

Coronavirus response

EUMOFA's weekly data and trends analysis

Weeks 22 - 23

The fishery and aquaculture sectors are among the most immediately impacted by the crisis. EUMOFA is releasing a weekly COVID-19 bulletin in order to inform the sector as quickly as possible on the evolution of the markets along the entire value chain, based on the most recent data on first sales, production and trade of fishery and aquaculture products. The data and analyses proposed are accurate to EUMOFA experts' best knowledge but are of course subject to availability of information in the short-term and to intrinsic volatility of the current situation.

As several Member States have been gradually lifting restrictions, two bi-weekly bulletins will be released in June, and starting from July, relevant updates will be included in the Monthly Highlights.

Most of countries have already opened kindergartens and schools. With continued distancing measures, larger gatherings start to be allowed, leading restaurants, cafes, schools and shops to re-open but still with relatively low activity. Prospects of increased demand from HORECA gives rise to cautious optimism throughout the value chain.



FISHERIES

FISHING ACTIVITIES RECOVERING DUE TO SLOWLY INCREASING DEMAND BUT PRICES STILL LOW, ESPECIALLY FOR EXPORT MARKETS¹

In **France**, fishing activities have recovered but [demand is still fragile](#) and too low to absorb the increased supplies and imports from neighbour countries, leading to low prices. [FranceAgriMer data](#) on weekly auction sales (excluding the Mediterranean seaboard) show that for the 31 main species, first sales volumes significantly increased in week 22 against week 21 (+17%, mostly due to sardine and to a lesser extent monk, saithe and haddock) but then decreased in week 23 compared with week 22 (-9%, mostly due to sardine). This led the average first sale price to decrease by 23% from week 21 to week 22 (mostly due to the volume effect and the increasing share of sardine) and to increase from week 22 to week 23 (+10%, with most species experiencing price increases and sardine share decreasing).

¹ Weekly data on first sale are conceived to be disseminated as rapidly as possible. For this reason, they only cover some representative products in a selection of locations in some countries. They do not aim to give complete coverage of the market, and so it is recommended to use them as a mere indication of ongoing trends. For more information on species, countries and locations covered, please see [here](#).

In **Spain**, [sardine prices dropped in Galicia](#) since the sardine campaign started in Portugal, the first week of June. In A Coruña, the medium sized sardine was sold at 1,50 EUR/kg and the big sized at 3,00 EUR/kg. The first week of June, Galician fishers sold medium sized sardines at 0,40 EUR/kg and big sized ones at 1,50 EUR/kg. The demand is expected to be lower than last year according to Acerga (seiners association of Galicia), due to COVID-19 restrictions making difficult the “sardiñadas” celebrations. In addition, the [anchovy campaign](#) is ending for Cantabrian seiners and prices have been lower than last year, making this year’s campaign hardly profitable.

In [five auctions](#) in **Denmark** (Hanstholm, Hirtshals, Strandby, Grenaa and Skagen), first-sale volumes decreased by 7% in week 22 compared to week 21 and remained stable in week 23 despite a public holiday on Monday 1st June. First-sale value decreased by 10% in week 22 but recovered in week 23 (+3%). Fishing activity seems to have increased over the past two months. The total first-sale volume in April and May was more than 50% higher compared to February and March. The main species contributing to this increase were plaice (+184%), saithe (+36%), cod (+86%), hake (+97%) and pollack (+129%).

In **Ireland**, the situation for the groundfish and shellfish fleets is reportedly depressed. In an attempt to balance the market, fishermen receive public economic support for committing to vessel tie-ups. However, with the amounts received by fishermen being considered too low, fisheries go at sea fishing - with the result that fish is being landed at low prices. Achieved prices by fishermen for cod destined for the French market have been reported as low as 0,40 EUR/kg. The shellfish (crab) market has to some extent picked up. Still, market prices are low – currently around 2,00 EUR/kg, down from around 4,00 EUR/kg last year. Air freight capacity is limited, and the freight cost is still high to the Asian market. Another constraint is the test capacity for issuing veterinary certificates needed for exports to the Chinese market as the tests are conducted by one institution only.

In **the Netherlands**, the situation for fishermen has improved as public economic support measures seem to be effective and prices are currently on an acceptable level. There are currently no fishing restrictions for the flatfish fisheries. However, POs have decided a 60-hour restriction on for shrimp fisheries due to limited capacity at peeling factories in Morocco. As the HORECA segment is slowly opening again, demand for seafood seems to rise. From week 20 to week 23, first sale prices for sole have trended above 12,00 EUR/kg and were around 2,00 EUR/kg for plaice.



PROCESSING

INCREASED SALES OF PRE-PACKED FISH PRODUCTS

French whitefish supplier Novo Food said it has seen a [sharp increase in business for pre-packed fish products](#) during the COVID-19 lockdown period, mirroring a national trend in the French market. While trading activity was halved, pre-packed processing was up 20-30%. In their processed product portfolio are cod, saithe, catfish, haddock and farmed salmon.

Other French companies are also reporting [the same trend in sales/demand](#). The French seabass, seabream and turbot producer Gloria Maris Groupe moved into production of pre-packed products after seeing its foodservice-orientated business slide by 80% amid the health crisis. French fishing firm Scapeche, which supplies the Intermarché and Netto chains as part of the Les Mousquetaires group, said its production lines for pre-packed fresh fish have been running at full capacity.



WHOLESALE

STABLE PRICES ALTHOUGH SLIGHT DECREASES REPORTED

In [Rungis \(France\)](#), the market keeps recovering with increased supply and demand but still low prices due to the low demand from the HORECA sector. Prices² have been relatively stable except some decreases for several main species in week 23 compared to week 21: -13-25% for rays, -7-9% for monk, -6-19% for lemon sole, -14% for John Dory, -6% for cod, -3-7% for brill and turbot.

In [Rome \(Italy\)](#), prices have been stable in week 23 (05.06 compared to 22.05), at the exception of decreased prices for anchovy (-30%), and Japanese carpet shell (-10%) due to greater availability on the market.

At [Mercamadrid \(Spain\)](#), in week 23, stable prices have been reported for sole, turbot, horse mackerel and mussel, whereas prices have significantly decreased for Gran Sol hake (-18%) and price of line-caught hake increased (+14%), as well as anchovy (+25%).

² The range of price variations provided for each species corresponds different sizes and origins (France/import).



RETAIL & CONSUMPTION

INCREASED LOCAL SOURCING AND PURCHASES IN SUPERMARKETS

Given the drop in activity and prices in the Spanish fishing sector, [Carrefour](#), with 190 hypermarkets in **Spain**, has reached an agreement, through Puerto Celeiro (a major place for hake first sales in Spain), with a group of Spanish shipowners to buy and market the majority of its production, 200 tonnes during the next three weeks. Through this commitment, more fish will be made available to the end consumer at an affordable price. The species included in the agreement are skewer hake and small whiting. The agreement, set for June, aims to become a permanent collaboration model that helps the sustainability of the Spanish fishing sector.

In the **UK**, the [Morrisons supermarket chain](#) confirmed that they are selling 60% more UK fish than before lockdown. As shopping conditions changed, Morrisons, who source British fish via Falfish in the South-West – have spear-headed the reintroduction of fresh fish sales in supermarkets through developing a British Fish Box, putting a new emphasis on selling UK species. The range of seafood products sold in fish boxes has not been altered from the range offered in fresh fish counters, but the volume has. Behind the 60% increase in sales volume of British fish is ‘phenomenal’ 1400% increase in sales of Dover sole, and an 83% increase in sales of monkfish.

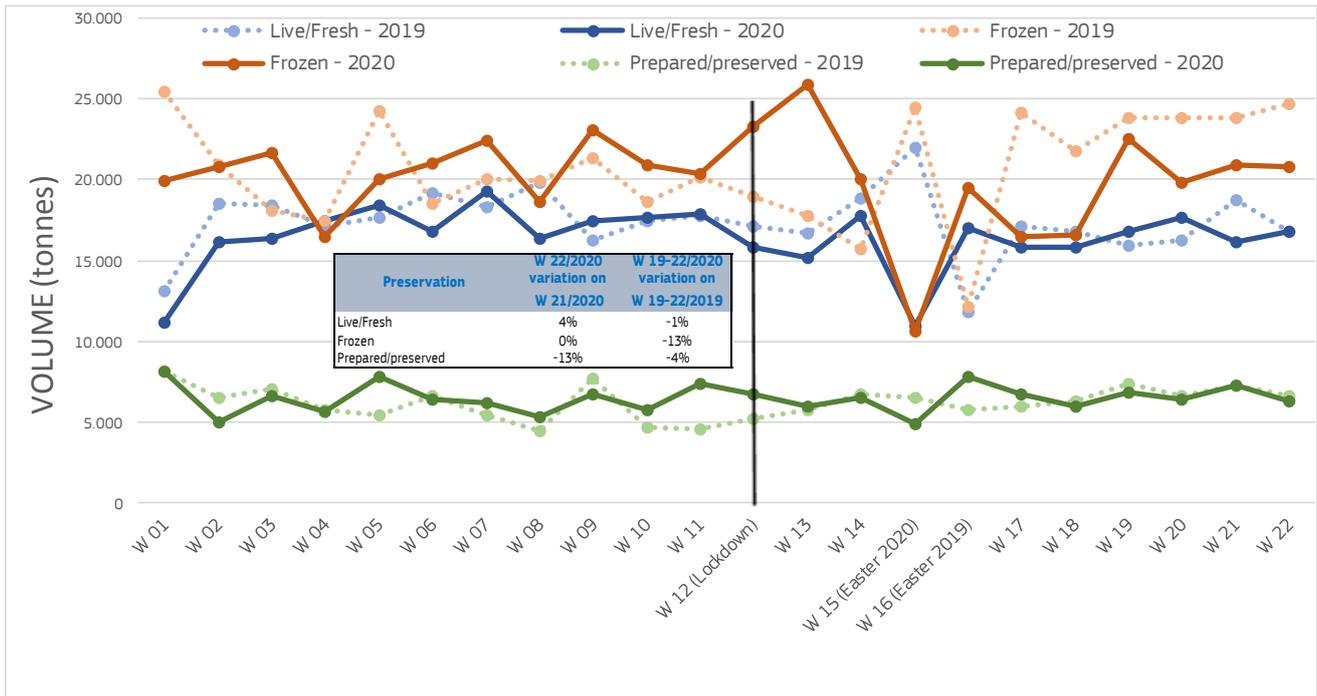
In **Germany**, according to the Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung (GfK), [private household expenditure in Germany on fish and seafood](#) was EUR 456 million in April 2020, surpassing the EUR 432 million spent in December 2019 by EUR 24 million or 5,55%. In April, consumers were again oriented towards frozen fish products (+ 16,7%) and fish marinades (+ 26,4%). The purchase volume of canned fish continued to grow disproportionately compared to the same month of the previous year at + 25,4%. Fresh fish (+7,9%) and smoked fish (+ 14,1%) were also in greater demand, although these categories are much more expensive than the other fish products. One reason for this trend is probably the persistently low fish sales in the out-of-home consumption, i.e. foodservice. Indeed, the HORECA sector is slowly recovering but with still low activity. For instance, one week after the restaurants in Baden-Württemberg reopened, three out of four catering businesses were still working below profitable levels.



HIGHER NORWEGIAN EXPORTS IN 2020 DESPITE SLIGHT DECLINE IN APRIL AND MAY / STABLE EU IMPORTS IN WEEK 22

In April, [Norway's seafood exports](#) saw its first decline in value after 18 months, which continued in May. However, seafood exports in the first quarter of 2020 were so above the comparative months of 2019 that the balance for the current year with a value of NOK 44,6 billion (EUR 4,2 billion) was still 3% or 1,5 billion NOK (EUR 141 million) above the previous year's result. The decline in Norwegian exports of fresh whole salmon, clipfish, prawns and king crabs is responsible for the slump caused by the COVID-19 crisis. There is strong demand for pelagic fish products this year. For herring, demand from important markets such as Germany has increased. For mackerel, higher quotas, increased landings from foreign ships in Norway and good demand from main markets such as Japan and South Korea have contributed to the increase. In Poland and Germany, more herring was sold in cans with oil. In 2020, the export price for herring in USD was 17% higher than in the same period in the previous year, and even 34% in NOK. USD mackerel export prices, on the other hand, were 9% lower this year than a year ago, and 1% higher in NOK. The salmon balance is still positive for the first five months: the export volume of 419.000 tonnes is roughly comparable with 2019, the export value of NOK 29.3 billion (EUR 2,8 billion) means an increase of NOK 476 million (EUR 45 million) or 2% - despite a decline in value of 14% in April and still 5% in May.

In **week 22 of 2020**, **extra-EU imports of major species from main suppliers** totaled 44.865 tonnes and EUR 190 million. With respect to week 21, volume was substantially **stable**, while values decreased by 5% returning to the level of week 20. If compared with the week when the lockdown began, volumes declined by 8% and values decreased by 14%, mainly due to frozen products.



Weeks 21/22–2020 vs. weeks 19/20–2020: most relevant trends

Salmon: due to decreased supplies from Norway, in weeks 21-22 imports followed a downward trend, thus declining by 14% in volume and by 2% in value terms compared with the previous two weeks. The average import price recorded a 15% increase (from an average of 5,54 EUR/kg in weeks 19-20 to 6,34 EUR/kg in weeks 21-22), also due to an appreciation of NOK against EUR occurred in the same two-week period (+4%). Compared with 2019, imports in weeks 21-22 of 2020 were 15% lower both in volume and value. Nevertheless, the import price was stable.

Skipjack tuna: driven by a drop of supplies from Ecuador, imports of prepared/preserved skipjack tuna in weeks 21-22 declined by 8% in volume and by 6% value from weeks 19-20. The average import price, which reached 3,76 EUR/kg in weeks 21-22, increased by 1% compared with weeks 19-20. During the two-week period, the USD depreciated against EUR (-4%: -2% from week 20 to 21 and -2% from week 21 to 22). Compared with last year, the decline of imports in weeks 21-22 was of 12% in volume and 1% in value, while the average import price was 10% lower.

Alaska pollock: with a strong fluctuating trend, weeks 21-22 showed a slight increase compared with weeks 19-20 (+1% in volume and +3% in value terms). The average import price moved from 2,84 EUR/kg in weeks 19-20 to 2,87 EUR/kg in weeks 21-22 (+1%). With respect to the same weeks last year, the growth in volume and value was relevant (+34% and +55%, respectively), while the import price increased by 15%.

Miscellaneous shrimps: imports of prepared/preserved miscellaneous shrimps recorded a significant growth in the last two weeks. Compared with weeks 19-20, they increased by 76% in volume and by 74% in value terms. The average import price decreased by 4% (from 7,81 EUR/kg in weeks 19-20 to 7,52 EUR/kg in weeks 21-22). Compared with the same weeks in 2019, imports decreased by 18% in volume and 26% in value. The average import price decreased by 10%.

Squid: driven by fluctuating supplies from the Falkland Islands, imports recorded in weeks 21-22 were about two times than those registered in weeks 19-20 (+204% in volume and +168% in value). The average import price decreased by 15% (from 3,95 EUR/kg in weeks 19-20 to 3,36 EUR/kg in weeks 21-22). Compared with 2019, imports in weeks 21-22 were 42% and 32% lower, in volume and value terms respectively. The average import price was 14% higher.

From 24th to 31st May, EUR appreciated against USD (+2%) and CNY (+1%) and depreciated against NOK (-3%), ISK and GBP (-1% each). During the following week, EUR appreciated again against USD and CNY (+2% and +1%, respectively) and depreciated against NOK (-3%), ISK and GBP (-1% each).

At the same time, marine fuel prices³ in Europe were stable, at 0,26 EUR/litre (which is around 50% lower than the same period in 2019). The lowest were registered in Belgium and the Netherlands (0,22 EUR/litre in each country), and the highest in Spain (0,32 EUR/litre).

To learn more about the market situation, [you can access the most recent weekly data \(up to week 23 of 2020\) on extra EU imports in Europe.](#)

For any questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact EUMOFA (contact-us@eumofa.eu)

ABOUT [EUMOFA](#)

The European Market Observatory for fisheries and aquaculture (EUMOFA) is a market intelligence tool on the European Union fisheries and aquaculture sector, developed by the European Commission. It aims to increase market transparency and efficiency, analyses EU markets dynamics, and supports business decisions and policy-making.

EUMOFA enables direct monitoring of volumes, values and prices of fisheries and aquaculture products, from the first sale to retail stage, including imports and exports. Data are collected from EU countries, Iceland, Norway, United Kingdom and from EU institutions and updated every day.

³ Source: MABUX. As data for Saturdays and Sundays are not available, prices analysed for 2020 refer to the following days: 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th May and 1st June.