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A Hungarian proof on innovative freshwater aquaculture

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Hungary is a landlocked country with a long tradition of fish farming. Lake Balaton is the largest lake in central Europe, the two main waterways, the Danube and Tisza rivers, define the country's geography. Fish are produced mainly in ponds but also in flowthrough systems and recirculation systems. Despite the relative small area of (freshwater) pond aquaculture-around 24.000 ha, this sector clearly shows Hungarian creativity and innovation. Our pond aquaculture is based on professional experience spanning centuries. The extensive fish production guarantees a high level of food safety to customers. The export of Hungarian aquaculture products has reached 27.5 million euros in 2016. The Hungarian fish pond aquaculture is the predominant production method, accounting for 83% of national fish production, both in volume and value. It also serves significant non-production functions such as water management, preservation of biodiversity, flood control, landscaping and recreational fishing. Due to its geothermal potential, Hungary can produce fish safely and cost-efficiently throughout the year. Furthermore, the aquaculture is an attractive field for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Most of the fish farms have diversified their activities beyond aquaculture such as catering and tourism which is also an asset. As a member country of the European Union Hungary currently invests around 52 million euros (7 year programming) into its aquaculture co-financed by the EU to develop recirculation systems, to find and successfully use renewable energy (including geothermal energy), to provide ecosystem services and save biodiversity, to include new fish species to production or to develop and support fish processing.

Biography

Gyorgy Bertalan Paczay has completed his Masters Degree on EU law and Politics from Nancy University and worked for more than 6 years in EU institutions (Council of Ministers, European Parliament) in agricultural and fishery field. He is a Parliamentary Expert in the EP's Agricultural and Fishery Committees. He has published more than 15 articles in Hungarian and English.

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