.

Now let me say a few words to the issue of further development of aquaculture on our territory as well as in the whole European Union. I am quite convinced that **the role of aquaculture has to grow and will continue growing** in the future. Aquaculture, including the freshwater one, has a big growth potential that we should support broadly, not only by subsidies but also by creating a favourable, producer-friendly environment for its further development. This should be a priority also for the whole European Union within the upcoming reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.

We should aim for the growth in the importance and production of **aquaculture in the European Union**, also with regard to the fact that at the moment, its production represents approximately 1.5 million tons, meaning only 2.5% of total production of aquaculture in the world. This issue is quite actual with regard to the fact that majority of fish consumed in the European Union is **imported** from third countries (Note: Approximately 65%) where quite often, producers of fish do not comply with the standards established for producers of fish in the European Union.

Also support is very important for increasing the **consumption** of aquaculture products reaching, for example, in the inland countries of the European Union including the Czech Republic, a relatively low. In the context of the above information and with regard to freshwater aquaculture particularly concerning us, I believe that **the inland countries should push this sustainable field of fishery through as the alternative** to endangered sources of maritime fisheries, and at the same time, as a production friendly to environment.

With the aim of contributing to the process of preparation of legislative proposals of the future CFP reform and to support development of freshwater aquaculture, we initiated a **declaration of landlocked countries** (Pozn.: CZ, HU, AT, SK, a LU) on the future of freshwater aquaculture.

The Declaration was signed by all landlocked countries of the European Union, contains common **priorities** and stresses our common interest in reinforcing the role of freshwater aquaculture. Among **common objectives included** in the Declaration, there are, for example, increased share of freshwater aquaculture in a new financial framework and increased attention to the needs of inland countries, support of promotion of aquaculture and research in this field, resolving the issues of invasive species – especially of cormorant – or decreased administrative burden in the sector.

The ministers of the signatory countries presented the Declaration directly to the **Commissioner** for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Mrs. Maria Damanaki, who appreciated the initiative. We were also very pleased by the statement of the

Commissioner Damanaki that she is ready to incorporate in the proposal of the prepared reform concrete sections proposed by us and by the offer of cooperation during the meetings with the Directorate General for the environment focused on the issue of limiting the problem of piscivorous predators.

The Declaration, was officially presented at the meeting of the Council for Agriculture and Fisheries on April 14, 2011 and **supported by another 14 Member States**. The Czech Republic and other landlocked countries for which aquaculture plays a very important role thus expended a significant effort to make this field of fishery having a significant perspective for the future more visible and to ensure its sufficient financing.

In this context, the **Czech Republic perceives positively the presented legislative package** on the future directions of CFP and appreciates that the European Commission **took into account the issue of aquaculture** within the prepared proposals, nevertheless, it will continue persisting on the extended support for aquaculture friendly to environment and adequate financing of this fishery sector.

Together with other countries of the European Union for whom freshwater aquaculture is important we now have a **better opportunity to defend our interests**. Apart from the cooperation of our countries, however, to defend our priorities, it is necessary to seek potential allies also among other, especially larger Member States (Note: For example, DE, PL, RO, BG) that we currently often help regarding the issues of maritime fisheries.

With regard to the changes planned, **the upcoming period** is very important for us as well as for our fishermen and it is necessary to pay full attention to seeking common position and defending of our priorities. In the period when a discussion about a concrete legislative version of the **future Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)** starts, I believe it is very important to **stress the role** of freshwater aquaculture for the individual countries and the whole European Union. At the same time, however, it is necessary to declare its importance for consumers as well as for environment – the issues that are currently more than topical ones.

Aquaculture has to become **one of the most important pillars** of the future version of the CFP while **also the level of budget** for this sector has to **correspond** to it, while as in many sectors of CFP, also its sustainability is important while expecting production growth. This area, however, **should not be flooded by and burdened with a number of regulations**. Already now, the sector belongs to the most regulated fields producing foodstuff, so that by closing, I would therefore like to especially **stress the need of simplification** in this field, and as I already mentioned, creation of more favourable conditions for producers.

*On this occasion, I would like to **thank the Polish colleagues for instigating the meeting in Krakow** in March of this year for the purpose of establishing a common position in order to seek more financial resources for the development of the aquaculture sector. The meeting resulted in the preparation of a **Common statement** by Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia **on financing of fishery sector of the European Union for the period of years 2014 – 2020 and I see it as an example of very good cooperation.***

I believe that by a more intensive cooperation and negotiation with our partners, the above mentioned objectives in the fishery sector at the European level will be enforced. By closing, let me thank the organizers for their perfect work when preparing and organizing this meeting and to thank all of you for your attention.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attention and I wish this conference a lot of success.

Juraj Chmiel
Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic