Conclusions of the Seminar

All the roundtables stressed the need to disseminate and publicise the benefits of the blue circular economy. Without the commitment of all agents and the awareness of consumers, it will not be possible to implement significant changes.

At the fisheries roundtable, the policy recommendations proposed in the BLUEfasma project were recognised as being correct with regard to the need for (1) financing and technology transfer so that fishing fleets can replace their current diesel engines with green energy ones; (2) public-private cooperation and data collection and systematisation to optimise the pro bono effort of fishing fleets in the collection of marine litter; and (3) policies that allow for the generational renewal of the fishing sector.

At the recreational fisheries roundtable, emphasis was placed on the need to obtain and systematise data to generate appropriate policies in terms of sustainability in general and circularity. It is the information that has made it possible to identify, for example, the pleasure of enjoying a day at sea as an interest in licence holders that is often greater than the actual catch itself. Learning from best practices in circularity already implemented in other countries and balancing the use of resources between the different recreational fishing activities and between recreational and professional fishing were other conclusions of the roundtable.

At the processing and marketing roundtable, the commitment of both the fishing and the fishery sector to increase quality and yield with sustainability parameters was recognised. The impact of consumer awareness was identified. On the positive side, it was pointed out that there is a growing number of customers who reject plastic as packaging. On the downside, it was pointed out that lack of knowledge and lack of habit in the preparation of some fishes, means that these are unjustifiably losing market share. The importance of promoting the marketing of local fish identified with new brands was also highlighted.

At the maritime spatial planning round table, it became clear that, in terms of circularity, to maintain the environment where fishing and aquaculture activities are carried out in optimal conditions, it is necessary to take measures regarding wastewater discharges and pollution
transferred from land to sea, especially in densely populated areas of the Mediterranean coastline where there is a greater need for food from the sea.

DG MARE, in closing, emphasised the effort needed to take seriously energy efficiency, decarbonisation and renewable energy generation for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, not only through the FEMPA - which for the period 2021-2027 has a total budget of 6,108 million euros - but also through the larger Structural Funds and the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism. It was also noted that the shift to create a sustainable blue economy requires strategic and horizontal cooperation, with all actors and sectors working in the same direction.