

Monthly Highlights

No. 5 / 2023

E U M O F A

European Market Observatory for
Fisheries and Aquaculture Products

In this issue

In the reporting countries covered by the EUMOFA database, first sales of "flatfish" in February 2023 came to EUR 25,2 million in value and 3.643 tonnes in volume. This is an 11% increase in value and 4% increase in volume compared to February 2022.

At the Electronic Recording and Reporting System (ERS) level, turbot (5%) and wedge sole (1%) together accounted for 6% of the total first-sales value for "flatfish" recorded in February 2023.

Over the 36-month observation period (March 2020 to February 2023), the weighted average first-sales price of turbot in France was 18,87 EUR/kg, 73% higher than in Portugal (10,91 EUR/kg), and 7% more than in the Netherlands (17,42 EUR/kg).

In the last 12 months a downward trend in the consumed volumes of European seabass, and an upward trend in prices could be observed in Italy, Portugal and Spain.

In 2020, total landings of blue whiting in the EU came to 325.446 tonnes, with an approx. 50/50 split between blue whiting for human consumption and for processing into fishmeal and oil.

At the United Nations Water Conference in New York from 22 to 24 March 2023, the EU confirmed its strong engagement with respect to global water security.



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1. First sales in Europe

During **January–February 2023**, 12 EU Member States (MS), Norway and the United Kingdom reported first-sales data for 10 commodity groups¹. First-sales data are based on sales notes and data collected from auction markets. First-sales data analysed in the section “*First sales in Europe*” are extracted from EUMOFA².

1.1. January–February 2023 compared to the same period in 2022

Increases in value and volume: Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Latvia and the United Kingdom recorded an increase in both first-sales value and volume. The biggest increases were observed in Germany and Latvia. Mackerel, shrimp *Crangon* spp. and European flounder were mainly responsible for increases in Germany, while in Latvia they were due to herring and sprat.

Decreases in value and volume: Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden recorded decreases in first-sales value and volume. Bulgaria and Sweden stood out with the most significant falls in absolute terms due to lower first sales of clam and sprat in Bulgaria, while in Sweden they were due to sprat, herring and mackerel.

Table 1. **JANUARY-FEBRUARY OVERVIEW OF FIRST SALES FROM THE REPORTING COUNTRIES**
(volume in tonnes and value in million EUR) *

Country	January – February 2021		January – February 2022		January – February 2023		Change from January – February 2022	
	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value
Bulgaria	53	0,1	68	0,2	5	0,0	-92%	-89%
Cyprus	48	0,4	42	0,3	46	0,3	10%	13%
Estonia	16.973	3,8	12.429	2,9	14.304	4,2	15%	43%
France	31.984	106,7	32.257	123,0	33.579	128,4	4%	4%
Germany	8.626	5,3	6.537	5,1	7.752	10,2	19%	101%
Italy	11.664	46,0	10.016	45,9	9.939	45,8	-1%	0%
Latvia	9.384	2,0	6.297	1,4	8.270	2,1	31%	51%
Lithuania	725	0,3	253	0,2	85	0,4	-67%	110%
Netherlands	26.858	36,4	44.696	48,1	26.066	32,8	-42%	-32%
Portugal	7.800	28,6	10.122	44,2	9.544	41,1	-6%	-7%
Spain	50.263	170,0	51.629	195,6	48.812	190,3	-5%	-3%
Sweden	44.506	14,6	25.679	12,0	2.709	5,5	-89%	-54%
Norway	587.003	530,0	541.150	583,9	565.567	559,1	5%	-4%
United Kingdom	64.551	94,6	61.853	115,7	69.470	124,9	12%	8%

Possible discrepancies in % changes are due to rounding.

* Volumes are reported in net weight for EU Member States, and in live weight equivalent (LWE) for Norway. Prices are reported in EUR/kg (without VAT). For Norway, prices are reported in EUR/kg of live weight.

¹ Bivalves, other molluscs and aquatic invertebrates, cephalopods, crustaceans, flatfish, freshwater fish, groundfish, salmonids, flatfish, tuna and tuna-like species, and other marine fish.

² First sales data updated on 16.4.2023.

1.2. February 2023 compared to February 2022

Increases in value and volume: First sales increased in Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia and the United Kingdom. The highest increases were in Germany, with sharp increases in mackerel and shrimp *Crangon* spp.

Decreases in value and volume: First sales decreased in Bulgaria, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain and Norway. The most significant falls were observed in Bulgaria, with decreases due to clam and sprat.

Table 2. **FEBRUARY OVERVIEW OF FIRST SALES FROM THE REPORTING COUNTRIES**
(volume in tonnes and value in million EUR) *

Country	February 2021		February 2022		February 2023		Change from February 2022	
	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value
Bulgaria	27	0,1	41	0,1	4	0,013	-90%	-85%
Cyprus	25	0,2	20	0,2	25	0,2	22%	14%
Estonia	7.627	1,7	6.065	1,3	7.741	2,3	28%	72%
France	15.943	53,2	15.481	60,8	17.858	64,5	15%	6%
Germany	4.473	1,9	1.048	0,5	1.606	2,0	53%	289%
Italy	6.525	25,5	5.202	24,4	5.403	25,3	4%	3%
Latvia	5.555	1,2	3.773	0,8	4.835	1,3	28%	54%
Lithuania	376	0,16	70	0,078	24	0,071	-65%	-9%
Netherlands	20.060	22,2	36.661	29,4	14.939	16,1	-59%	-45%
Portugal	3.662	13,6	4.515	20,8	4.782	20,2	6%	-3%
Spain	25.972	86,7	28.024	101,1	24.366	90,4	-13%	-11%
Sweden	22.664	7,3	1.862	2,6	1.482	2,8	-20%	7%
Norway	315.138	311,1	336.388	367,8	293.322	298,0	-13%	-19%
United Kingdom	16.507	30,0	17.667	37,6	18.935	39,6	7%	5%

Possible discrepancies in % changes are due to rounding.

** Volumes are reported in net weight for EU Member States and the UK, and in live weight equivalent (LWE) for Norway. Prices are reported in EUR/kg (without VAT). For Norway, prices are reported in EUR/kg of live weight.*

The most recent weekly first-sales data (**up to week 17 of 2023**) are available via the EUMOFA website, and can be accessed [here](#).

The most recent monthly first-sales data **for March 2023** are available via the EUMOFA website and can be accessed [here](#).

1.3. First sales in selected countries

First sales data analysed in this section are extracted from EUMOFA³.

Table 3. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN BULGARIA**


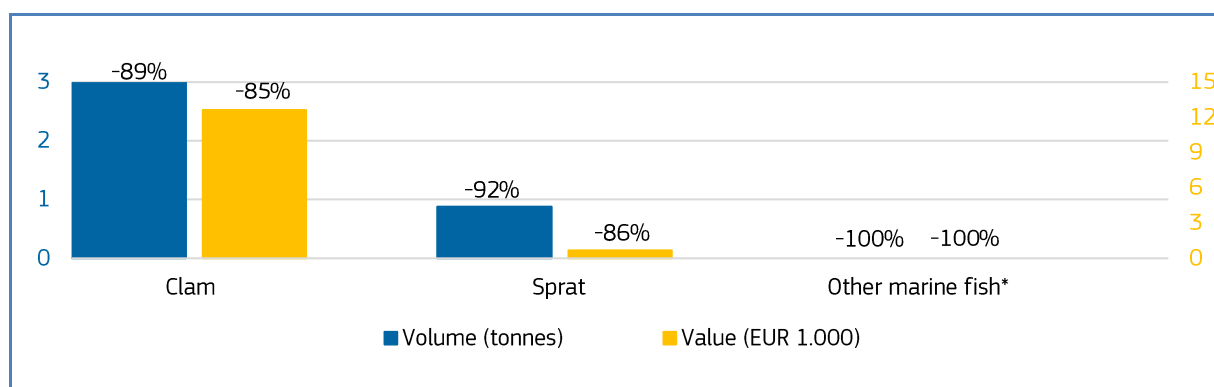

 Bulgaria	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 0,017 million, -89%	5 tonnes, -92%	Clam, sprat.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 0,013 million, -85%	4 tonnes, -90%	Clam, sprat.

Figure 1. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN BULGARIA, FEBRUARY 2023**



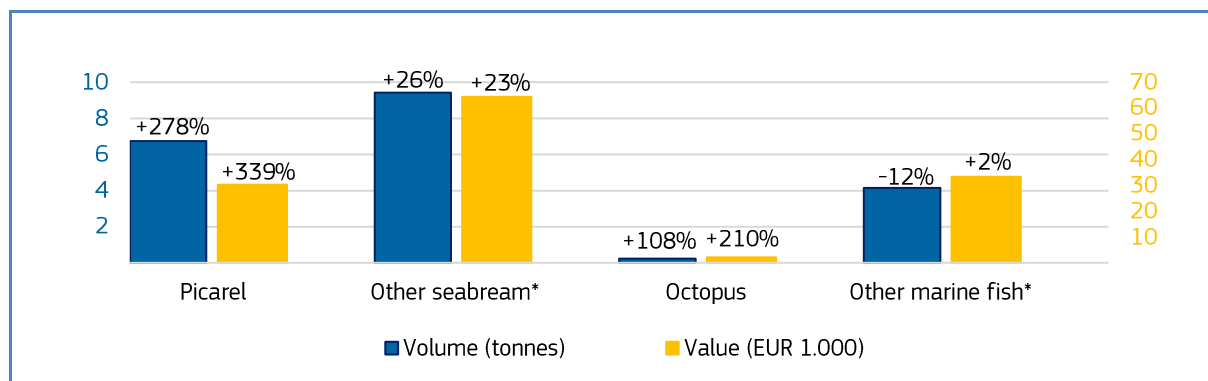
Percentages show change from the previous year. *EUMOFA aggregation for species. Metadata 2, Annex 3: <https://eumofa.eu/supply-balance-and-other-methodologies>

Table 4. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN CYPRUS**

 Cyprus	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species	Notes
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 0,3 million, +13%	46 tonnes, +10%	Other seabream*, other marine fish*, red mullet, picarel.	Picarel is the most important demersal fish targeted by bottom trawl and gillnet fisheries in Cyprus (GSA 25). First sales of picarel registered a high increase in February 2023 compared to February 2022. The high difference in supplies (+278%) is probably due to stronger winds in the area in 2022, affecting the spawning aggregations of the species that usually occur between February-April in the coastal waters of Cyprus, especially the southern part. The weather conditions probably caused both a delay in the formation of the spawning aggregations in coastal waters and a reduction in fishing effort by the small-scale fleets. Landings were thus much smaller both in terms of volume and value in February 2022 compared to 2023.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 0,2 million, +14%	25 tonnes, +22%	Picarel, other seabream*, octopus, other marine fish*.	

³ First-sales data updated on 13.4.2023.

Figure 2. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN CYPRUS, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year. *EUMOFA aggregation for species.

Table 5. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN ESTONIA**


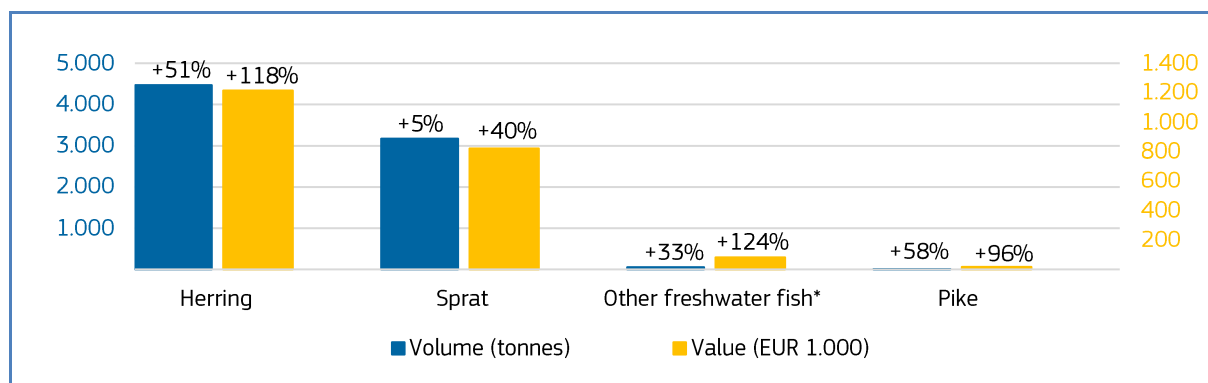
 Estonia	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 4,2 million, +43%	14.304 tonnes, +15%	Herring, sprat, other freshwater fish*.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 2,3 million, +72%	7.741 tonnes, +28%	Herring, sprat, pike-perch, other freshwater fish*.

Figure 3. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN ESTONIA, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year. *EUMOFA aggregation for species.

Table 6. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN FRANCE**


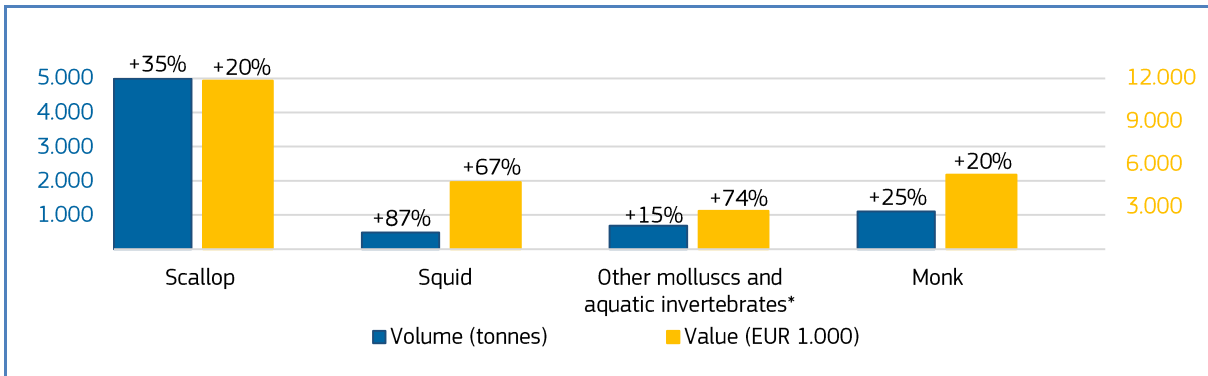
 France	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 128,4 million, +4%	33.579 tonnes, +4%	Scallop, squid, cuttlefish, octopus, other molluscs and invertebrates*.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 64,5 million, +6%	17.858 tonnes, +15%	Scallop, squid, other molluscs and invertebrates*, monk.

Figure 4. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN FRANCE, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year. *EUMOFA aggregation for species.

Table 7. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN GERMANY**


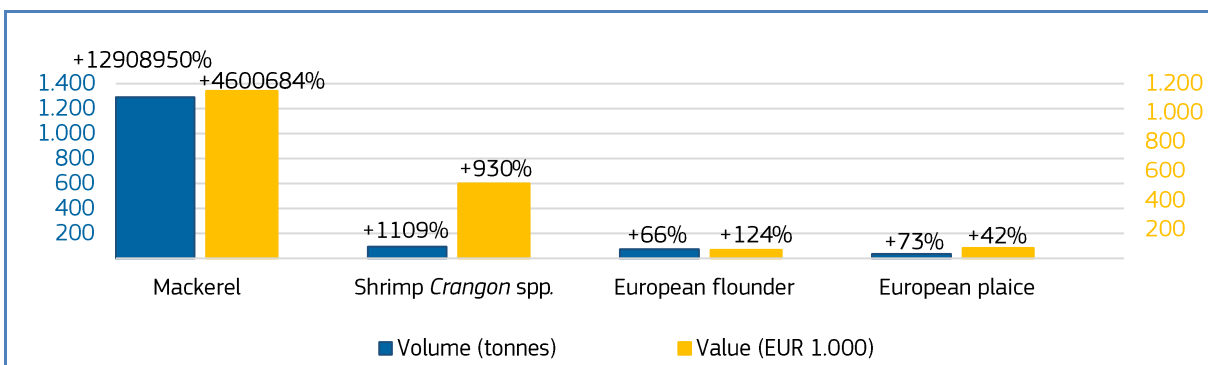
 Germany	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species	Note
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 10,2 million, +101%	7.752 tonnes, +19%	Mackerel, shrimp <i>Crangon</i> spp., European flounder, pike.	First sales of Atlantic mackerel registered a tremendous increase in February 2023 compared to February 2022. The species stock is currently in good status, with the spawning stock biomass above MSY, Btrigger, Bpa and Blim in both 2021 and 2022. The high change in production is most probably due to a statistical artefact, as a big share of landings occurred in late January 2022. However, overall mackerel production in the first two months of 2023 (around 2.500 tonnes) was rather similar to that observed over the first two months of 2022 (around 2.900 tonnes). First sales of shrimp <i>Crangon</i> spp registered an increase in February 2023 compared to February 2022. However, looking at the historical record, the production observed in February was by far the lowest compared to the other months, with the bulk of production in the August-October period. This was also confirmed by ICES ⁴ , showing that fishing effort is mostly applied from April, with the productivity level highest in October, while production levels in February were around 70-100 tonnes.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 2,0 million, +289%	1.606 tonnes, +53%	Mackerel, shrimp <i>Crangon</i> spp., European flounder, European plaice.	

Figure 5. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN GERMANY, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year.

⁴ ICES. 2022. Working Group on Crangon Fisheries and Life History (WGCRAN; outputs from 2021 meet-ing). ICES Scientific Reports. 4:14. 77 pp. <http://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.10056>

Table 8. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN ITALY**


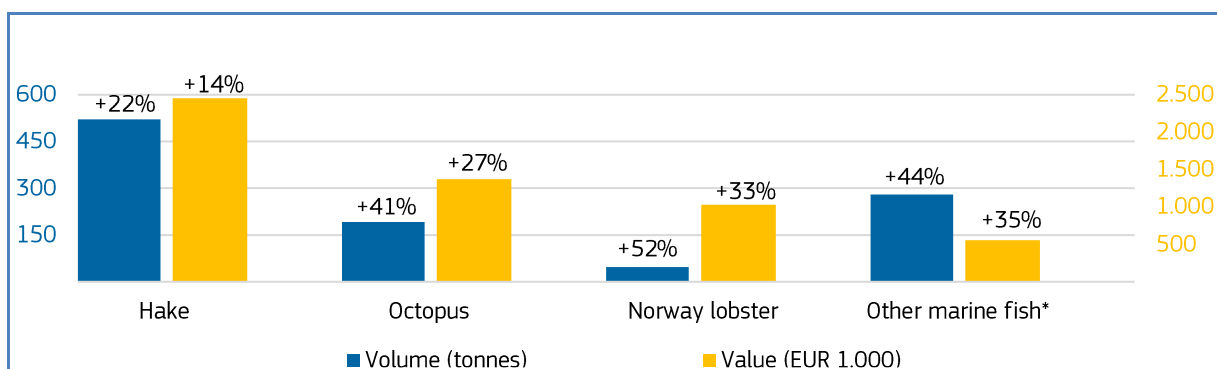
 Italy	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 45,8 million, 0%	9,939 tonnes, -1%	Anchovy, hake, clam, sardine.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 25,2 million, +3%	5,403 tonnes, +4%	Hake, octopus, Norway lobster, other marine fish*.

Figure 6. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN ITALY, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year. *EUMOFA aggregation for species.

Table 9. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN LATVIA**


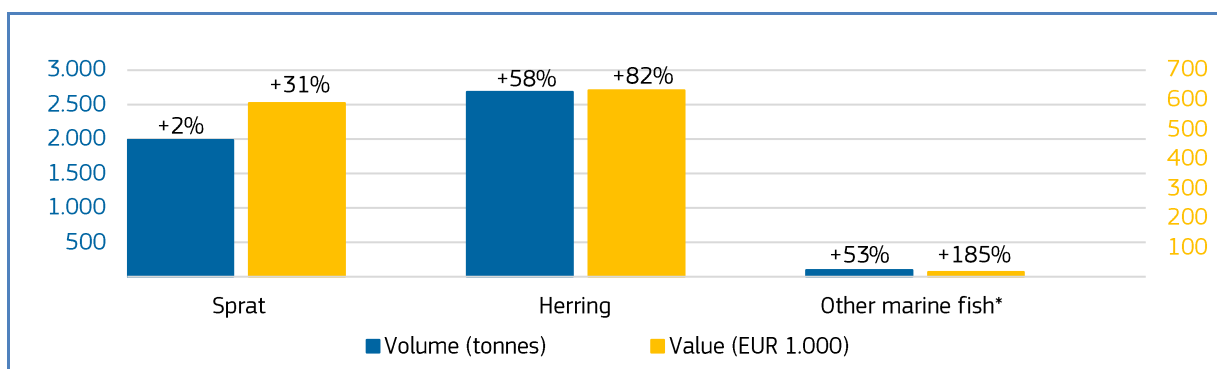
 Latvia	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species	Notes
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 2,1 million, +51%	8,270 tonnes, +31%	Herring, sprat, other marine fish*, smelt.	First sales of other marine fish registered an increase in February 2023 compared to February 2022. One of the reasons for a significant rise in volume may be the weather conditions in February 2022 which affected the use of available fishing capacity. Another reason could be the incidental catches caused by changes in fishers' behaviour due to the weather conditions. Supplies of three-spined stickleback were observed in February 2023 but not February 2022. It seems that no targeted fishing or supplies of that species occurred in Latvia in 2022. Incidental catches thus increased in February 2023.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 1,3 million, +54%	4,835 tonnes, +28%	Sprat, herring, other marine fish*.	

Figure 7. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN LATVIA, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year. *EUMOFA aggregation for species.

Table 10. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN LITHUANIA**


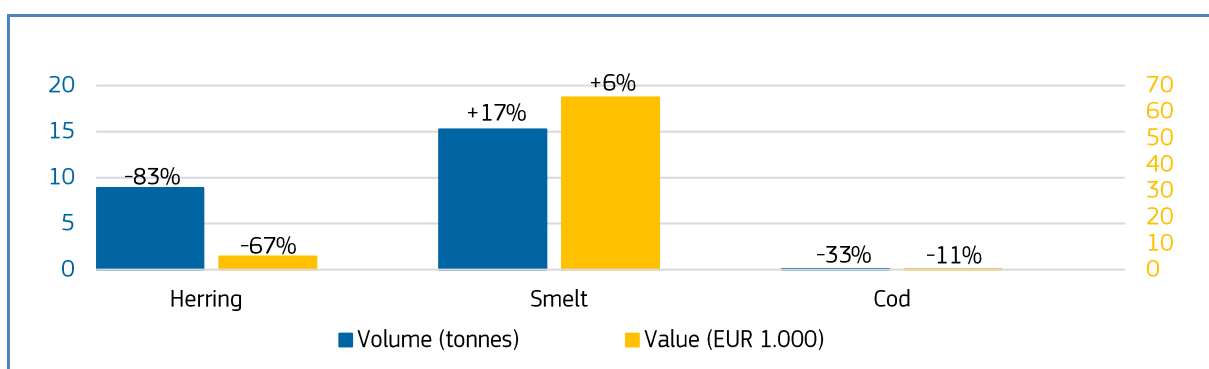
 Lithuania	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume/ trend %	Main contributing species
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 0,4 million, +110%	85 tonnes, -67%	Value: Smelt, cod. Volume: Herring, sprat, pike-perch.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 0,07 million, -9%	24 tonnes, -65%	Smelt, herring, cod.

Figure 8. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN LITHUANIA, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year.

Table 11. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN THE NETHERLANDS**


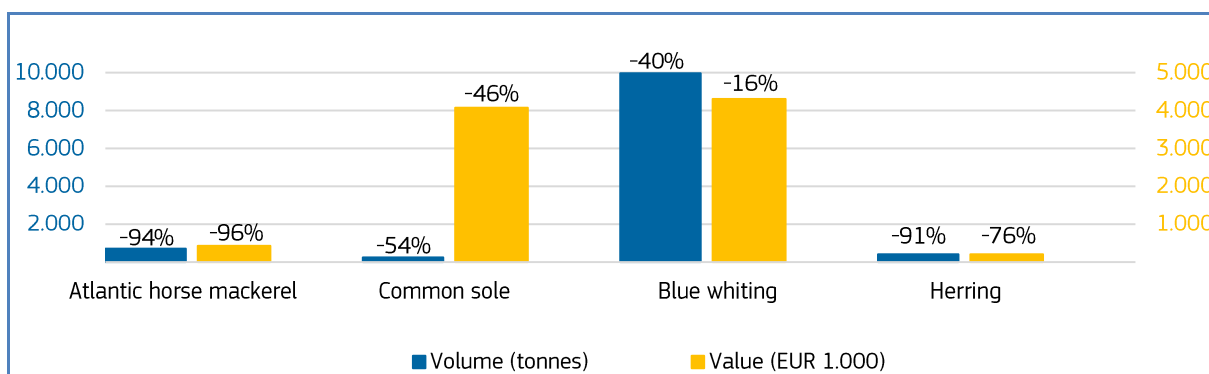
 the Netherlands	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species	Notes
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 32,8 million, -32%	26.066 tonnes, -42%	Atlantic horse mackerel, common sole, herring, blue whiting.	First sales of Atlantic horse mackerel registered a decrease in February 2023 compared to February 2022. This is mostly due to the EU decision to significantly decrease the Atlantic horse mackerel TAC in the North Sea (CE, 2023) ⁵ , further to the ICES advice to set a zero TAC in this fishing area for 2023 (ICES, 2022) ⁶ .
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 16,1 million, -45%	14.939 tonnes, -59%	Atlantic horse mackerel, common sole, herring, blue whiting.	

Figure 9. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN THE NETHERLANDS, FEBRUARY 2023**



⁵ COUNCIL REGULATION (EU) 2023/194 of 30 January 2023 fixing for 2023 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters, as well as fixing for 2023 and 2024 such fishing opportunities for certain deep-sea fish stocks.

⁶ ICES Advice 2022 – hom.27.2a4a5b6a7a-ce-k8 – <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.19772383>

Percentages show change from the previous year.

Table 12. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN PORTUGAL**


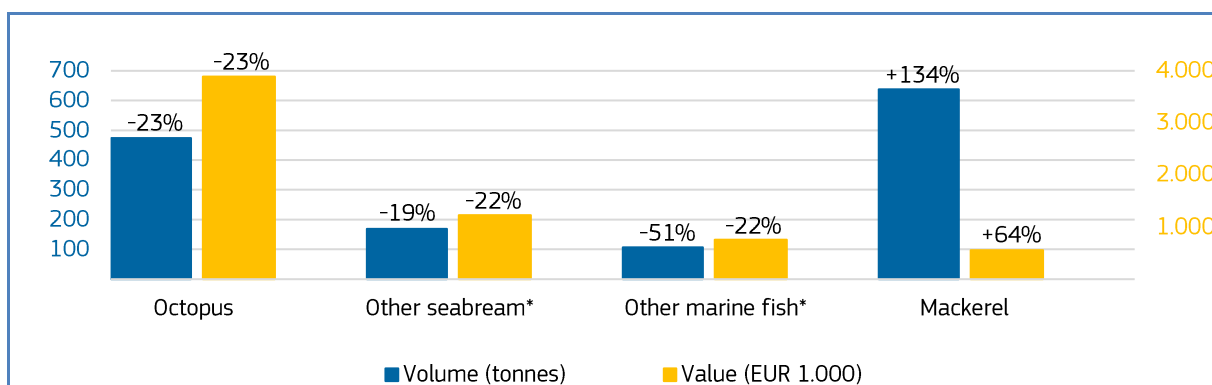
 Portugal	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 41,1 million, -7%	9.544 tonnes, -6%	Octopus, anchovy, squid, other seabream*.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 20,2 million, -3%	4.782 tonnes, +6%	Value: Octopus, other marine fish*, other seabream*, other sole. Volume: Mackerel, blue whiting, miscellaneous tuna.

Figure 10. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN PORTUGAL, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year. *EUMOFA aggregation for species

Table 13. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN SPAIN**


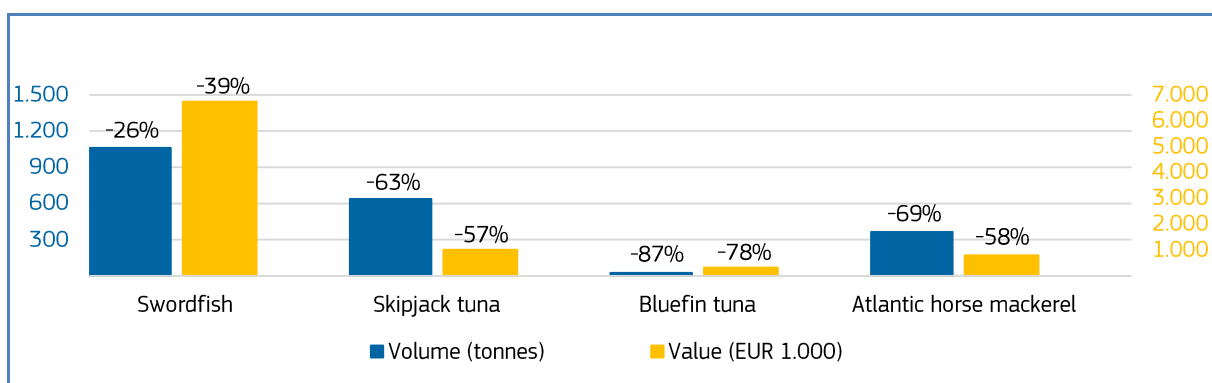
 Spain	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 190,3 million, -3%	48.812 tonnes, -5%	Swordfish, Atlantic horse mackerel, octopus, anchovy.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 90,4 million, -11%	24.366 tonnes, -13%	Swordfish, skipjack tuna, bluefin tuna, Atlantic horse mackerel.

Figure 11. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN SPAIN, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year. *EUMOFA aggregation for species.

Table 14. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN SWEDEN**


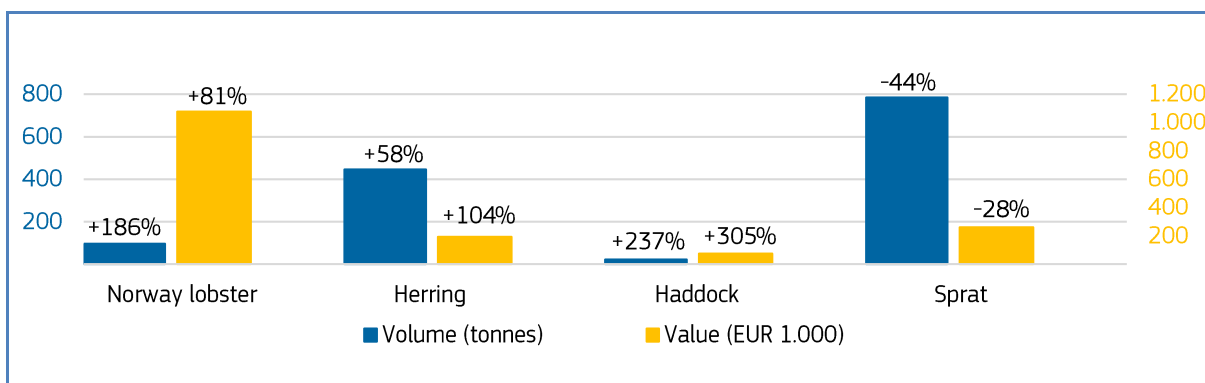
 Sweden	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species	Notes
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 5,5 million, -54%	2.709 tonnes, -89%	Sprat, herring, mackerel, cold-water shrimps.	First sales of haddock registered a significant increase in February 2023 compared to February 2022. The reason for the large rise in volume might be the weather conditions in February 2022 which affected regular fishing activities. Comparing February 2023 to 2022, the increase of around 16 tonnes does not represent a huge supply to the market. The 20 percent price increase in February 2023 compared to February 2022 may be due to insufficient supplies to the market to satisfy demand as well as inflation which has been observed in 2023.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 2,8 million, +7%	1.482 tonnes, -20%	Value: Norway lobster, herring, haddock, cod. Volume: Sprat, cold-water shrimps, other marine fish*.	

Figure 12. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN SWEDEN, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year. *EUMOFA aggregation for species.

Table 15. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN NORWAY**


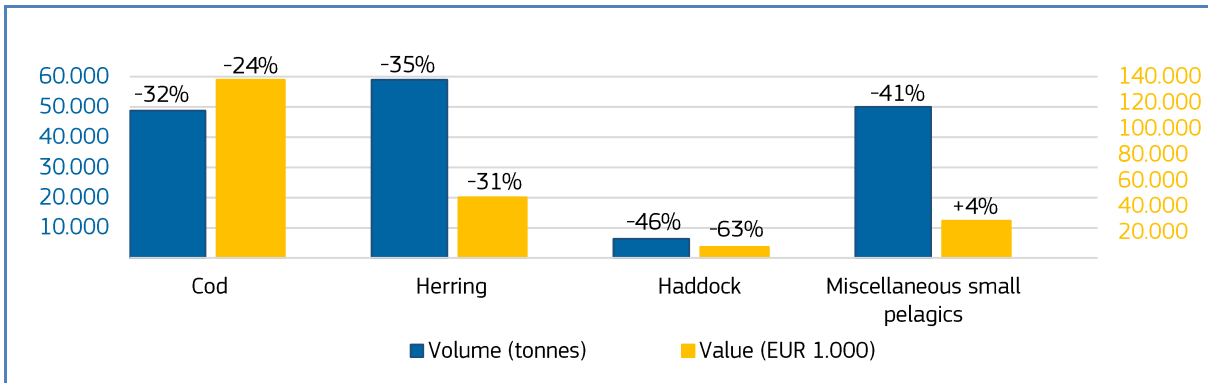
 Norway	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 559,1 million, -4%	565.567 tonnes, +5%	Value: cod, crab, haddock, mackerel. Volume: blue whiting, seaweed and other algae*, saithe, herring.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 298 million, -19%	293.322 tonnes, -13%	Cod, herring, haddock, miscellaneous flatfish*,

Figure 13. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN NORWAY, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year. *EUMOFA aggregation for species.

Table 16. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**


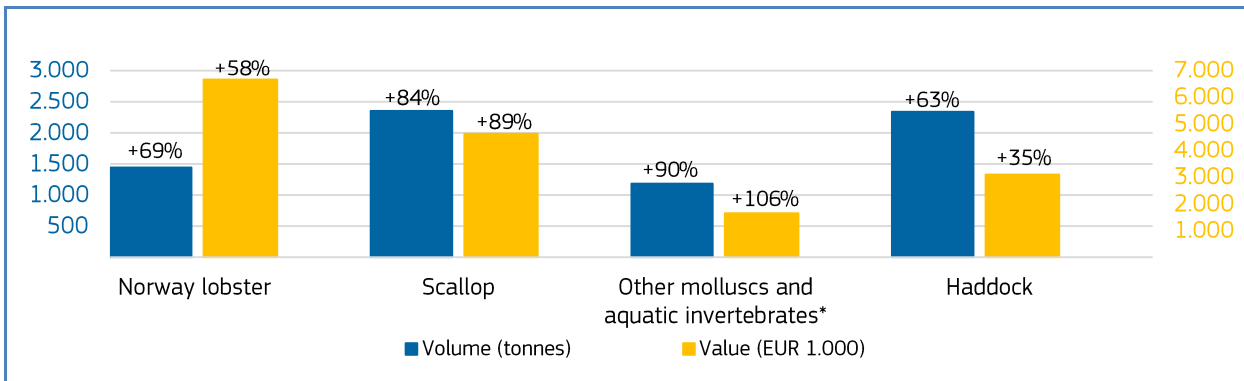
 The United Kingdom	First-sales value / trend %	First-sales volume / trend %	Main contributing species
Jan-Feb 2023 vs Jan-Feb 2022	EUR 125,0 million, +8%	1.685 tonnes, +9%	Mackerel, Norway lobster, cod, haddock.
Feb 2023 vs Feb 2022	EUR 39,6 million, +5%	69.470 tonnes, +12%	Norway lobster, scallop, other molluscs and aquatic invertebrate*, haddock.

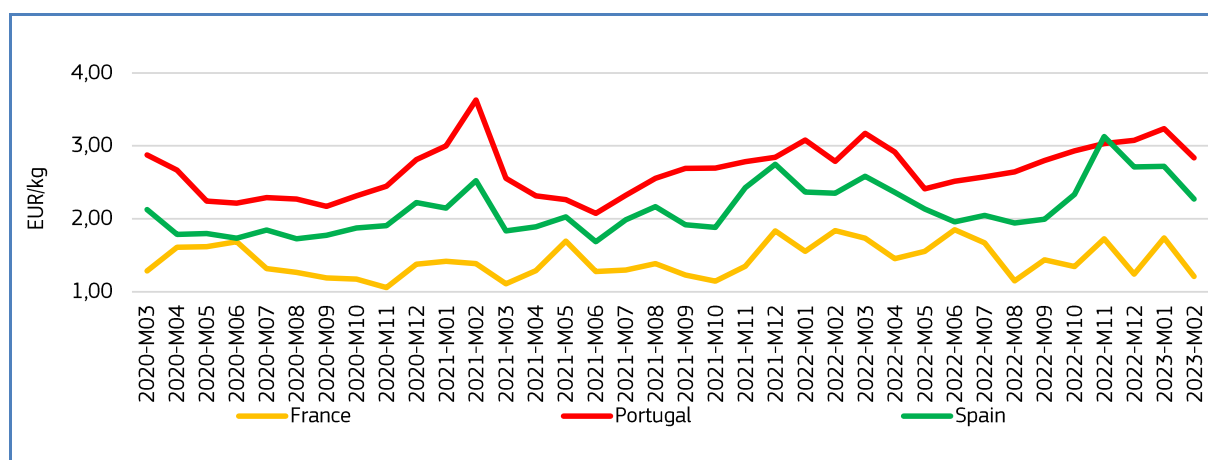
Figure 14. **FIRST SALES OF THE MAIN COMMERCIAL SPECIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, FEBRUARY 2023**



Percentages show change from the previous year. *EUMOFA aggregation for species.

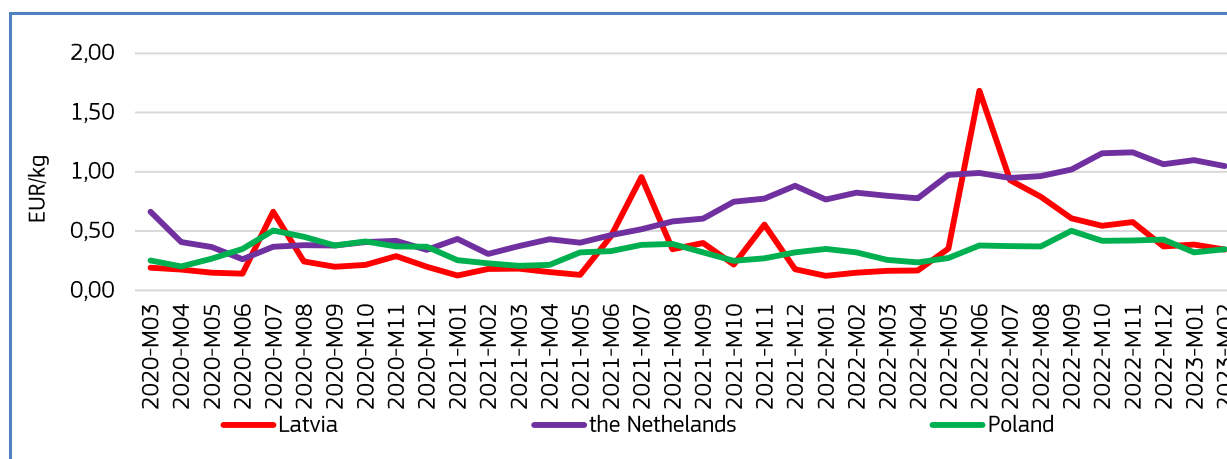
1.4. Comparison of first sales prices of selected species in selected countries⁷

Figure 15. **FIRST SALES PRICES OF EUROPEAN CONGER IN FRANCE, PORTUGAL, AND SPAIN**



EU first sales of **European conger** occur predominantly in **France**, as well as in **Portugal** and **Spain**. In February 2023, the average first-sales prices of European conger were 1,21 EUR/kg in France (down by 31% from the previous month and down by 34% from the previous year), 2,84 EUR/kg in Portugal (down by 12% from January 2023 and up by 2% from February 2022) and 2,27 EUR/kg in Spain (down by 16% from the previous month, and down by 3% from the previous year). In February 2023, supply increased in France (+17%) and Spain (+28%), and decreased Portugal (-32%), relative to the previous year. Supply is seasonal in Portugal, with volume peaking in July and August as well as in Spain where supply seems to peak between May-June and September-October. Volumes sold in France seem to peak in March and October-November. Between 03/2020 to 02/2023, prices fluctuated in Portugal with seasonal peaks between January and March. Prices fluctuated greatly in France with a slight decrease, while they increased in Spain reaching the highest value of 3,13 EUR/Kg in November 2022.

Figure 16. **FIRST SALES PRICES OF EUROPEAN FLOUNDER IN LATVIA, THE NETHERLANDS, AND POLAND**

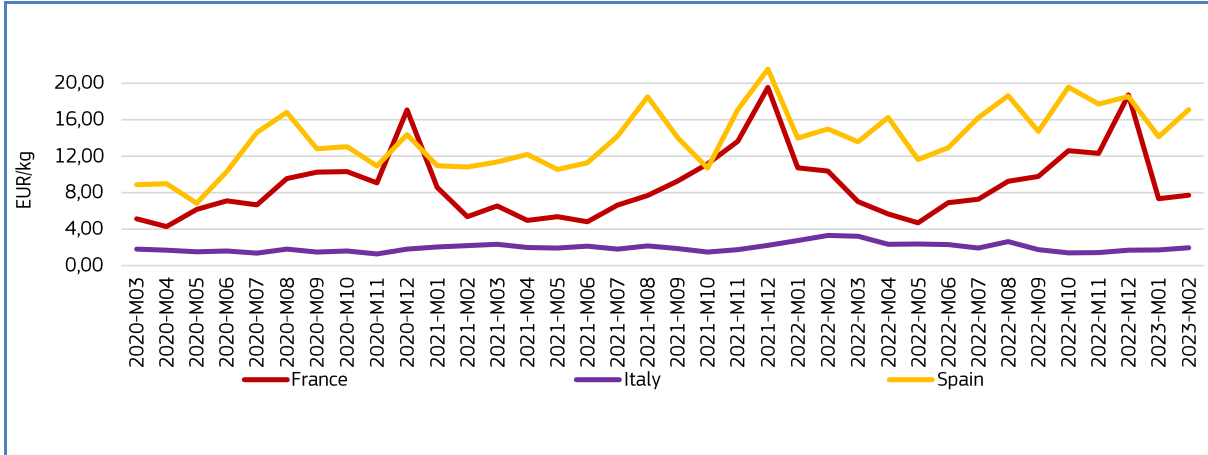


EU first sales of **European flounder** occur in several countries including **Latvia**, **the Netherlands** and **Poland**. In February 2023, the average first-sales prices of European flounder were 0,34 EUR/kg in Latvia (down by 11% from the previous month and up by 132% from February 2022), 1,05 EUR/kg in the Netherlands (down by 4% from the previous month and up by 27% from February 2022) and 0,35 EUR/kg in Poland (up by 8% from both the previous month and year). In February 2023, supply increased in Latvia (+19%), and decreased in both the Netherlands and Poland, relative to the previous year (-55% and -98%, respectively). Supply is highly seasonal, with peaks in March and September-October in Latvia, and between February and May in the Netherlands. In Poland, supply seems to peak in March. Between the months 03/2020 and 02/2023, prices

⁷ First sales data updated on 18.4.2023.

increased in the three markets analysed, showing a progressive increase in the Netherlands and seasonal price peaks between June and July in Latvia.

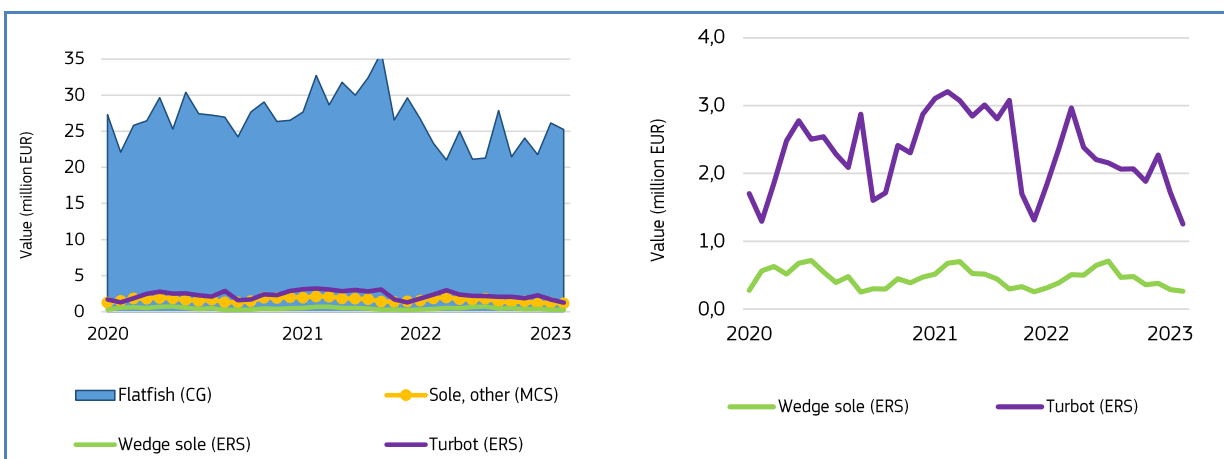
Figure 17. **FIRST SALES PRICES OF PURPLE DYE MUREX IN FRANCE, ITALY AND SPAIN.**



EU first sales of **purple dye murex** occur mainly in **France, Italy** and **Spain**. In February 2023, the average first-sales prices of purple dye murex were 7,72 EUR/kg in France (up by 5% from the previous month and down by 25% from the previous year), 1,95 EUR/kg in Italy (up by 13% from both the previous month and down by 41% from February 2022) and 17,10 EUR/kg in Spain (up by 21% from January 2023 and by 14% from February 2022). In February 2023, supply increased in France (+18%), and Italy (+85%) and decreased in Spain (-41%), relative to the previous year. Volumes sold in the three markets are highly seasonal: supply peaks between May and July in France, in Italy volumes peak in July but also between October and December, and in Spain volumes seems to peak in February-March and in December. Between the months 03/2020 to 02/2023, prices increased in Spain and France showing high fluctuation in both countries, reaching a maximum price of 21,54 EUR/kg in December 2021 in Spain. In France prices showed a seasonal peak in December. Italy experienced a slight increase in prices ranging between 1,29 EUR/kg (November 2021) and 3,31EUR/kg (February 2022).

1.5. Commodity group of the month: flatfish⁸

Figure 18. **FIRST-SALES COMPARISON AT CG, MCS, AND ERS LEVELS FOR REPORTING COUNTRIES⁹, MARCH 2020 - FEBRUARY 2023**



⁸ First sales data updated on 16.4.2023.

⁹ Norway and the UK excluded from the analyses.

In February 2023, the “flatfish” commodity group (CG¹⁰) recorded the 6th highest value and the 7th highest first-sales volume out of the 10 CGs in the countries monitored by EUMOFA¹¹. In the reporting countries covered by the EUMOFA database, first sales of “flatfish” totalled a value of EUR 25,2 million and a volume of 3.643 tonnes, representing a value increase of 11% and a volume increase of 4% compared to February 2022. In the past 36 months, the highest first-sales value of flatfish was registered in December 2021 at EUR 35,9 million.

The flatfish commodity group includes 13 main commercial species (MCS): Atlantic halibut, brill, common sole, other soles, dab, European flounder, other flounders, European plaice, other plaices, Greenland halibut, megrim, turbot and the grouping “other flatfish”¹². At the Electronic Recording and Reporting System (ERS) level, turbot (5%) and wedge sole (1%) together accounted for 6% of the total first-sales value for “flatfish” recorded in February 2023.

1.6. Focus on Turbot



Turbot (*Scophthalmus maximus*) is a member of the Scophthalmidae family. It is a left-sided flatfish, with its eyes normally on the left side of the head¹³. Adults live on sandy, rocky or mixed sea bottoms, and they are rather common in brackish waters. They mainly feed on other bottom-living fishes (sand-eels, gobies, etc.) and to a lesser extent on larger crustaceans and bivalves. They are batch spawners, with a spawning season between April and August. Their eggs are pelagic. Adults may reach 25 kg¹⁴.

Turbot inhabits the Northeast Atlantic. It is found throughout the Mediterranean and along the European coasts to the Arctic Circle, as well as in most of the Baltic Sea. One of its subspecies, *Psetta maxima maeotica* can also be found in the Black Sea.

The EU established a discard plan for turbot fisheries in the Black Sea in August 2021¹⁵. Based on an EU Regulation adopted in 2023 fixing the annual fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, there are turbot quotas in the Black Sea for Bulgaria (92,14 tonnes) and Romania (80,36 tonnes), which makes a total of 172,5 tonnes for the European Union out of a TAC of 857 tonnes¹⁶.

Turbot is caught mostly with beam trawls, although otter trawls and static nets can also be used¹⁷. It is a highly valued food fish, utilised fresh or frozen. It is also eaten steamed, pan-fried, broiled, boiled, microwaved and baked.

We have covered **Turbot** in the following *Monthly Highlights*:

First sales: MH 6/2020 (Belgium, France, the Netherlands), MH 7/2017 (Belgium, Denmark, the United Kingdom), MH 8/2016 (Belgium), MH 9/2015 (Belgium), MH 2/2014 (Belgium), MH April/2013 (Belgium)

Topic of the month: Fisheries and aquaculture of turbot (MH 3/2019),

Selected countries

Table 17. COMPARISON OF TURBOT FIRST-SALES PRICES, MAIN PLACES OF SALE, AND CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL SALES OF “FLATFISH” IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

Turbot		Changes in turbot first sales Jan-Feb 2023 (%)		Contribution of turbot to total “flatfish” first sales in February 2023 (%)	Principal places of sale Jan-Feb 2023 in terms of first-sales value
		Compared to Jan-Feb 2022	Compared to Jan-Feb 2021		
France	Value	-10%	+31%	4%	Guilvinec, Saint Quay Portrieux, Les Sables-d’Olonne.
	Volume	-17%	-21%	4%	

¹⁰ Annex 3: <http://eumofa.eu/supply-balance-and-other-methodologies>

¹¹ More data on commodity groups can be found in Table 1.2 of the Annex.

¹² Greater argentine accounts for the highest first-sales value and volume within the miscellaneous flatfish category.

¹³ <https://www.britannica.com/animal/turbot>

¹⁴ <https://www.fishbase.se/summary/scophthalmus-maximus.html>

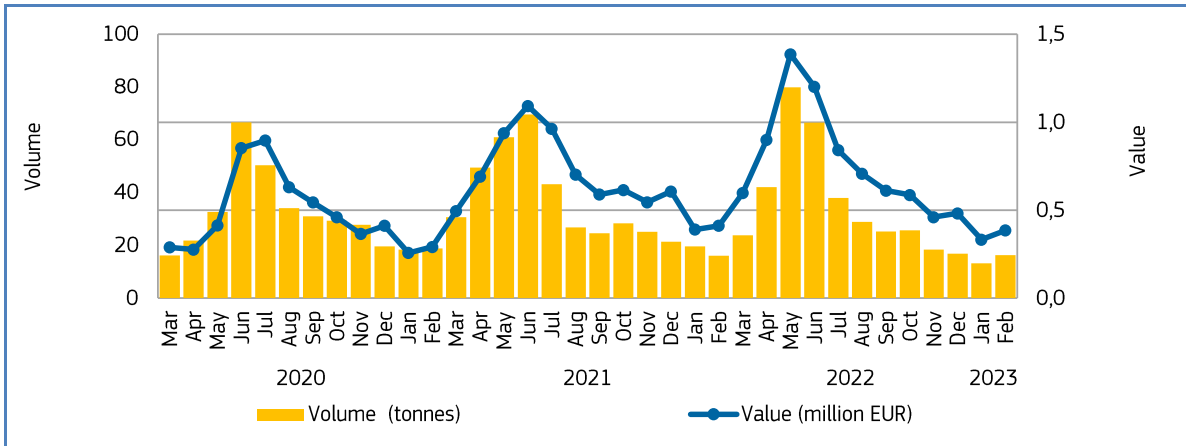
¹⁵ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2065: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2065&from=EN>

¹⁶ Council Regulation (EU) 2023/195: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/195/oj>

¹⁷ <https://britishseafishing.co.uk/turbot/>

the Netherlands	Value	+1%	-22%	9%	Ijmuiden/Velsen, Urk, Scheveningen.
	Volume	+13%	-59%	4%	
Portugal	Value	+11%	+88%	16%	Aveiro, Peniche, Matosinhos.
	Volume	+9%	+48%	8%	

Figure 19. **TURBOT: FIRST SALES IN FRANCE, MARCH 2020 - FEBRUARY 2023**



Over the past 36 months, the highest first-sales value of turbot in **France** occurred in May 2022 when 80 tonnes were sold for about EUR 1,4 million. In general, first sales were highest from April to June, while they were lower once the sea temperatures became cooler in the last and first quarter of the year.

Figure 20. **FIRST SALES: COMPOSITION OF “FLATFISH” (ERS LEVEL) IN FRANCE IN VALUE AND VOLUME, FEBRUARY 2023**

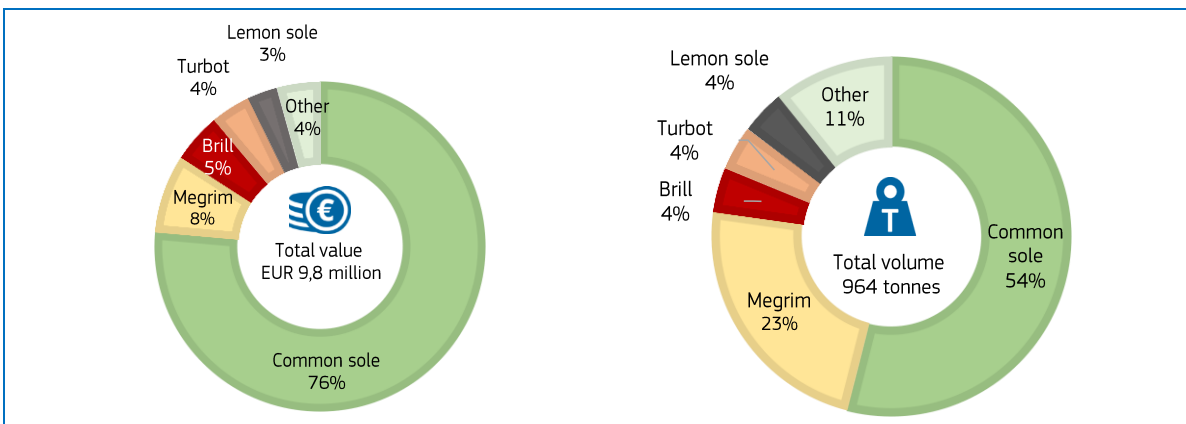
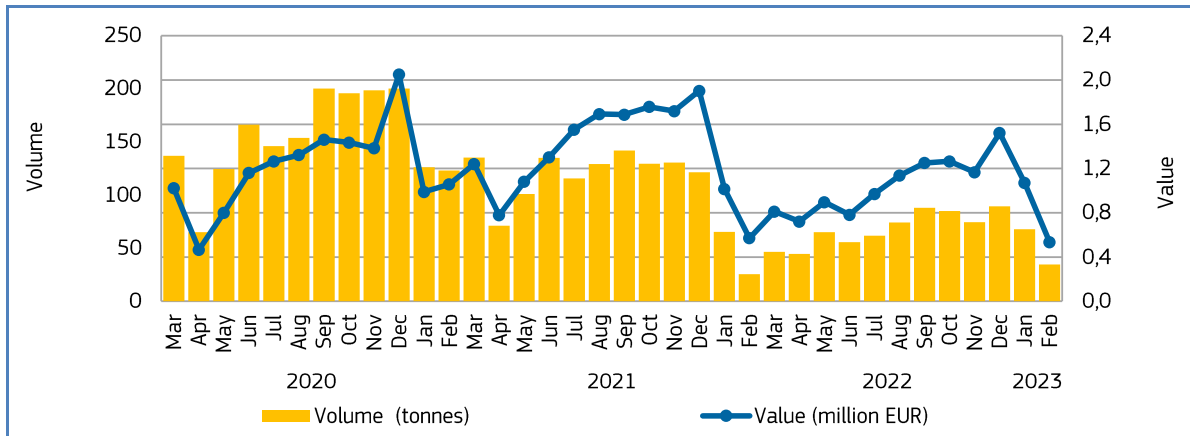


Figure 21. **TURBOT: FIRST SALES IN THE NETHERLANDS, MARCH 2020 - FEBRUARY 2023**



Over the past 36 months in **the Netherlands**, the highest first sales of turbot were in December 2020 when 200 tonnes were sold. The highest first-sales value and volume of turbot were recorded in 2020, while the supply was lower in 2022 and 2023.

Figure 22. **FIRST SALES: COMPOSITION OF “FLATFISH” (ERS LEVEL) IN THE NETHERLANDS IN VALUE AND VOLUME, FEBRUARY 2023**

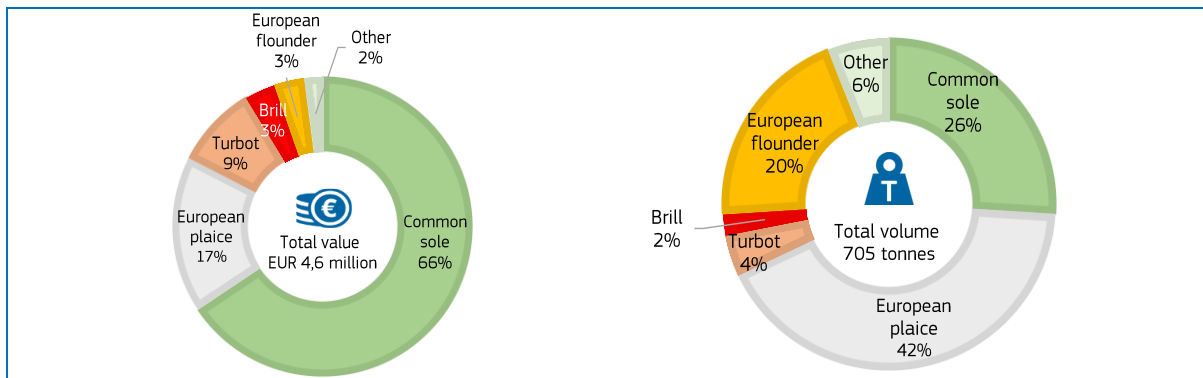
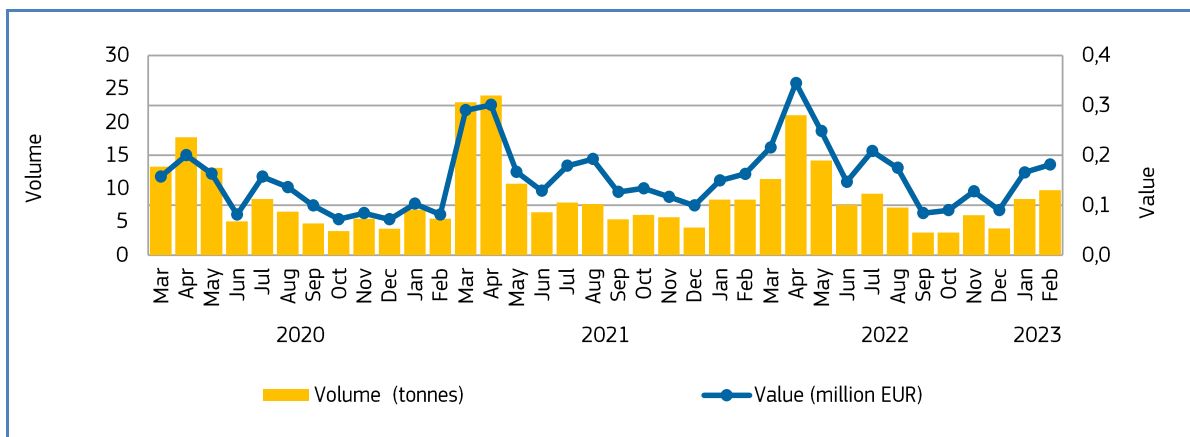
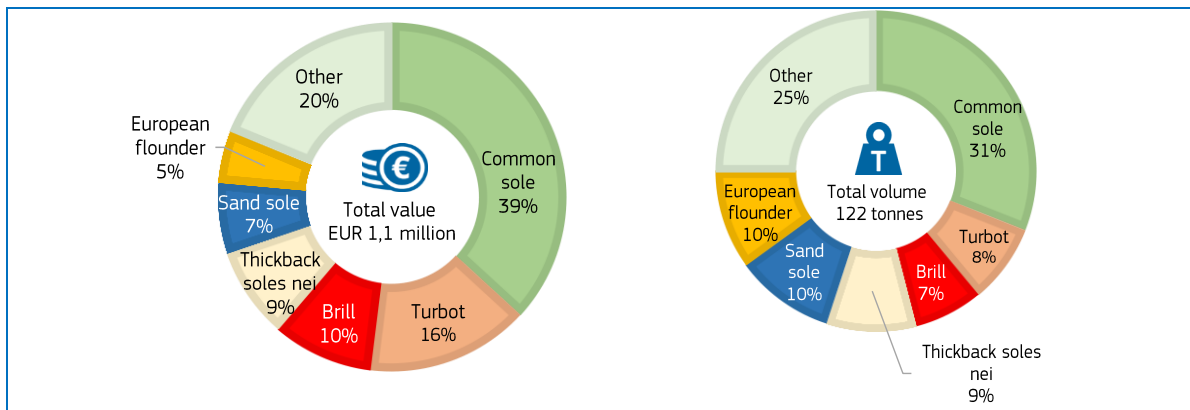


Figure 23. **TURBOT: FIRST SALES IN PORTUGAL, MARCH 2020 - FEBRUARY 2023**



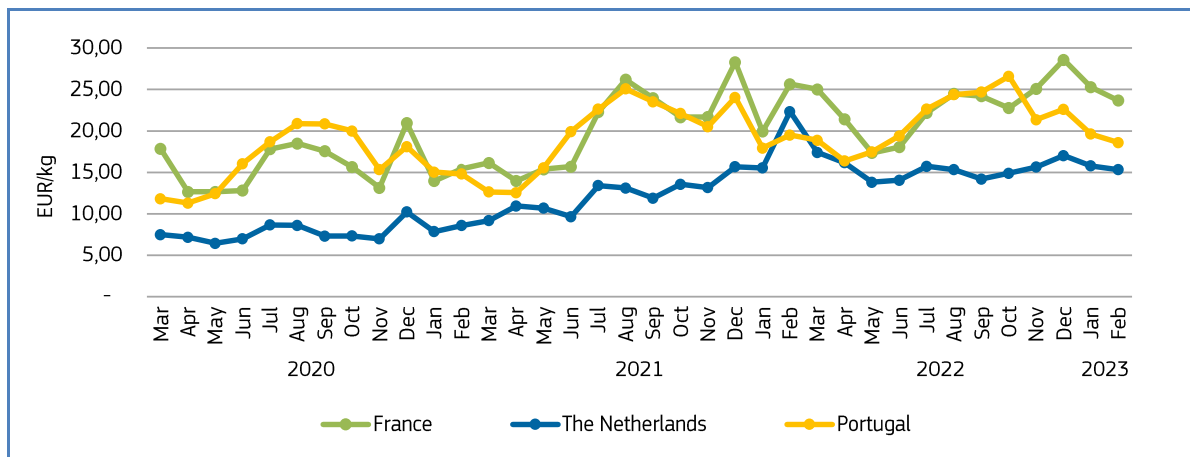
Over the past 36 months in **Portugal**, first sales have been seasonal with higher first sales in March-April-May each surveyed year. The highest first-sales volume of turbot occurred in April 2021 when 24 tonnes were sold. The lowest first-sales volume was recorded in colder months each year with 3,4 tonnes recorded in September and October 2022.

Figure 24. **FIRST SALES: COMPOSITION OF “FLATFISH” (ERS LEVEL) IN PORTUGAL IN VALUE AND VOLUME, FEBRUARY 2023**



Price trend

Figure 25. **TURBOT: FIRST-SALES PRICES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES, MARCH 2020 – FEBRUARY 2023**



Over the 36-month observation period (March 2020 to February 2023), the weighted average first-sales price of turbot in **France** was 18,87 EUR/kg, 73% higher than in **Portugal** (10,91 EUR/kg) and 7% higher than in **the Netherlands** (17,42 EUR/kg).

In **France** in February 2023, the average first-sales price of turbot (23,68 EUR/kg) decreased by 8% compared with February 2022 and increased by 54% compared with February 2021. Over the past 36 months, the average price ranged from 12,65 EUR/kg for 21,8 tonnes in April 2020 to 28,60 EUR/kg for 16,9 tonnes in December 2022.

In **the Netherlands** in February 2023, the average first-sales price of turbot (15,34 EUR/kg) decreased by 31% compared to the same month of 2022 and increased by 79% over February 2021. During the period observed, the lowest average price (6,43 EUR/kg for 124,5 tonnes) was in May 2020, while the highest average price (22,33 EUR/kg for 25,6 tonnes) was recorded in February 2022.

In **Portugal** in February 2023, the average first-sales price of turbot (18,60 EUR/kg) decreased by 5% from February 2022 and increased by 26% over February 2021. During the period observed, the average price ranged from 11,28 EUR/kg for 17,7 tonnes in April 2022 to 26,59 EUR/kg for 3,4 tonnes in October 2022.

1.7. Focus on Wedge sole

Wedge sole (*Dicologlossa cuneata*) is a member of the family Soleidae. It is a subtropical, demersal species that can be found at depths of 10 - 460 m, but usually between 10 - 150 m. The species mainly inhabits sandy or sand-mud bottoms and feeds on a wide range of small bottom-living organisms, primarily crustaceans, polychaete worms, bivalves, etc. It is an oviparous species with pelagic and non-adhesive eggs¹⁸.

Wedge sole populates the Eastern Atlantic: from the Bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa.

Wedge sole is currently exempted from the default maximum level of cadmium for fish of 0,05 mg/kg within the European Union, as new occurrence data show that the default maximum level can be complied with following good fishery practices. Specific maximum levels are therefore no longer necessary for the species¹⁹.

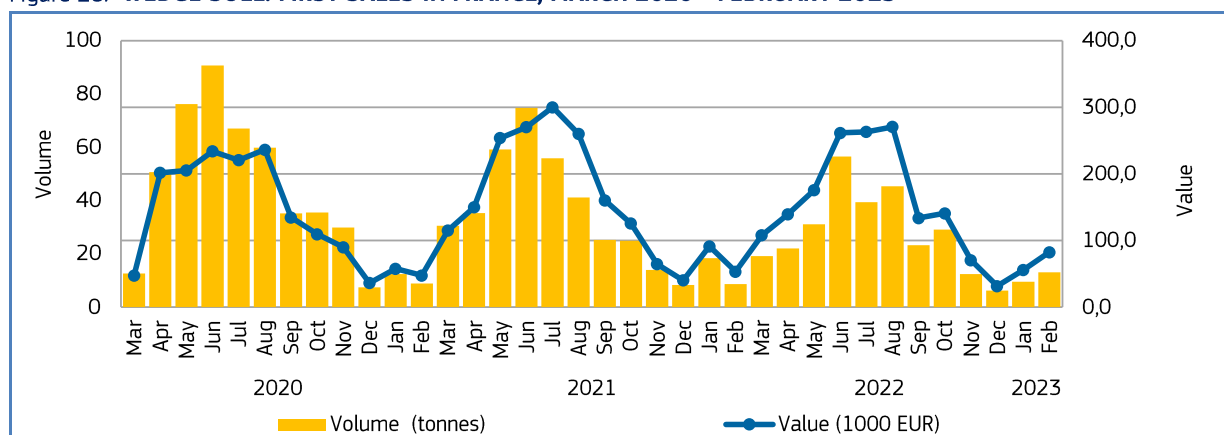
Wedge sole is caught mainly by trawl, and to a lesser extent by gillnets²⁰. The flesh of the species is white, delicate and low in fat. The bones are not difficult to remove when eating²¹.

Selected countries

Table 18. **COMPARISON OF WEDGE SOLE FIRST-SALES PRICES, MAIN PLACES OF SALE, AND CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL SALES OF “FLATFISH” IN SELECTED COUNTRIES**

Wedge sole		Changes in wedge sole first sales Jan-Feb 2023 (%)		Contribution of wedge sole to total “flatfish” first sales in February 2023 (%)	Principal places of sales in Jan-Feb 2023 in terms of first-sales value
		Compared to Jan-Feb 2022	Compared to Jan-Feb 2021		
France	Value	-4%	+31%	1%	La Cotinière, St Jean-de-Luz, Arcachon.
	Volume	-16%	+6%	1%	
Portugal	Value	-31%	-40%	5%	Aveiro, Matosinhos, Nazaré.
	Volume	-41%	-59%	9%	
Spain	Value	+10%	0%	2%	Sanlucar De Barrameda, Chipiona, Isla Cristina.
	Volume	+13%	-27%	1%	

Figure 26. **WEDGE SOLE: FIRST SALES IN FRANCE, MARCH 2020 - FEBRUARY 2023**



¹⁸ <https://www.fishbase.se/summary/Dicologlossa-cuneata>

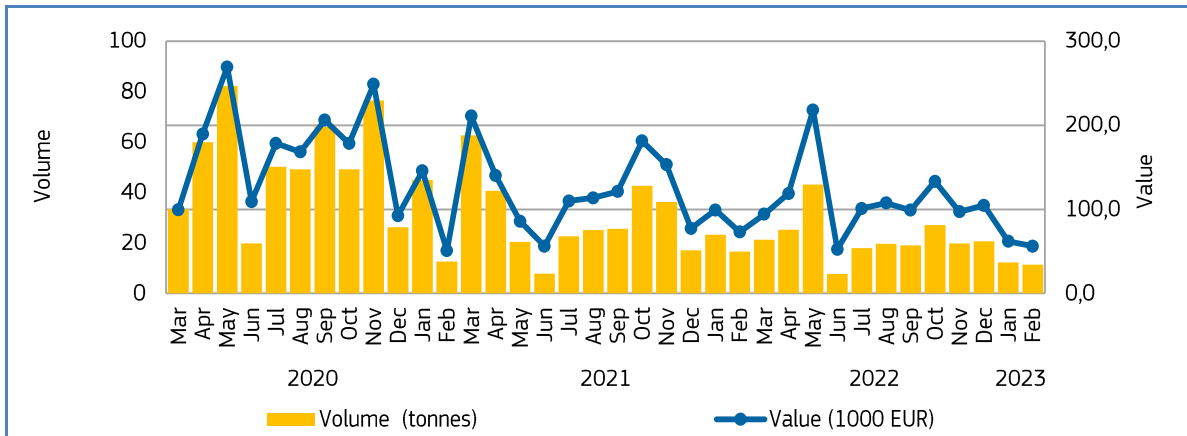
¹⁹ Commission Regulation (EU) 488/2014: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32014R0488>

²⁰ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s002270050308>

²¹ <https://uk.inaturalist.org/taxa/99274-Dicologlossa-cuneata>

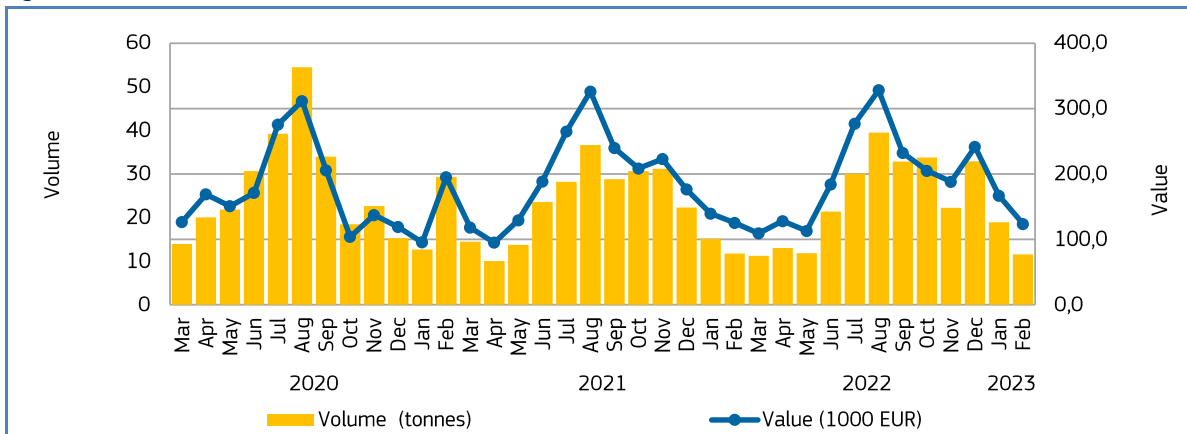
In **France**, over the observed 36-month period, the highest first sales volume of wedge sole occurred in June 2020 when 91 tonnes were sold. The lowest sales were observed in December each year, when sales ranged from 6 to 8 tonnes.

Figure 27. **WEDGE SOLE: FIRST SALES IN PORTUGAL, MARCH 2020 - FEBRUARY 2023**



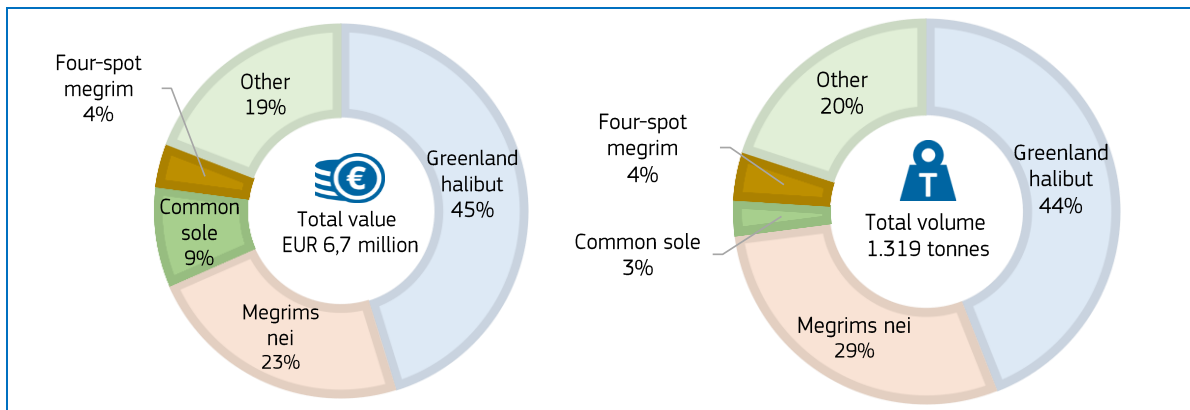
In **Portugal** over the past 36 months, first sales were highest in 2020 peaking in May with 82 tonnes sold for EUR 270.000. In general, supply was lowest during colder periods when weather conditions are not favourable for fishing activity.

Figure 28. **WEDGE SOLE: FIRST SALES IN SPAIN, MARCH 2020- FEBRUARY 2023**



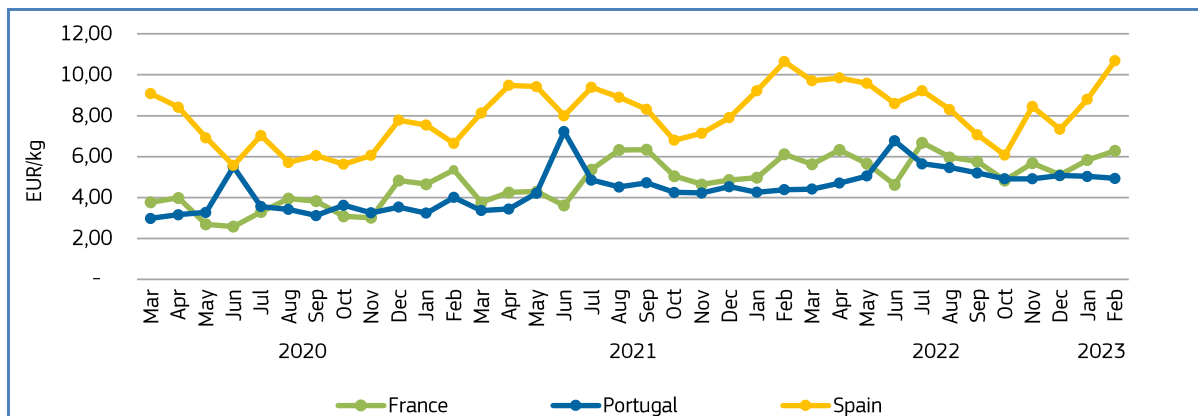
In **Spain** over the past 36 months, the highest first sales were registered in summer, peaking in August 2020 when 55 tonnes were sold. The main fishing seasons occurred in warmer months, mainly during the summer, while sales were low in winter and early spring.

Figure 29. **FIRST SALES: COMPOSITION OF “FLATFISH” (ERS LEVEL) IN SPAIN IN VALUE AND VOLUME, FEBRUARY 2023**



Price trend

Figure 30. **WEDGE SOLE: FIRST-SALES PRICES IN SELECTED COUNTRIES, MARCH 2020 - FEBRUARY 2023**



Over the 36-month observation period (March 2019–February 2022), the weighted average first-sales price of wedge sole in **Spain** was 7,58 EUR/kg, 93% higher than that of **Portugal** (3,98 EUR/kg), and 74% above the average price in **France** (4,40 EUR/kg).

In **France** in February 2023, the average first-sales price of wedge sole (6,28 EUR/kg) increased by 3% compared to February 2022 and by 18% compared to February 2021. The lowest average price was recorded in June 2020 at 2,58 EUR/kg for 91 tonnes, while the highest average price of 6,68 EUR/kg for 39 tonnes was recorded in July 2022.

In **Portugal** in February 2023, the average first-sales price of wedge sole was 4,93 EUR/kg, 13% and 23% higher than in February 2022 and 2021 respectively. The lowest price in the past 36 months was recorded in March 2020 at 2,98 EUR/kg for 33 tonnes. The highest price (7,22 EUR/kg for 8 tonnes) was recorded in June 2021.

In **Spain** in February 2023, the average first-sales price of wedge sole was 10,69 EUR/kg. That was the similar to the first sales price in February 2022 and 61% higher than in February 2021. The lowest average price was recorded in June 2020 at 5,57 EUR/kg for 31 tonnes. The highest average price of 10,69 EUR/kg for 12 tonnes was recorded in February 2023. In general, the average prices are highest in spring when supply is lower, but demand remains stable.

2. Extra-EU imports

The weekly extra-EU import prices (weighted average values per week in EUR per kg) for nine different species are examined every month. The three most relevant species in terms of value and volume remain consistent: fresh whole Atlantic salmon from Norway, frozen Alaska pollock fillets from China, and frozen tropical shrimp (*Penaeus* spp.) from Ecuador. The other six species change each month; three are chosen from the commodity group of the month, and three are randomly selected. The commodity group for this month is “flatfish”, and the featured species are fresh or chilled Atlantic halibut from Norway, fresh or chilled turbot from Norway and frozen lesser or Greenland halibut from Greenland. The three randomly selected species this month are fresh or chilled cod from Norway, prepared or preserved mussels from Chile and frozen lobsters whole, even smoked or cooked by steaming or by boiling in water from Canada.

Data analysed in the section “Extra-EU imports” are extracted from EUMOFA, as collected from the European Commission²².

Table 19. **EVOLUTION OF WEEKLY PRICE AND VOLUME OF THE THREE MOST RELEVANT FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE PRODUCTS IMPORTED INTO THE EU**

Extra-EU Imports		Week 11/2023	Preceding 4-week average	Week 11/2022	Notes
Fresh whole Atlantic salmon imported from Norway (<i>Salmo salar</i> , CN code 03021400)	Price (EUR/kg)	10,28	10,02 (+3%)	8,19 (+26%)	From week 01/2023 to week 07/2023 prices showed an increasing trend, which was also the case for the past three years reaching the highest price of 11,28 EUR/kg (week 16/2022), while the minimum price in the period analysed was 4,32 EUR/kg (week 44/2020)
	Volume (tonnes)	10.639	10.357 (+3%)	11.676 (-9%)	Volumes showed high fluctuation with values ranging between 5.672 tonnes (week 15/2022) and 19.497 tonnes (week 35/2022). Supply shows a clear seasonality with peaks occurring most often in weeks 35/37, 40/42 and 49/50.
Frozen Alaska pollock fillets imported from China (<i>Theragra chalcogramma</i> , CN code 03047500)	Price (EUR/kg)	3,76	3,66 (+3%)	3,17 (+19%)	Over the last three years prices showed an overall increasing trend. However, from week 01/2023 to week 11/2023 prices showed some fluctuations and a slight decrease. After the fall between week 45/2022 and week 01/2023, prices remained stable up to week 11/2023.
	Volume (tonnes)	1.849	2.632 (-30%)	1.558 (+19%)	Weekly volumes in the analysed period ranged from 587 tonnes (week 15/2020) to 6.758 tonnes (week 48/2022). Supply shows high fluctuations but do not seem to follow a clear seasonality.
Frozen tropical shrimp imported from Ecuador (genus <i>Penaeus</i> , CN code 03061792)	Price (EUR/kg)	5,41	5,44 (-1%)	6,01 (-10%)	Weekly prices decreased slightly between week 12/2020 and week 11/2023, while they increased between week 01/2023 and 11/2023. Prices ranged from 4,27 EUR/kg (week 38/2020) to 7,19 EUR/kg (week 41/2022).
	Volume (tonnes)	2.089	2.060 (+1%)	3.824 (-45%)	In the period analysed volumes showed high fluctuations, with a minimum of 891 tonnes (week 03/2023) and maximum 4.925 tonnes (week 33/2021). Peaks in supply seem to occur most often between weeks 09/16, 31/33 and 45/46.

²² Last update: 14.4.2023

Figure 31. **IMPORT PRICE OF FRESH AND WHOLE ATLANTIC SALMON FROM NORWAY, 2020 - 2023**

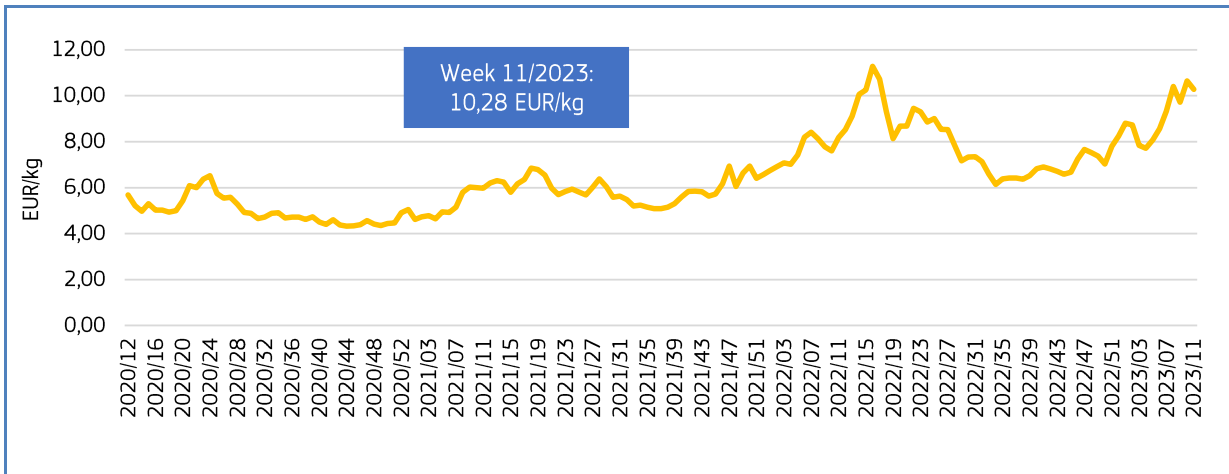


Figure 32. **IMPORT PRICE OF FROZEN ALASKA POLLOCK FILLETS FROM CHINA, 2020 - 2023**

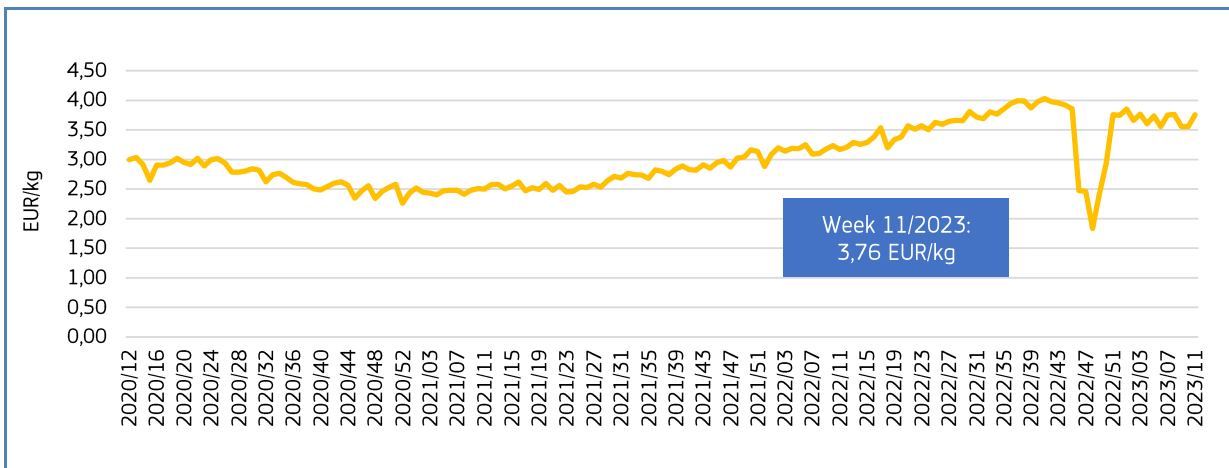


Figure 33. **IMPORT PRICE OF FROZEN TROPICAL SHRIMP FROM ECUADOR, 2020 - 2023**

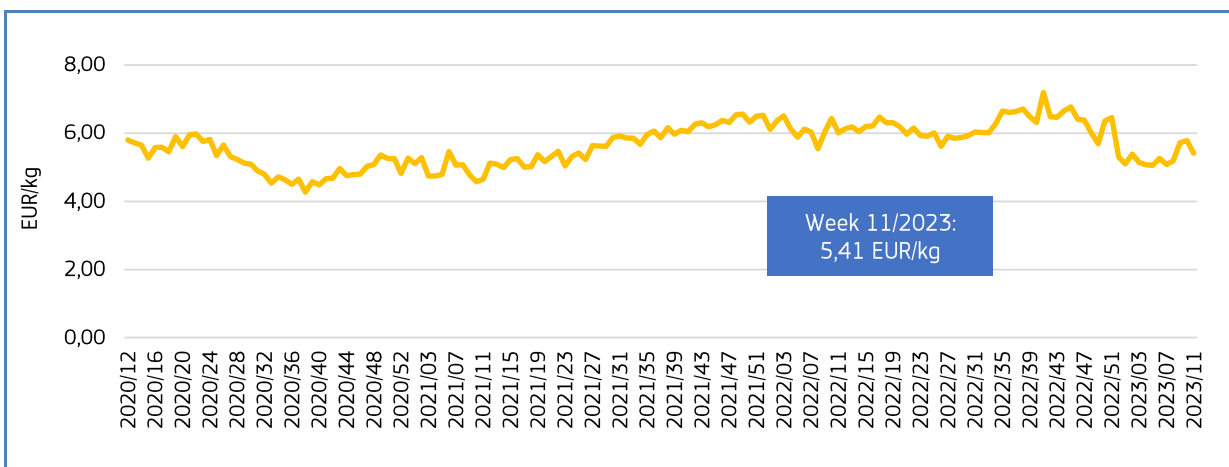


Table 20. **EVOLUTION OF WEEKLY PRICE AND VOLUME OF THIS MONTH'S THREE FEATURED COMMODITY PRODUCTS IMPORTED INTO THE EU**

Extra-EU Imports		Week 11/2023	Preceding 4-week average	Week 11/2022	Notes
Fresh or chilled Atlantic halibut from Norway (<i>Hippoglossus hippoglossus</i> , CN code 03022130)	Price (EUR/kg)	10,45	12,03 (-13%)	9,48 (+10%)	Between week 12/2020 and week 11/2023 prices fluctuated greatly showing an increasing trend. Prices ranged from 5,52 EUR/kg (week 23/2020) to 15,11 EUR/kg (week 06/ 2023). 54% of the weekly prices were below 10,00 EUR/kg.
	Volume (tonnes)	36	26 (+41%)	24 (+55%)	Supply is seasonal with peaks occurring most often between weeks 36/39 and 48/51. Volumes show high fluctuations ranging from 7 tonnes (week 53/2020) to 81 tonnes (week 42/ 2020). 43% of the weekly supply was less than 20 tonnes
Fresh or chilled turbot from Norway (<i>Psetta maxima</i> , CN code 03022400)	Price (EUR/kg)	7,62	9,94 (-23%)	10,70 (-29%)	Between week 12/2020 and week 11/2023 prices showed an increasing trend. Prices fluctuated greatly ranging from 2,69 EUR/kg (week 13/2021) to 25,31 EUR/kg (week 50/ 2021). 44% of the weekly prices were between 10,00 EUR/kg and 13,00 EUR/kg.
	Volume (tonnes)	2	1 (+28%)	10 (-81%)	Weekly volumes show high fluctuations in supply, varying from 0,002 tonnes (week 13/ 2021) to 10 tonnes (week 11/2022). 54% of the weekly volumes were less than 2 tonnes.
Frozen lesser or Greenland halibut from Greenland (<i>Reinhardtius hippoglossoides</i> , CN code 03033110)	Price (EUR/kg)	5,33*	6,15 (-13%)**	4,76 (+12%)***	Prices showed high fluctuation, following a downward trend up to week 10/2021 followed by an upward trend to the maximum price of 7,14 EUR/kg (week 07/2023). 57% of the weekly prices were between 4,00 and 5,00 EUR/kg.
	Volume (tonnes)	13*	89 (-86%)**	11 (+17%)***	Very high fluctuations in supply from 0,008 tonnes (week 13/2020) to 2.341 tonnes (week 44/2020). In the period analysed the highest peaks in supply seemed to occur between weeks 24/25, 27/30, 43/36 and 48/50. 54% of the weekly supply was more than 500 tonnes.

*Data refers to week 10 of 2023 (the most recent available) ** Data refers to weeks 06 to 09 of 2022. *** Data refers to week 10/2022.

Figure 34. **IMPORT PRICE OF FRESH OR CHILLED ATLANTIC HALIBUT FROM NORWAY, 2020 - 2023**

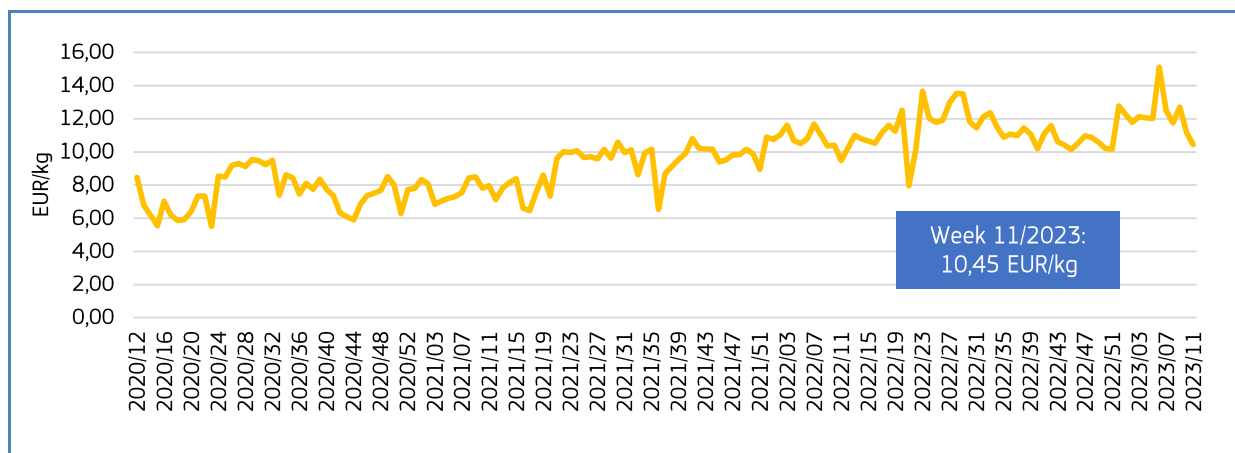


Figure 35. **IMPORT PRICE OF FRESH OR CHILLED TURBOT FROM NORWAY, 2020 - 2023**

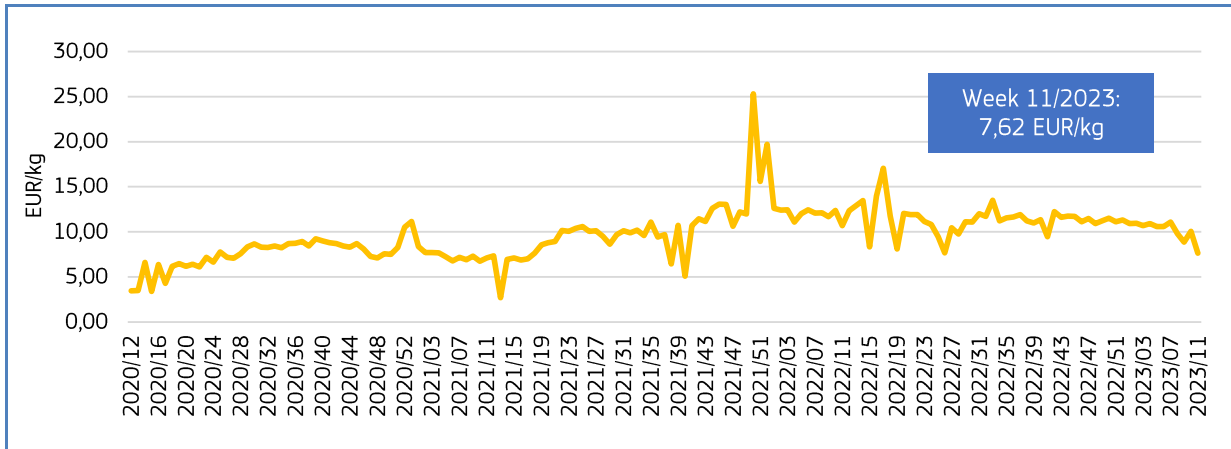
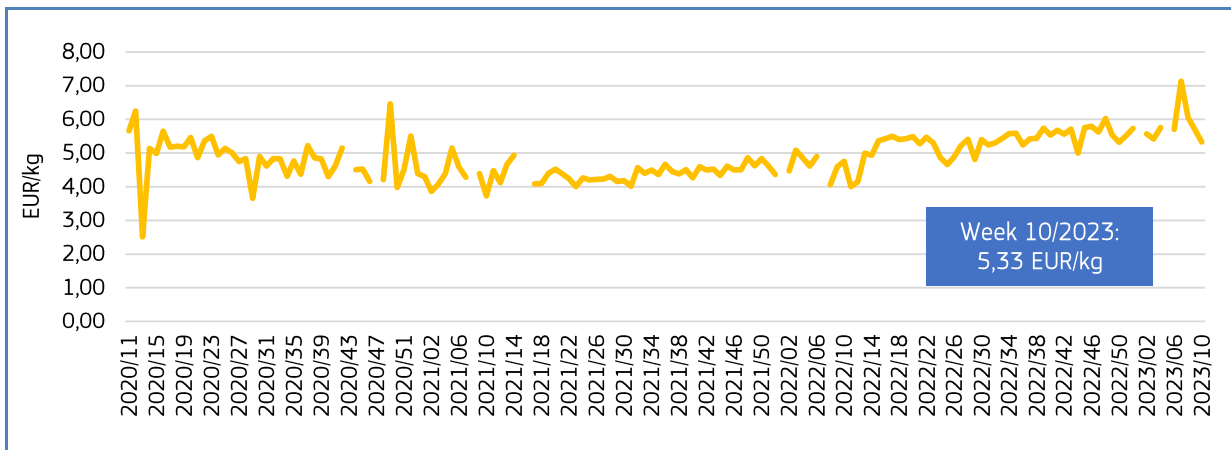


Figure 36. **IMPORT PRICE OF FROZEN LESSER OR GREENLAND HALIBUT FROM GREENLAND, 2020 - 2023**



Between week 01/2023 and week 11/2023, the price of fresh or chilled **Atlantic halibut** from **Norway** showed a downward trend. Price ranged from 10,45 to 15,11 EUR/kg, and volume fluctuated between 12 to 36 tonnes.

Between week 01/2023 and week 11/2023, the price of fresh or chilled **turbot** from **Norway** decreased. At the same time, volume showed the opposite. Price ranged from 7,62 to 11,09 EUR/kg, and supply from 1 to 2 tonnes.

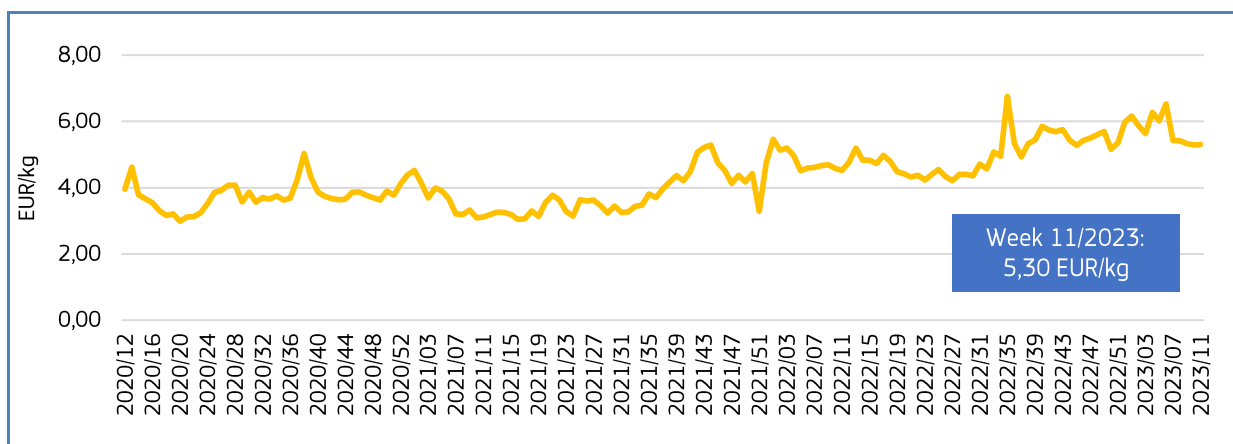
In 2023, price and volume of frozen **lesser** or **Greenland halibut** from **Greenland** showed a downward trend. Price ranged from 5,33 to 7,14 EUR/kg, and volume fluctuated strongly between 13 and 537 tonnes.

Table 21. **EVOLUTION OF WEEKLY PRICE AND VOLUME OF EU IMPORTS OF THREE OTHER FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE PRODUCTS RELEVANT TO THE EU MARKET**

Extra-EU Imports		Week 11/2023	Preceding 4-week average	Week 11/2022	Notes
Fresh or chilled cod from Norway (<i>Gadus morhua</i> , CN code 03025110)	Price (EUR/kg)	5,30	5,36 (-1%)	4,52 (+17%)	Between week 12/2020 and week 11/2023 prices showed an increasing trend. Prices fluctuated a lot ranging from 2,99 EUR/kg (week 20/2020) to 6,76 EUR/kg (week 35/2022). 52% of the weekly prices were between 4,00 EUR/kg and 6,00 EUR/kg.
	Volume (tonnes)	2.088	1.958 (+7%)	1.216 (+72%)	Supply is highly seasonal with peaks occurring most often between weeks 09/10/11. Volumes showed high fluctuations ranging from 89 tonnes (week 52/2020) to 3.502 tonnes (week 10/2021). 42% of the weekly supply was less than 500 tonnes
Mussels , prepared or preserved (excl. in airtight containers, and merely smoked) from Chile (CN code 16055390)	Price (EUR/kg)	3,26	3,32 (-2%)	2,67 (+22%)	In the period analysed prices followed a downward trend until reaching the minimum price of 2,22 EUR/kg in week 02/2021, followed by an upward trend to the maximum price of 3,64 EUR/kg (week 51 of 2022). 54% of the weekly prices were between 2,50 EUR/kg and 3,00 EUR/kg.
	Volume (tonnes)	833	401 (+108%)	721 (+16%)	Supply is seasonal with peaks occurring most often between weeks 12/13, 18/19, 21/25 and 31/25. Volumes show high fluctuations ranging from 122 tonnes (week 03/2022) to 1.420 tonnes (week 13/2021). 30% of the weekly supply was above 800 tonnes
Frozen lobsters whole, even smoked or cooked by steaming or by boiling in water from Canada ²³ (<i>Homarus</i> spp., CN code 03061210)	Price (EUR/kg)	17,52*	16,05** (+9%)	19,74 (-11%) ***	Between week 09/2020 and week 08/2023 prices showed an increasing trend. Prices fluctuated a lot ranging from 1,39 EUR/kg (week 39/ 2020) to 59,24 EUR/kg (week 05/2022). 34% of the weekly prices were above 18,00 EUR/kg.
	Volume (tonnes)	5*	16** (-71%)	12 (-60%) ***	Supply fluctuates a great deal with peaks occurring most often between weeks 26, 29 and 31. Volumes range from 0,005 tonnes (week 20/2021) to 456 tonnes (week 32/2022). 44% of the weekly supply was below 50 tonnes.

*Data refers to week 08 of 2023 (the most recent available) ** Data refers to week 06/07 of 2023 ***Data refers to week 08 of 2022

Figure 37. **IMPORT PRICE OF FRESH OR CHILLED COD FROM NORWAY, 2020 - 2023**



²³ There were no sales recorded for week 11 of 2023.

Figure 38. **IMPORT PRICE OF PREPARED OR PRESERVED MUSSELS FROM CHILE, 2020 - 2023**

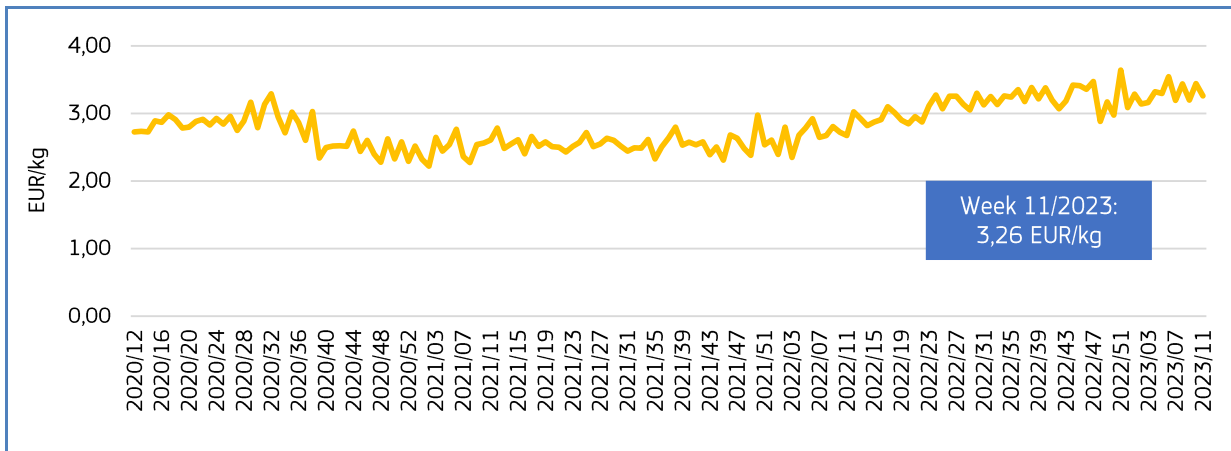
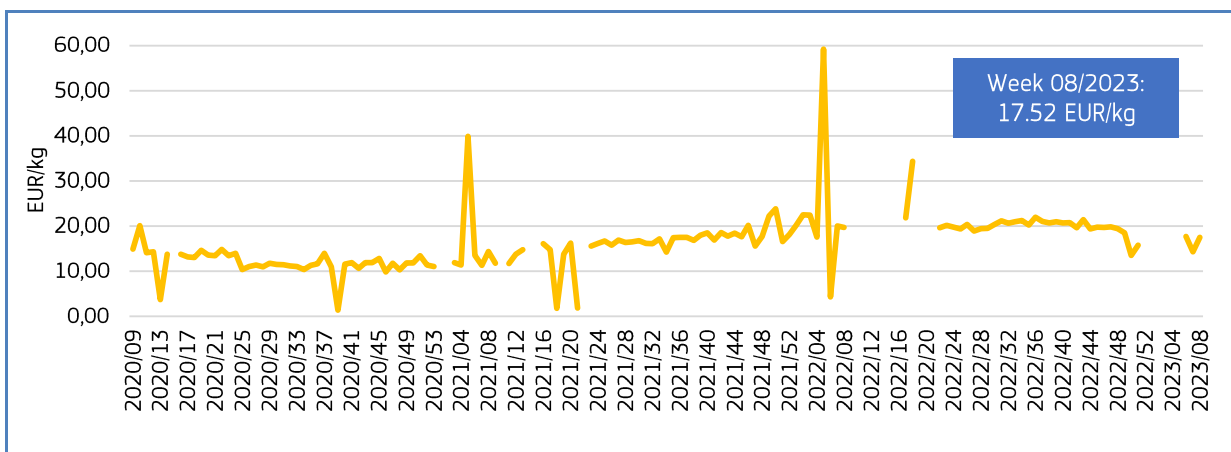


Figure 39. **IMPORT PRICE OF FROZEN LOBSTERS FROM CANADA, 2020 - 2023**



Price of fresh or chilled **cod** from **Norway** showed a downward trend between week 01/2023 and week 11/2023. At the same time volume showed an upward trend. Price ranged from 5,29 to 6,53 EUR/kg and weekly supply ranged from 680 to 2.505 tonnes.

Since the beginning of the year, price of prepared or preserved **mussels** from **Chile** was stable between 3,14 and 3,54 EUR/kg. At the same time, volume fluctuated a great deal showing an increasing trend ranging from 245 to 833 tonnes.

In 2023, price of frozen **lobster** from **Canada** showed a downward trend. Price ranged from 14,34 to 18,75 EUR/kg and supply from 0,018 to 22 tonnes.

3. Consumption

3.1. HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION IN THE EU

Data analysed in the section “Consumption” are extracted from EUMOFA, as collected from Europanel²⁴.

In February 2023 compared with February 2022, household consumption of fresh fisheries and aquaculture products decreased in both volume and value in most of the Member States analysed. Only in Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal did volume decrease while value increased. In Spain volume decreased, while value remained stable.

The highest decrease was observed in Denmark and Sweden. Denmark experienced the largest decreases for dab (-86% of volume, -83% of value), mussels *Mytilus* spp. (-58% of volume, -63% of value) and mackerel (-60% of volume, -52% of value) In Sweden the decreases were for pike-perch (-74% of volume, -43% of value) and salmon (-64% of volume, -48% of value).

Table 22. **FEBRUARY OVERVIEW OF THE REPORTING COUNTRIES (volume in tonnes and value in million EUR)**

Country	Per capita consumption 2020* (live weight equivalent, LWE) kg/capita/year	February 2021		February 2022		January 2023		February 2023		Change from February 2022 to February 2023	
		Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value	Volume	Value
Denmark	35,17	1.194	21,28	996	16,93	700	12,26	630	12,06	37%	29%
France	32,56	18.550	228,76	16.041	205,49	13.419	193,35	14.102	195,80	12%	5%
Germany	12,81	8.326	118,14	5.910	91,06	5.516	83,79	5.426	89,96	8%	1%
Hungary	6,50	573	2,86	319	2,34	232	1,86	262	2,11	18%	10%
Ireland	21,22	1.251	18,33	1.087	16,79	837	14,76	1.008	16,45	7%	2%
Italy	29,99	27.150	291,04	22.473	252,25	17.504	221,71	18.920	230,79	16%	9%
Netherlands	20,70	2.817	45,64	2.562	45,48	2.057	38,86	2.306	46,18	10%	2%
Poland	13,33	4.453	29,45	3.566	25,95	2.852	25,01	3.495	28,03	2%	8%
Portugal	57,67	6.390	43,33	4.535	33,65	4.187	33,40	4.439	34,68	2%	3%
Spain	44,21	52.307	454,94	41.208	370,99	37.823	376,63	38.326	372,73	7%	0%
Sweden	23,99	914	11,79	627	8,10	448	6,94	362	5,90	42%	27%

*Data on per capita consumption of all fish and seafood products for all EU Member States can be found at: https://www.eumofa.eu/documents/20178/521182/EFM2022_EN.pdf

Over the past three years, the average household consumption of fresh fisheries and aquaculture products in February has been below the annual average in both volume and value in most of the Member States analysed. Only in Germany and Ireland was it above the annual average in both volume and value. In Poland, even though the average volume for February was below the yearly average household consumption, no changes in value were observed.

The most recent weekly consumption data (up to **week 16 of 2023**) are available on the EUMOFA website and can be accessed [here](#).

²⁴ Last update: 23.03.2023.

3.2. European seabass

Habitat: European seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) belongs to the family Moronidae. They inhabit coastal waters down to about 100 m depth but can more commonly be found in shallow waters. They enter coastal waters and river mouths in summer but migrate offshore in colder weather and occur in deep water during winter in the northern range. Young fish form schools, whereas adults appear to be less gregarious. They feed mainly on shrimps, molluscs and fishes. They spawn in batches²⁵.



Catch area: They are found in the Eastern Atlantic, from Norway to Morocco, the Canary Islands and Senegal. The species is also known from the Mediterranean and Black seas, but is absent from White, Barents, Baltic and Caspian Seas²⁶.

Wild catch in the EU: France, UK, Portugal, Spain

Aquaculture in the EU: Greece, Spain, Italy.

Production method: Capture and aquaculture²⁷.

Presentation: Fresh or smoked.

Preservation: Whole and fresh, sometimes filleted²⁸.

3.2.1. Overview of household consumption in Italy, Portugal and Spain

The per capita apparent consumption of fish and seafood products in Italy, Portugal and Spain are all above the EU average. In 2020, Portugal registered the highest consumption within the EU with 57,67 kg, followed by Spain with 44,21 kg. Consumption in Italy was 29,99 kg, 29% higher than the EU average of 23,28 kg. See more on EU per capita consumption in Table 22.

Even though European seabass is one of the five most consumed fresh fisheries and aquaculture products in Italy and Spain, in the last 12 months a downward trend in consumed volumes and an upward trend in prices could be observed, also in Portugal, reaching a three-year peak of prices in all three countries.

We have covered **European seabass** in previous *Monthly Highlights*:

First Sales: France 2/2020, 8/2019, 9/2017, 9/2016, 6/2015, 6/2013, Portugal 2/2020, 8/2019, 9/2017, 2/2014, Spain 2/2020, UK 8/2019, 9/2017.

Consumption: France 6/2016, 9/2015, 2/2015, 8/2013, Greece 6/2016, 9/2015, 2/2015, 8/2013, Italy 5/2018, 6/2016, 9/2015, 2/2015, Portugal 5/2018, 6/2016, 2/2015, Spain 5/2018, UK 5/2018, 2/2015.

Extra-EU Imports: Turkey 4/2023, 3/2021, 3/2020, 7/2019, 6/2018.

Topic of the month: Seabass/seabream in the EU 8/2021, Seabass and seabream in Greece 9/2017

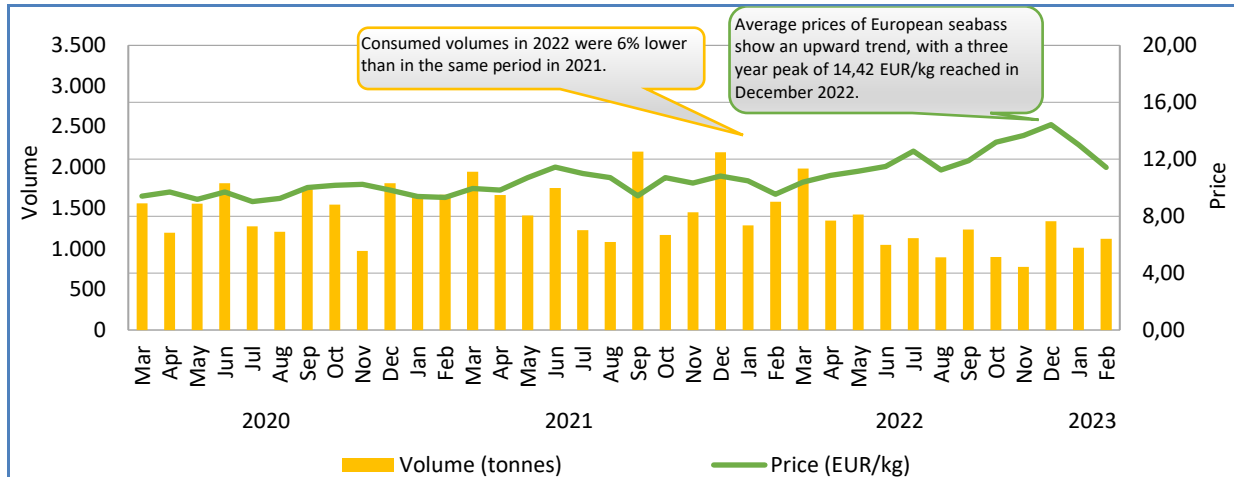
²⁵ <https://www.fishbase.se/summary/dicentrarchus-labrax.html>

²⁶ <https://www.fishbase.se/summary/dicentrarchus-labrax.html>

²⁷ <https://www.eumofa.eu/documents/20178/258094/Monthly+Highlights+-+N.6-2016.pdf>

²⁸ <https://www.eumofa.eu/documents/20178/258094/Monthly+Highlights+-+N.6-2016.pdf>

Figure 42. **RETAIL PRICE AND VOLUME OF FRESH EUROPEAN SEABASS PURCHASED BY HOUSEHOLDS IN ITALY MAR 2020 – FEB 2023**



3.2.3. Household consumption trends in Portugal

Long-term trend (March 2020 to February 2023): Upward trend in price and downward trend in volume.

Yearly average price: 6,41 EUR/kg (2020), 7,23 EUR/kg (2021), 8,64 EUR/kg (2022).

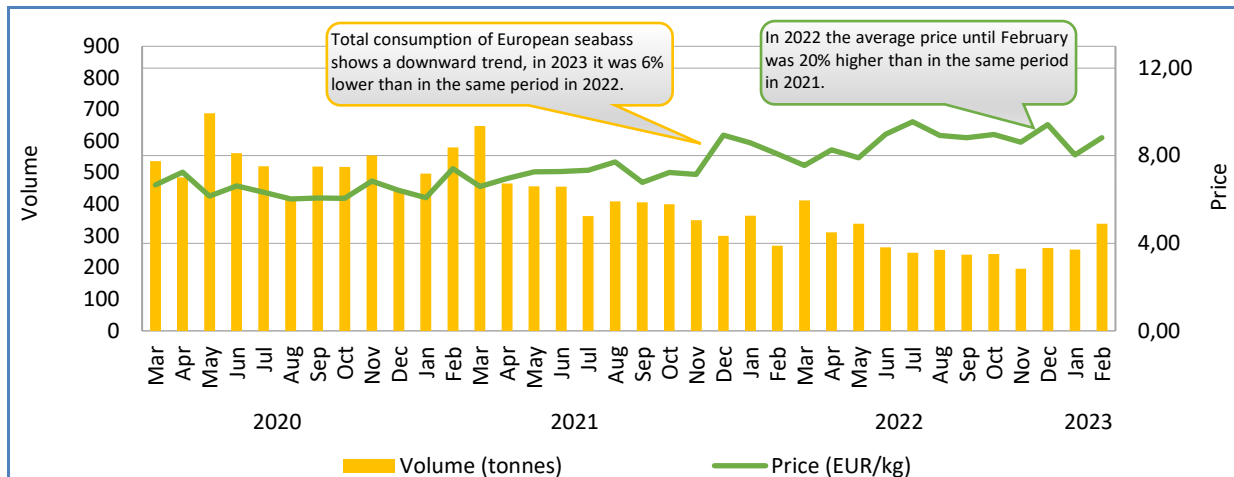
Yearly consumption: 6.170 tonnes (2020), 5.330 tonnes (2021), 3.404 tonnes (2022).

Short-term trend (January to February 2023): Upward trend both in price and volume.

Price: 8,42 EUR/kg.

Consumption: 596 tonnes.

Figure 43. **RETAIL PRICE AND VOLUME OF FRESH EUROPEAN SEABASS PURCHASED BY HOUSEHOLDS IN PORTUGAL MAR 2020 – FEB 2023**



3.2.4. Household consumption trends in Spain

Long-term trend (March 2020 to February 2023): Upward trend in price and downward trend in volume.

Yearly average price: 8,66 EUR/kg (2020), 8,94 EUR/kg (2021), 9,86 EUR/kg (2022).

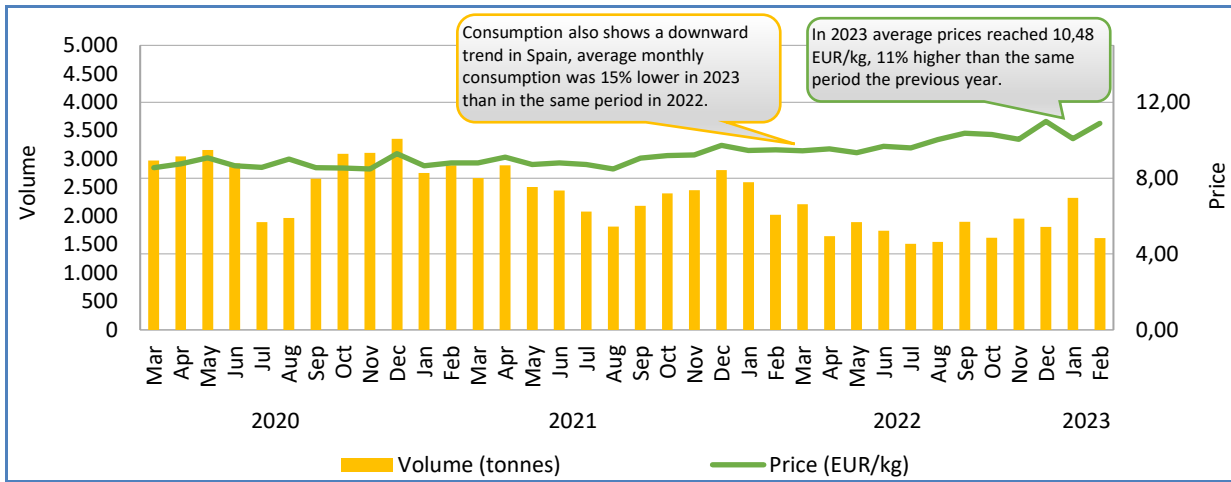
Yearly consumption: 33.908 tonnes (2020), 29.904 tonnes (2021), 22.447 tonnes (2022).

Short-term trend (January to February 2023): Upward trend in price and downward trend in volume.

Price: 10,48 EUR/kg.

Consumption: 3.934 tonnes.

Figure 44. **RETAIL PRICE AND VOLUME OF FRESH EUROPEAN SEABASS PURCHASED BY HOUSEHOLDS IN SPAIN
MAR 2020 – FEB 2023**



4. Case study: Inflation and price development for comparable protein sources

EU Member States are currently facing strong inflation, especially with respect to energy costs and foodstuffs²⁹. This can partly be explained by the recovery of the economy after the Covid-19 crisis and by the war in Ukraine, combined with extreme weather events in Europe in 2022, which affected livestock production in particular. According to Eurostat, the price of foodstuffs increased by 19,17% between March 2022 and March 2023. The main drivers of food inflation have been rising energy costs affecting the entire agri-food chain (from farmers to processing facilities to transport) and reduced supply of key agricultural inputs such as fertilisers and animal feed which constitute the highest input cost for farmers³⁰. At retail level, consumer prices have been increasing strongly. The consequences of this may have been significant for household purchases where expensive animal protein products have been substituted by cheaper ones, and meat and fish products purchased less frequently.

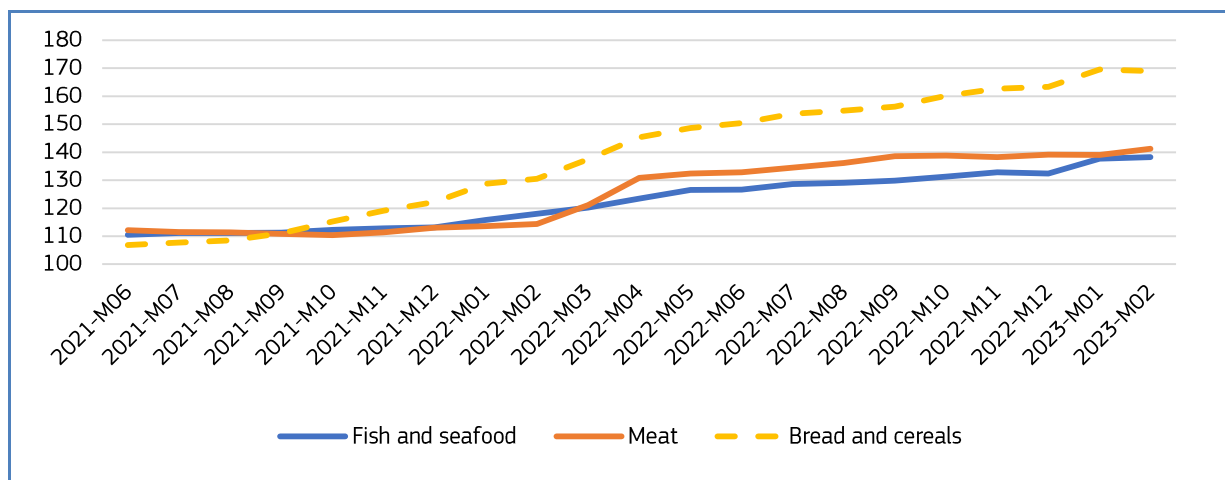
5.1. First-sale stage

Producer price index

Eurostat provides a producer price index for main commodity categories, including fish and seafood and meat products, updated on a monthly basis. It corresponds to an index of transaction prices for the monthly industrial output of economic activities.

From June 2021 to February 2023, the producer price index for meat and for fish and seafood saw increases of 26% and 25% respectively. By comparison, inflation of bread and cereals was 58% during the period. The inflation rates specifically accelerated in the beginning of 2022. However, meat prices grew more rapidly than fish and seafood prices, especially between March and April 2022: +8% for meat as opposed to +3% for fish and seafood. But in early 2023, fish and seafood prices seem to have been catching up with the meat price index. The differences in price growth could be explained by the fact that the EU market for fish and seafood still largely relies on wild-caught products for which the first-sale prices are less dependent on variations in production costs than in the farming sector (for example driven more by demand due to the auction sales system).

Figure 45. **PRODUCER PRICE INDEX (2015=100)**



Source: Eurostat, reference dataset: prc_fsc_idx.

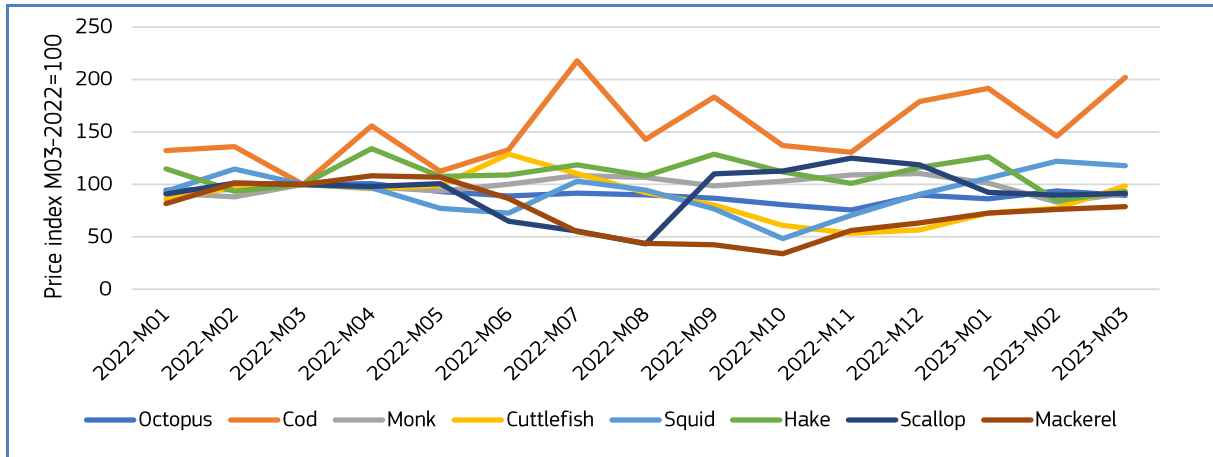
²⁹ Source: <https://www.touteleurope.eu/economie-et-social/le-taux-d-inflation-en-europe/>

³⁰ Source: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/739298/EPRS_ATA\(2023\)739298_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/739298/EPRS_ATA(2023)739298_EN.pdf)

Main fishery products

First-sale prices of most fishery products show a strong seasonality due to availability of supply as well as seasonal demand for some products, so it is not easy to analyse an assumed inflation trend for these products at first-sale stage. When calculating the exchange rate over the main inflation period available (March 2022-March 2023) for all species combined, inflation is only 2%. The exchange rate differs widely depending on species: for instance, average prices of cod have doubled over the period and almost tripled for European flounder, while octopus, scallop, monk and sardine experienced a decrease in FS prices (-9-10%). Prices of mackerel experienced an even greater decrease (-21%). Meanwhile, squid and cuttlefish prices rose by 18% and 31% respectively.

Figure 46. **FIRST SALES PRICES INDEX FOR A SELECTON OF MAIN FISHERY SPECIES IN THE EU**

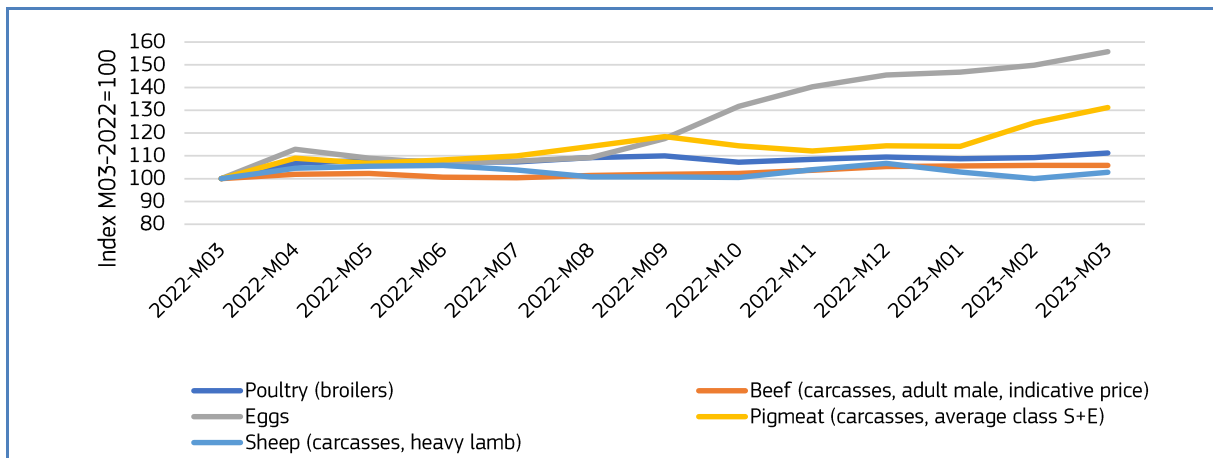


Source: EUMOFA (<https://www.eumofa.eu/sources-of-data>).

Other comparable protein sources: meat and eggs

Based on information provided by EU Member states, DG Agri collates price information for the main food commodities making it possible to reliably monitor inflation at producer stage. Although there was strong general inflation affecting animal protein products, the situation varied among the different product categories. Over the last 12 months (March 2022-March 2023), eggs were the animal protein product experiencing the highest inflation rate (+56%), followed by pig meat (+31%). For eggs, inflation started to accelerate from Q3-2022 whereas it was more recent for pig meat (Q1-2023). Poultry (+11%), beef (+6%) and sheep (+3%) experienced lower inflation rates.

Figure 47. **PRODUCER PRICE INDEX FOR MAIN MEAT CATEGORIES AND EGGS IN THE EU**



Source: EUMOFA elaboration based on DG AGRI (https://agridata.ec.europa.eu/extensions/DataPortal/agricultural_markets.html).

5.2. Import-export stage

Import price for fish products

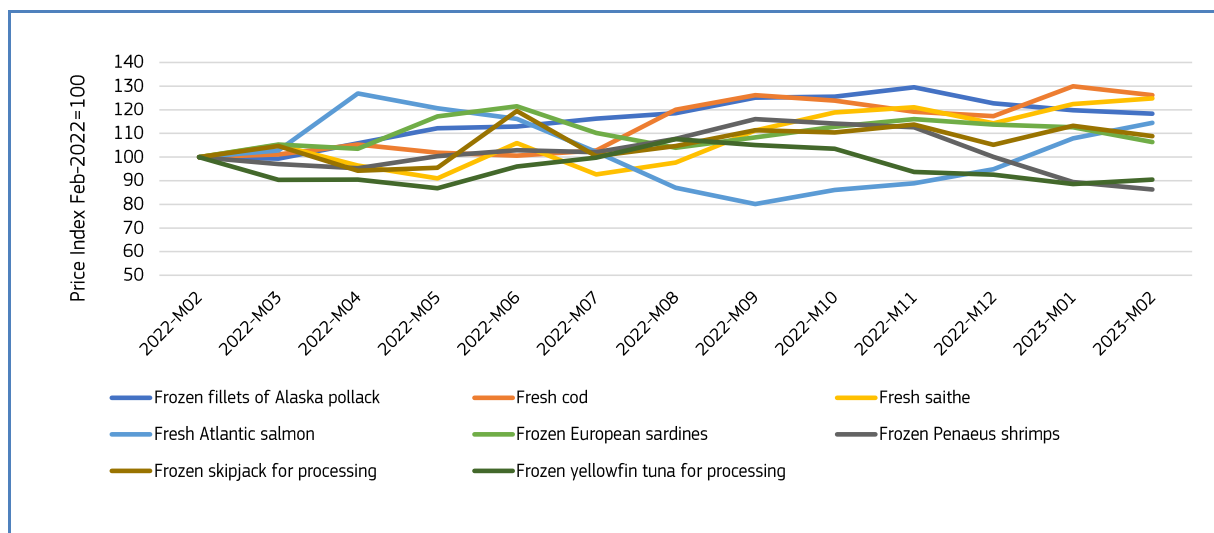
Unlike the meat market, the EU fish market is highly dependent on imports from third countries, especially for the raw material used in the EU fish processing sector (fresh salmon, fresh cod, fresh saithe, canned tuna and sardines, cooked shrimps, frozen Alaska pollock, etc.). When analysing trade data, a general inflation rate can be observed, especially since the beginning of 2022.

However, price trends show very different variations among the main imported products:

- Some products showed significant import price increases over the period: fresh cod (+25%), fresh saithe (+26%), frozen fillets of Alaska pollack (+18%), preserved skipjack tuna and fresh Atlantic salmon (+15% each).
- For other products inflation was less significant: fresh seabass and seabream (+11% and +13%, respectively), preserved yellowfin tuna in olive oil (+5%), frozen European sardine (+5%), frozen cape hakes (+9%).
- Some major imported products even experienced price falls: frozen yellowfin tuna destined to canning (-10%), frozen *Penaeus* shrimp (-15%).

The chart below provides the monthly import price index evolution for a selection of relevant fish products imported to the EU market over the period February 2022-February 2023.

Figure 48. **EXTRA-EU IMPORT PRICE INDEX FOR A SELECTION OF MAJOR IMPORTED PRODUCTS**



Source: EUMOFA based on Eurostat-COMEXT

5.3. Retail stage

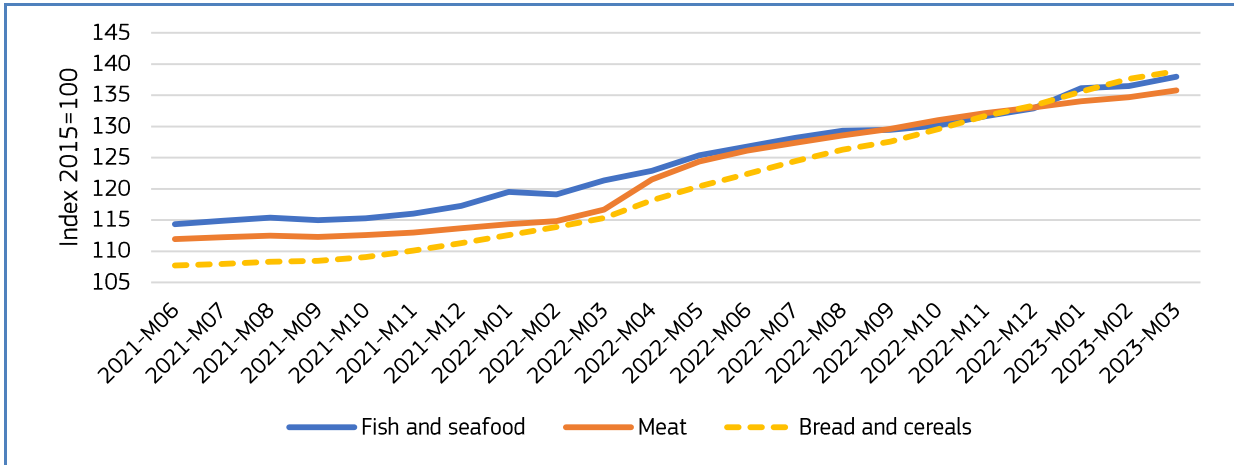
Consumer price index

Eurostat provides a harmonised consumer price index for main commodity categories, including fish and seafood and meat products, updated on a monthly basis. It corresponds to an index of prices paid by households to purchase individual goods and services in monetary transactions.

From June 2021 to February 2023, the consumer price index for meat and for fish and seafood experienced comparable increases of 21%. As for producer prices, the inflation rate specifically accelerated in the beginning of 2022. Following the producer prices, meat prices grew more rapidly than fish and seafood prices, especially between March and April 2022: +4% for meat as opposed to +1% for fish and seafood. In early 2023 however, fish and seafood prices seem to have been catching up on the meat price index. By comparison, inflation for bread and cereals was 29% over the period.

The fact that producer price index inflation was higher than that at consumer level may result in a reduction of margins along the supply chain (processors, transporters, retailers, etc.) for both meat and fish and seafood products.

Figure 49. **HARMONISED CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (2015=100)**



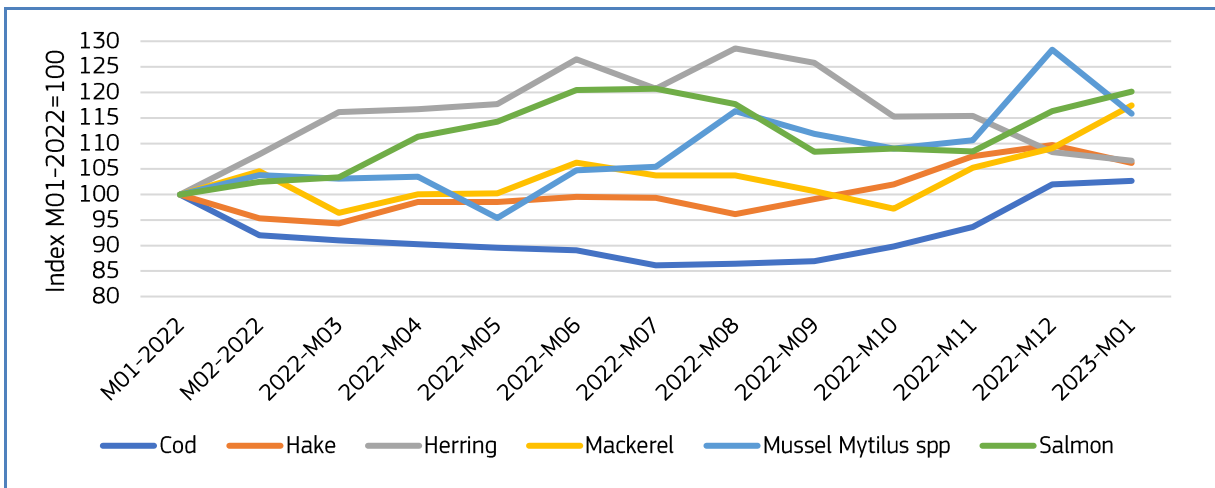
Source: Eurostat, reference dataset: prc_fsc_idx.

Retail prices for main fresh fish products in the EU

EUMOFA provides household consumption data (based on EUROPANEL) for a selection of fresh fish products in the main EU consumption markets. An analysis of these data for the main fish and seafood products consumed fresh in the EU shows a general inflation experienced by most of the main products over 2022.

Over the period January 2021-January 2022, inflation was specifically high for salmon (+20%), mussel *Mytilus* spp. (16%), and mackerel (+17%). The increase was less significant for herring (+7%), hake (+6%) and cod (+3%).

Figure 50. **FRESH FISH HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION: PRICE INDEX FOR A SELECTION OF MAIN PRODUCTS IN THE EU**



Source: EUMOFA based on EUROPANEL(<https://www.eumofa.eu/sources-of-data>).

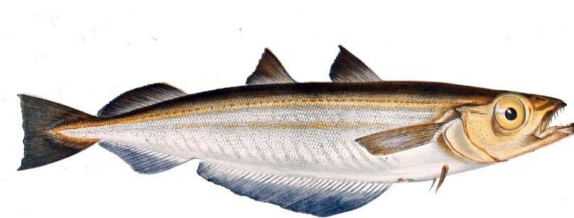
5. Case study: Blue whiting in the EU

Blue whiting is an important commercial species for pelagic fisheries in the EU, as well as in Norway, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Russia. Blue whiting is mainly used for the production of fishmeal and oil but is marketed fresh and frozen whole for human consumption in some countries, such as Nigeria, Spain and Cameroon. In 2021, catches of blue whiting in the EU amounted to 259.264 tonnes, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland and Germany being the main producing countries. The EU is a net exporter of blue whiting with a trade surplus of EUR 83 million in 2021. Most of the exports go to Nigeria as frozen products.

5.4. Biology, resource and exploitation

Biology

Blue whiting (*Micromesistius poutassou*) is a species of small codfish in the Gadidae family, widespread and common in the northeast Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea³¹. Smaller stocks are also found in the northwest Atlantic. It is one of the most abundant fish stocks in the semi-pelagic water masses of the northeast Atlantic. Blue whiting is a diurnal species, found closer to the



Source: Gervais, H., (1877). *Les poissons de mer*.

surface during the night³². It is most common at 100–600 m depth but has been observed deeper than 900 m. It is usually between 15–30 cm length and 80–180 g, but can grow up to 50 cm and 800 g³³. Females are usually larger than males. It rarely lives longer than 10 years but can reach 20 years of age³². Blue whiting mainly feed on krill, amphipods and small fish and often compete with herring and mackerel for food when young³¹. Larger specimens of blue whiting mostly feed on fish and they often cannibalise smaller specimens of their own species. Other important predators of blue whiting include saithe and Greenland halibut, as well as various species of whale, such as the pilot whale.

Adult blue whiting migrate every winter to their spawning grounds off the west coast of the British Isles, before spawning commences between February and April³². The blue whiting spawns in free water masses at a depth of 300–500 m along the edge of the continental shelf and banks³⁴. The eggs and newly hatched larvae move slowly towards the surface as they develop and are carried north by the ocean currents to the east Atlantic and Norwegian Sea. Some juveniles mature at about three years of age, but recruitment to the breeding stock is not complete until most fish are 7–8 years old. Males mature faster than females.

Resource, exploitation and management in the EU

The fishing season for blue whiting can vary depending on the location of the fishery and the management policies of the countries involved. In general, it coincides with the spawning season, from February to April, when they are biggest and most sought after³⁵. Blue whiting is mainly caught with pelagic trawls at 300–600 m depth along the continental slope off the

³¹ Institute of Marine Research, (2022). *Topic: Blue whiting*. <https://www.hi.no/en/hi/temasider/species/blue-whiting>

³² Vøllestad, L. A., (2021). *Kolmule*. Great Norwegian Encyclopedia. <https://snl.no/kolmule>

³³ FAO, (2023). *Micromesistius poutassou* Risso, 1826. Fisheries and aquaculture division. <https://www.fao.org/fishery/en/aqspecies/whb>

³⁴ FAO, (2001). *Handling and processing of blue whiting*. <https://www.fao.org/3/x5952e/x5952e00.htm>

³⁵ Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries, (2023). *Capture limitations with pelagic trawl*. <https://www.fiskeridir.no/Yrkesfiske/Nyheter/2023/fakta-fiske-etter-kolmule>

west coast of the British Isles, but purse seines and bottom trawls are also used. In the Mediterranean, blue whiting are usually a bycatch in the Norway lobster fishery³⁶.

In 2022, 77% of the Norwegian blue whiting catch was used for fishmeal and oil production³⁷, which was lower than the decade average of 95% and means that a larger share of blue whiting went to human consumption in 2022. Fishing vessels usually store their catch in refrigerated sea water tanks (RSW tanks) on board, which is sufficient for fish going to processing plants for fishmeal and fish oil. Blue whiting caught for consumption are usually frozen at sea, as fresh whole blue whiting spoil rapidly³⁴. However, in the Mediterranean seaboard, fresh blue whiting are landed and consumed as fresh products, such as surimi³⁸. There is only one producer of surimi base in the EU (La Compagnie des Pêches Saint-Malo in France), supplied by the French vessel Joseph Roty II which catches and processes blue whiting into surimi base on board³⁹.

Blue whiting is an important target for commercial fisheries in Europe. The management of blue whiting in the EU is based on a system of annual Total Allowable Catches (TACs)⁴⁰ which are set based on scientific advice⁴¹ and allocated among the EU Member States according to historical catch data. In 2023, the TAC is 1.359.629 tonnes, an 81% increase from 2022 and in line with ICES advice. In addition to TACs, the EU also manages its fisheries according to rules for sustainably managing European fishing fleets and conserving fish stocks⁴². This includes limits on the amount of time that fishing vessels can spend at sea, as well as other measures such as gear restrictions. In the Mediterranean, no minimum conservation reference size has been defined for blue whiting, but a minimum landing size has been established at 15 cm total length on the Spanish Mediterranean coast^{36,43}.

5.5. Production

Catches

In 2021 global production of blue whiting came to more than 1,2 million tonnes⁴⁴. The Faroe Islands was the top producer, accounting for 24% of global catches, followed by the EU 27 (21%), Norway (19%), Iceland (15%) and Russia (13%). Of EU MS, the Netherlands (24%), Denmark (16%), Ireland (15%) and Germany (13%) were the main producing countries, accounting for 68% of the EU catches.

In the period 2012–2021, global catches of blue whiting steadily increased until 2018, when catches reached an all-time high of more than 1,7 million tonnes. In the following years, catches decreased each year due to quota regulations and decreased by 17% from 2020 to 2021. Norway saw the biggest decrease in catch volume, down by 34% (120.000 tonnes), followed by the Faroe Islands (19%) and Iceland (22%). The EU decreased its catch volume by 7%, mainly because Poland and Denmark reduced their catches by 45% and 32% respectively.

³⁶ Mir-Arguimbau, et al., (2022). *Fishery dynamics of blue whiting, *Micromesistius poutassou*, a highly discarded bycatch species in the NW Mediterranean Sea*. https://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/269422/1/Mir_et_al_2022.pdf

³⁷ Norges Sildesalgslag, (2023). *Turnover*. <https://www.sildelaget.no/en/catches-and-quotas/statistics/turnover?SelectedReport=TurnoverSoFar&SelectedExtraction=MealAndOil>

³⁸ EUMOPA, (2018). *Surimi industry in the EU*. <https://www.eumopa.eu/documents/20178/114144/MH+3+2018.pdf>

³⁹ Alfa Laval, (2022). *Floating surimi factory in France*. <https://www.alfalaval.com/media/stories/food-processing/floating-surimi-factory-in-france/>

⁴⁰ European Commission, (2023). *Sustainable fisheries: EU reaches agreement with north-east Atlantic coastal states, as well as with the UK and Norway on the shared management of key stocks in 2023*. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/news/sustainable-fisheries-eu-reaches-agreement-north-east-atlantic-coastal-states-well-uk-and-norway-2022-12-15_en

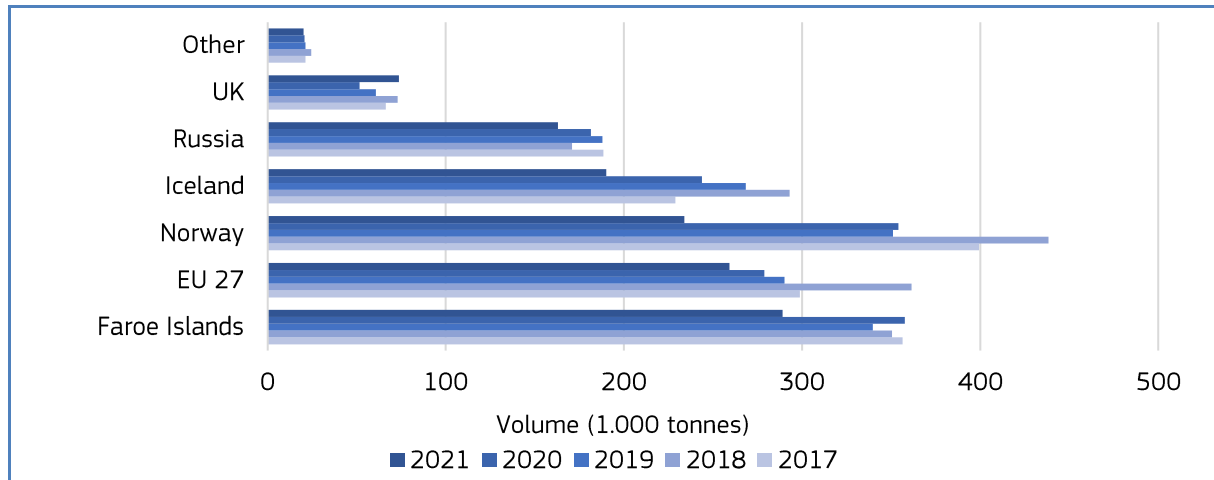
⁴¹ European Commission, (2023). *Scientific advice and data collection*. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/fisheries/scientific-input/scientific-advice-and-data-collection_en

⁴² European Commission, (2023). *Common fisheries policy*. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/policy/common-fisheries-policy-cfp_en

⁴³ Regulation EU 2019/1241. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019R1241>

⁴⁴ FAO statistics.

Figure 51. **TOTAL WORLD CATCHES OF BLUE WHITING**



Source: FAO.

Landings in the EU

In 2020, total landings of blue whiting in the EU amounted to 325.446 tonnes, with an approx. 50/50 split between blue whiting for human consumption and processing into fishmeal and oil. The landed volume of blue whiting in the EU was higher than the caught volume by EU MS, suggesting that vessels flagged to other countries landed some of their catches in the EU. This was especially the case for Ireland and the Netherlands, as their catch volume represented only 19% and 53% respectively of the landed volume in Ireland and the Netherlands. Blue whiting caught by foreign vessels was also landed in Denmark, but to a lesser extent, and represented 28% of the landed volume in Denmark.

In 2020, 36% of landings in the EU occurred in the Netherlands, 27% in Ireland, 25% in Denmark and 7% in Spain. In the Netherlands all landings of blue whiting were delivered frozen whole and gutted, while landings in Ireland and Denmark were delivered fresh whole and gutted. In Spain most of the landings were delivered fresh whole and gutted (97%) and the remainder was frozen whole and gutted (3%).

Table 23. **LANDINGS OF BLUE WHITING IN THE EU (volume in tonnes)**

EU MS	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Netherlands	4.788	33.716	47.064	38.570	101.424	63.763	121.038	150.025	132.968	116.347
Ireland	1.200	77.323	17.590	25.480	28.660	37.528	53.218	45.956	65.407	87.698
Denmark	1.181	2.624	69.720	173.841	184.701	155.262	178.267	223.474	124.667	81.647
Spain	5.232	8.336	16.477	25.927	25.650	25.595	27.527	25.431	25.097	24.170
Germany	17	1.221		5.772	3.054	9.840	34.261	7.333	1.166	8.264
Other	6.370	5.671	12.635	12.631	11.784	8.787	11.747	9.311	11.753	7.319
Total	18.787	128.890	163.487	282.221	355.273	300.774	426.059	461.530	361.059	325.446

Source: EUMOFA elaboration of Eurostat.

5.6. Blue whiting: first sales in the EU

First sales data for 2022 are displayed for the Netherlands and Spain. First sales data for blue whiting were available for all the main EU landing countries except for Ireland, where it is assumed a large share of landings are done as Killybegs is one of the closest ports to the main fishing grounds. Some of the blue whiting from targeted fisheries are sold via contracts and thus not reported in first sales data due to confidentiality.

In 2021, 62% first sales in reporting countries occurred in Denmark (72% in Skagen, 17% in Thyborøn and 11% in Hanstholm), 26% in the Netherlands (54% in Ijmuiden/Velsen, 16% in Vlissingen, 15% in Scheveningen and 14% in Amsterdam) and 10% in Spain (51% in Santa Eugenia Riberia, 27% in La Coruña and 7% in Aviles). Most of the first sales in Denmark were fresh cuts of blue whiting (96%) and fresh whole blue whiting (4%). All first sales in the Netherlands were frozen whole blue whiting, while all first sales in Spain were fresh blue whiting.

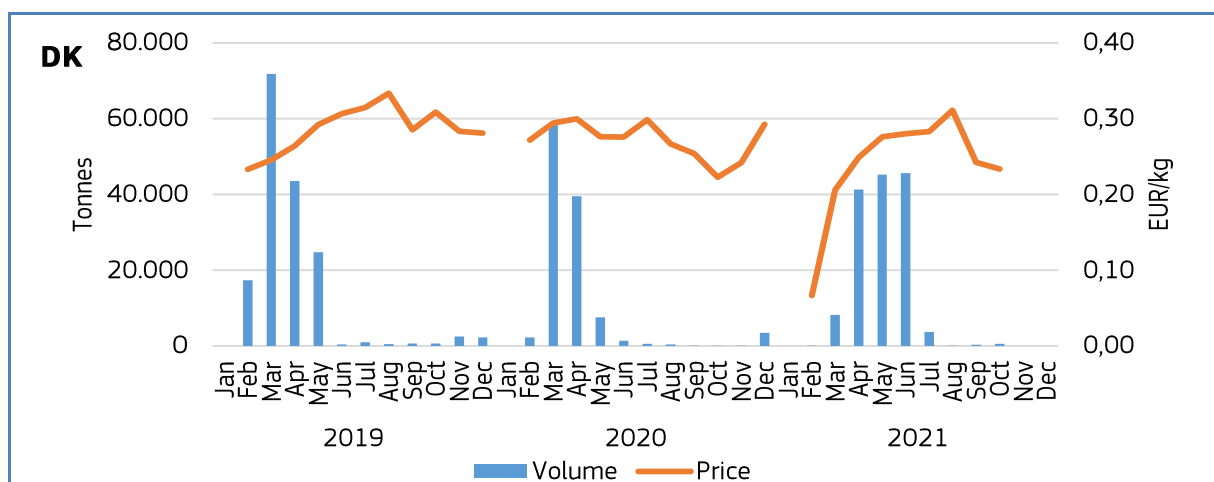
In 2021, first sales of blue whiting in reporting countries amounted to 235.580 tonnes at a value of EUR 124 million and an average price of 0,53 EUR/kg. The average price of fresh blue whiting destined for fish meal and oil was 0,27 EUR/kg, while the average price for fresh blue whiting destined for human consumption was 1,34 EUR/kg. Frozen blue whiting had an average price of 0,42 EUR/kg.

Among reporting countries, Denmark accounted for most first-sales volumes (62%), followed by the Netherlands (26%) and Spain (10%). Compared to 2020 first-sales volumes increased by 18% overall, mainly due to increased first-sales volume in Denmark (28%), followed by France (142%) and the Netherlands (3%). First-sales value also increased, but this was related to increased volume, as the average price decreased from 0,59 EUR/kg to 0,53 EUR/kg. First-sales volumes remained stable in the Netherlands and Spain in 2022, whereas the average price in the Netherlands fell by 72%.

First-sales data showed a high seasonality for all main reporting countries. In Denmark and the Netherlands, most first sales occurred between March and May/June, with peaks usually occurring in March/April. The difference in first-sales volume during the fishing season and the off season is very large in Denmark and the Netherlands compared to the seasonal variations seen in Spain. The main season in Spain was somewhat later, between April and July, some years lasting as long as September.

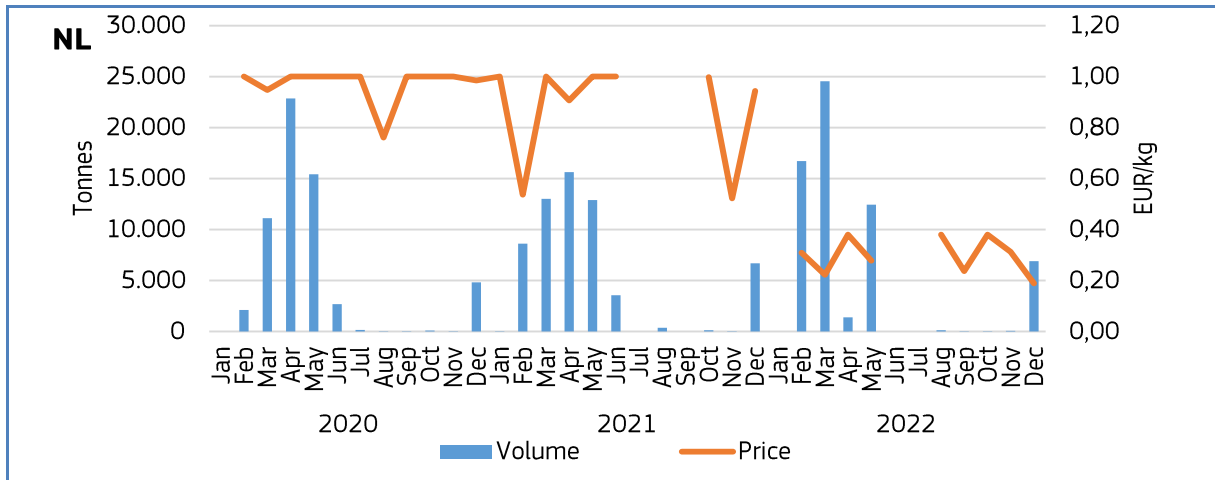
The average first-sales price of blue whiting between January 2019 and December 2021 was much lower in Denmark (0,27 EUR/kg) compared to both the Netherlands (0,95 EUR/kg) and Spain (0,97 EUR/kg). Most of the blue whiting sold in Denmark goes to produce fishmeal and oil, while in the Netherlands much of it is exported to third countries (Nigeria, China, Cameroon). In Spain, blue whiting goes to domestic consumption. This explains the discrepancies between the first-sales prices, as fish for human consumption generally is priced higher than fish used for production of fishmeal and oil.

Figure 52. **FIRST SALES: BLUE WHITING IN DENMARK**



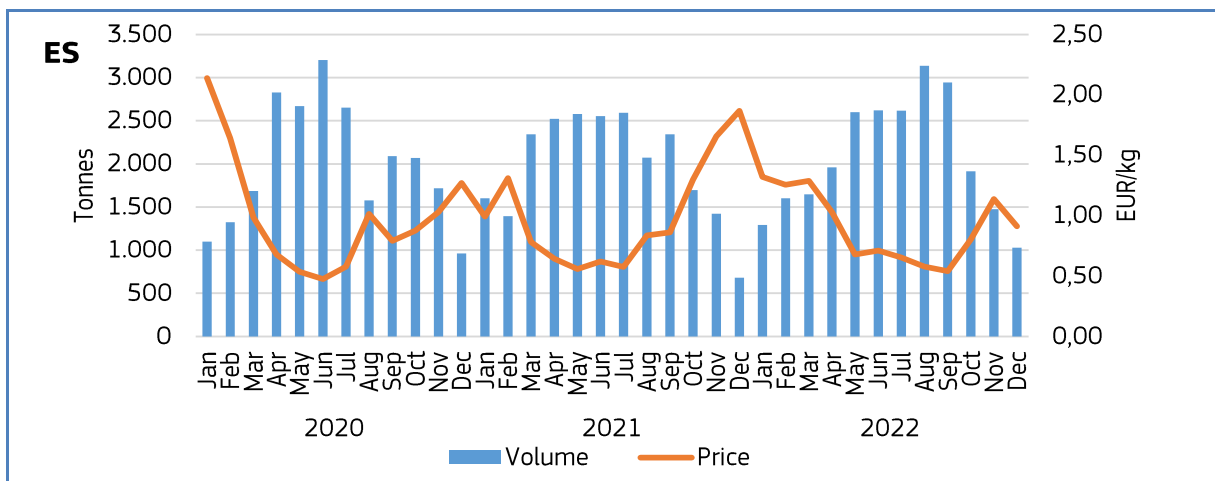
Source: EUMOFA, as collected from National Administrations (see the list of sources by country at the link <https://www.eumofa.eu/sources-of-data#firstSaleTab>).

Figure 53. **FIRST SALES: BLUE WHITING IN THE NETHERLANDS**



Source: EUMOFA, as collected from National Administrations (see the list of sources by country at the link <https://www.eumofa.eu/sources-of-data#firstSaleTab>).

Figure 54. **FIRST SALES: BLUE WHITING IN SPAIN**



Source: EUMOFA, as collected from National Administrations (see the list of sources by country at the link <https://www.eumofa.eu/sources-of-data#firstSaleTab>).

5.7. International trade

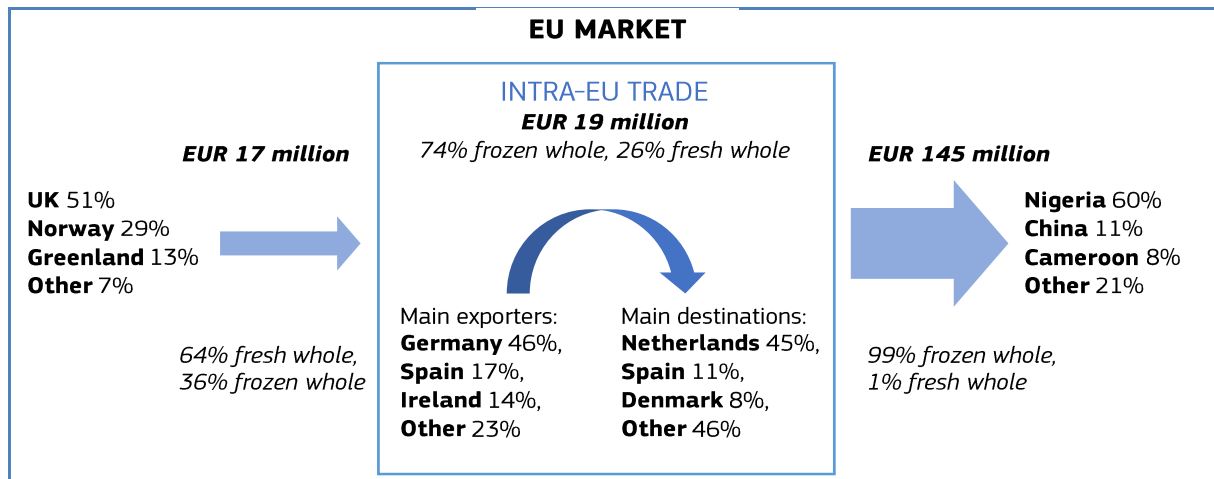
EU trade flows and supply

In 2022, the EU imported 56.749 tonnes of blue whiting at a value of EUR 17 million and exported 197.995 tonnes at a value of EUR 145 million, which resulted in a trade surplus of EUR 128 million. Imports consisted of frozen (64%) and fresh (36%) whole blue whiting, while exports mainly consisted of frozen whole blue whiting (99%). The UK was the main supplier of blue whiting to the EU market, with a market share of 51% of supplied value, followed by Norway (29%) and Greenland (13%). Denmark and Ireland, followed by the Netherlands, were the main entry points for blue whiting to the EU market, receiving 47%, 35% and 16% of total value respectively.

The main destinations for exports of blue whiting from the EU in 2022 were Nigeria (60% of total value), followed by China (11%) and Cameroon (8%). The Netherlands was the main exporter of blue whiting, accounting for 73% of total exported volume, the remainder was mainly exported by Ireland (25%).

Intra-EU exports amounted to 34.723 tonnes at a value of nearly EUR 18 million. The intra-EU trade volume mainly consisted of frozen whole blue whiting (82%); the remainder was fresh whole blue whiting (18%). The main exporting countries within the EU were Germany, accounting for 46% of total exported value, followed by Spain (17%), Ireland (14%) and the Netherlands (10%). The Netherlands was the main destination for intra-EU exports, accounting for 45% of exported value, followed by Spain (11%), Denmark (8%) and Ireland (8%).

Figure 55. **THE BLUE WHITING EU-TRADE MARKET IN 2022, IN VALUE**



Source: EUMOFA elaboration of Eurostat-Comext

6. Global highlights

EU / Water: At the United Nations **Water Conference** in New York from 22 to 24 March 2023, the EU confirmed its strong engagement with respect to global water security by announcing 33 commitments for action starting now. These commitments will underpin the EU vision that by 2050, the world should be resilient to increasing water stress, providing water security for all. The world is currently facing a water crisis driven by overdemand, mismanagement and the impacts of the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. 40% of the world's population lives in areas affected by water stress. Water resilience is key to preventing and addressing the current and future health, food and energy crises. The UN 2023 Water Conference was the first of its kind in almost 50 years, aiming to mobilise global action for water resilience and security. The EU brought together a range of commitments to the Water Action Agenda, including a number of policy actions and EU laws, leading water technologies, as well as extensive support to partner countries on water and sanitation⁴⁵.



EU / Fishery and Aquaculture: On 17 March the European Commission adopted revised Guidelines for State aid in the fishery and aquaculture sector ('Fisheries Guidelines'). The revised Guidelines set out the conditions under which State aid granted by Member States to support the fisheries and aquaculture sectors may be considered compatible with the Single Market. The new State aid rules help Member States to meet the ambitious EU green targets by improving energy efficiency and mitigating the effect of climate change, without undue distortions of competition in the Single Market⁴⁶.

EU / Blue economy: The European Green Deal envisages a central role for the blue economy in alleviating the multiple demands on the EU's land resources and tackling climate change. The sector can contribute by improving the use of aquatic and marine resources and by promoting the production and use of new sources of protein that can relieve pressure on agricultural land. For this, blue economy needs a large pool of highly-qualified and skilled professionals. 'Blue Biotechnology Master for a Blue Career' (BBMBC) has been established to address this need with an entirely new curriculum for postgraduates to empower them with blue biotechnology skills. Combining traditional lectures with work-linked training, the Master's degree strengthens the link between academia and industry. 40 students participated in the programme, and most of them are still working in marine biotech companies. Another 15 students attended the 'Spanish version' of the same Master's⁴⁷.

Norwegian initiative / Fisheries crime: On 23 March 2023, the first ever ministerial conference on fisheries crime was organised in Copenhagen by Norway, together with the United Nations Development Programme. In 2018, Norway and eight other countries initiated a global ministers' declaration against fisheries crime, known as the Copenhagen Declaration. Last week, nine new countries signed the declaration, which is now supported by a total of 60 countries. The Declaration states that the world must acknowledge that organised crime is threatening the global fishing industry and encompasses illegal fishing, economic crime and human trafficking⁴⁸.

Iceland / Fishery: The total fish catch of Icelandic vessels in March was 255.000 tonnes compared with approx. 145.000 tonnes in March 2022. This increase is mainly due to an abundant capelin catch which was nearly 209.000 tonnes compared with just above 95.000 tonnes in March last year. The demersal catch was nearly 43.000 tonnes, a decrease by 11% of which cod catch was approx. 24.000 tonnes, 18% less than in March last year. In the 12-month period from April 2022 to March 2023 the overall catch was 1.370.000 tonnes which is 8% less than what was caught in the same period one year earlier⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_23_1790

⁴⁶ https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/news/state-aid-commission-adopts-revised-rules-fishery-and-aquaculture-sector-2023-03-17_en

⁴⁷ https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/news/bbmbc-blue-career-project-mundus-master-2023-04-21_en

⁴⁸ <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/60-countries-now-support-the-norwegian-initiative-against-fisheries-crime/id2969915/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.statice.is/publications/news-archive/fisheries/fish-catch-in-march-in-2023/>

7. Macroeconomic Context

7.1. Marine fuel

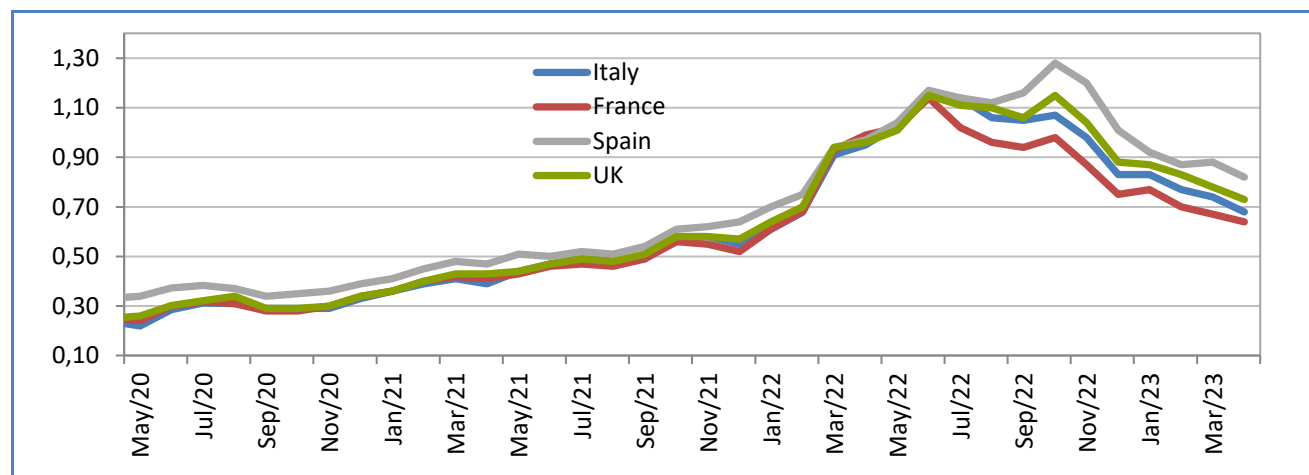
Average prices for marine fuel in **April 2023** ranged between 0,64 and 0,82 EUR/litre in ports in **France, Italy, Spain** and the **UK**. Prices decreased by an average of about 6,5% compared with the previous month, and decreased by an average of 25,8% compared with the same month in 2021.

Table 24. **AVERAGE PRICE OF MARINE DIESEL IN ITALY, FRANCE, SPAIN, AND THE UK (EUR/litre)**

Member State	April 2023	Change from Mar 2023	Change from Apr 2022
France <i>(ports of Lorient and Boulogne)</i>	0,64	-4%	-35%
Italy <i>(ports of Ancona and Livorno)</i>	0,68	-8%	-28%
Spain <i>(ports of A Coruña and Vigo)</i>	0,82	-7%	-15%
The UK <i>(ports of Grimsby and Aberdeen)</i>	0,73	-6%	-24%

Source: Chamber of Commerce of Forlì-Cesena, Italy; DPMA, France; MABUX.

Figure 56. **AVERAGE PRICE OF MARINE DIESEL IN ITALY, FRANCE, SPAIN, AND THE UK (EUR/litre)**

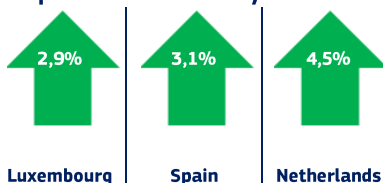


Source: Chamber of Commerce of Forlì-Cesena, Italy; DPMA, France; MABUX.

7.2. Consumer prices

The EU annual inflation rate was at 8,3% in March 2023, down from 9,9% in February 2023. A year earlier, the rate was 7,8%.

Inflation: lowest rates in March 2023, compared with February 2023.



Inflation: highest rates in March 2023, compared with February 2023.



Table 25. HARMONISED INDEX OF CONSUMER PRICES IN THE EU (2015 = 100)

	Mar 2021	Mar 2022	Feb 2023	Mar 2023	Change from Feb 2023		Change from Mar 2022	
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	110,15	117,54	138,17	140,07	↑	1,4%	↑	19,2%
Fish and seafood	113,26	121,33	136,50	137,96	↑	1,1%	↑	13,8%

Source: Eurostat.

7.3. Exchange rates

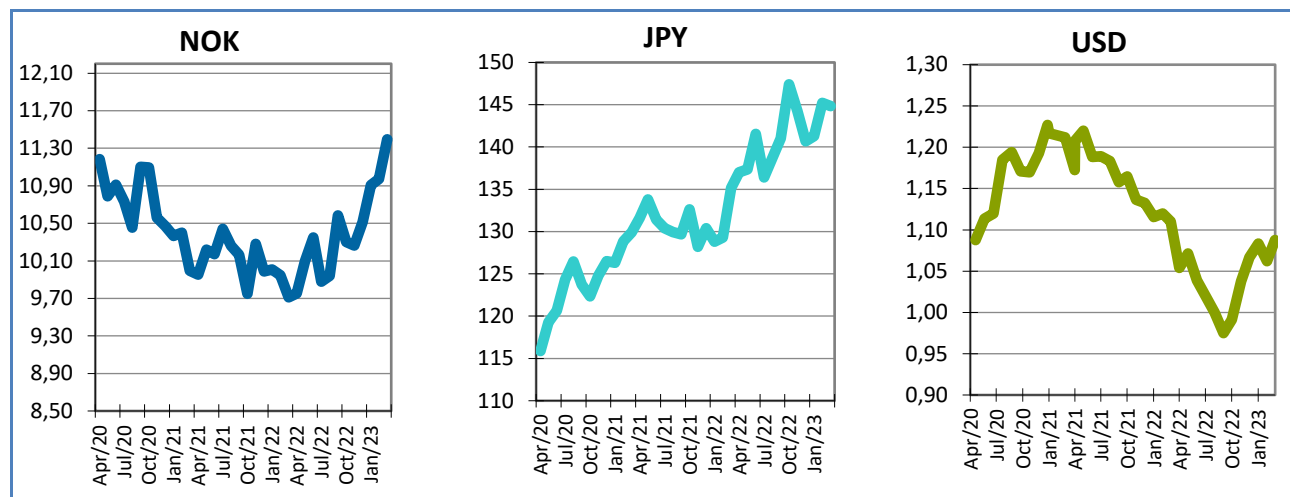
Table 26. EURO EXCHANGE RATES FOR SELECTED CURRENCIES

Currency	Mar 2021	Mar 2022	Feb 2023	Mar 2023
NOK	9,9955	9,711	10,9713	11,394
JPY	129,91	135,17	145,23	144,83
USD	1,1725	1,1101	1,0619	1,0875

Source: European Central Bank.

In March 2023, the euro appreciated against the Norwegian krone (3,9%), the US dollar (2,4%) and depreciated against the Japanese yen (0,3%), relative to the previous month. For the past six months, the euro has fluctuated around 143,95 against the Japanese yen. Compared with March 2022, the euro has appreciated 7,1% against the Japanese yen and 17,3% against the Norwegian krone, and depreciated 2,0% against the US dollar.

Figure 57. TREND OF EURO EXCHANGE RATES



Source: European Central Bank.

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This report has been compiled using EUMOFA data and the following sources:

First sales: EUR-Lex, DG Mare – European Commission, FAO, ICES, Eur-LEX, Directorate of Fisheries of Norway, Fishbase.se, British Sea Fishing, Scientia Marina Vol 60., Current Politics and Economics of Europe.

Consumption: Europanel, FishBase.

Case studies: Institute of Marine Research, Great Norwegian Encyclopedia, FAO, Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries, Scientia Marina, Norges Sildesalgslag, Alfa Laval, European Commission, EUR-Lex, Sean Ward Fish Exports, Eurostat-Comext, ResearchGate, Les poisons de mer, Eurostat, EUMOFA, European Parliament, DG Agri.

Global highlights: European Commission, Oceans and Fisheries, Statistics Iceland, Government of Norway.

Macroeconomic context: EUROSTAT, Chamber of Commerce of Forlì-Ces ena, Italy: DPMA, France: ARVI, Spain: MABUX, European Central Bank.

The underlying first-sales data is in an annex available on the EUMOFA website. Analyses are made at aggregated (main commercial species) level and according to the EU Electronic recording and reporting system (ERS).

In the context of this Monthly Highlight, analyses are led in current prices and expressed in nominal values.

The **European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products (EUMOFA)** was developed by the European Commission, representing one of the tools of the new Market Policy in the framework of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. [Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 art. 42].

As a **market intelligence tool**, EUMOFA provides regular weekly prices, monthly market trends, and annual structural data along the supply chain.

The database is based on data provided and validated by Member States and European institutions. It is available in 24 languages.

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