

Coronavirus response

EUMOFA's weekly data and trends analysis

Week 19

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.

Gradual lifting of COVID-19 restrictions

Several Member States are communicating different plans to gradually lift restrictions. Some have already opened kindergartens and schools. With continued distancing measures, larger gatherings might be allowed leading [restaurants, cafes, schools and shops to re-open](#). Prospects of return of demand from HORECA give rise to cautious optimism throughout the value chain. However, stakeholders are concerned of reduced purchasing power and whether more activity could lead to new spikes in COVID-19 infections followed by restrictions being reimposed.



SLOW RECOVERY OF FISHING ACTIVITY WITH MIXED EFFECTS ON PRICES¹

In **Spain**, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, fishing activity keeps recovering with [55% of the Spanish fleet active](#). At first-sale level, monk, megrim and hake prices have been decreasing. One explanation is [the increase of sales in Spain of Irish and Scottish fish](#) that used to be exported to France.

In **France**, [FranceAgriMer](#) data on weekly auction sales (excluding the Mediterranean seaboard) show that for the 31 main species, volumes increased significantly from week 18 to week 19. The average price increased as well (+18%), mostly because of the increasing share of higher valued species in total sales (monk, Norway lobster, black seabream, rays, red mullet, turbot) and drops of sales of lower valued species such as mackerel and scallop.

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 [five auctions](#) in **Denmark** (Hanstholm, Hirtshals, Strandby, Grenaa and Skagen), sales decreased by 24% in volume from week 18 to week 19. However, Friday 8th May was a holiday and average daily volumes were quite similar in both weeks. The increasing price trend of week 18 continued in week 19, mostly driven by cod, hake, monkfish and pollack.

In the **Netherlands**, the first-sale auction prices in week 18 [continued a negative](#) trend for the fourth consecutive week. The average price of brill, turbot and sole were 5,30 EUR/kg, 5,59 EUR/kg and 9,12 EUR/kg respectively. The flatfish fleet is still making use of the “silent scheme” supported by the EMFF, and in week 19, 74 flatfish cutters stayed in port.

A temporary voluntary fleet tie-up scheme for fishing vessels in the polyvalent, beam trawl and other specific segments of the **Irish fishing fleet** was [announced by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine](#). This is designed to support fixed costs incurred by owners of fishing vessels while tied up, and will operate over June, July and August, to coincide with the monthly fisheries quota management periods, in order to adjust the supply of fish coming into a currently depressed market and protect quota availability for later in the year.



PRODUCERS TARGETING HORECA AND EXPORT MARKETS ARE STRUGGLING WITH UNCERTAINTY OF FUTURE PROSPECTS

According to industry sources, the **Greek seabass and seabream** farming industry, selling a large share of their production to the HORECA segment, is facing some challenges. As HORECA is almost non-existing, prices are low for large sized fish (600 grams+), a product that normally achieves high prices. Overseas export markets (mainly the US) are virtually closed with logistic costs at 6,00 EUR/kg or higher. Reduction in sales volumes (estimated between 20-30% in 2020 compared with 2019) will most likely cause challenges for the industry as biomass is building up. The most important challenge is, however, the uncertainty related to future market conditions. This, combined with current financial challenges, may lead to drop in stocking.

In **Italy**, seabass and seabream farmers are managing to sell their products, especially when already selling to supermarkets and used to requirements of processed and pre-packed products. However, shellfish farming, freshwater aquaculture and producers that used to sell their products to HORECA or export markets are [struggling to find outlets](#).

The **mussel** farming sector has been experiencing a drop of demand since the beginning of the crisis, with up to 80%-decrease of sales. Producers expect that the summer season and the comeback of tourists in coastal regions will allow them to sell their production especially in France and Italy where [many companies are facing financial problems](#).



WHOLESALE

STRONG PRICE INCREASE OF ANCHOVY IN SEVERAL MS BUT VARIOUS PRICE TRENDS FOR OTHER SPECIES

In [Rungis \(France\)](#), prices of fresh fish have been fluctuating for many main species in week 19 compared to week 18. Increases were reported for anchovy (+18%), wild-caught seabass (from +10-12% for seabass caught with trawl to +25-35% for seabass caught with hooks), monk tail (+22-39%), red mullet (+36-43%) and sardine (+12-22%). Decreases were reported for brill (-10-15%), sole (-10-24%), turbot (-24%), cod (-9-12%), and pollack (-24-31%).

In [Rome \(Italy\)](#), prices have been stable in week 19 (8th May compared to 30th April), at the exception of increasing prices for anchovy (+33%), possibly related to lower supplies and higher demand due to reopening of take-away restaurants. In [Milan](#), purchases have been increasing in the week 18, but are still at 50% of the pre-lockdown levels.

At [Mercamadrid \(Spain\)](#), anchovy and hake prices strongly increased, whereas price decreases were reported for sole and monk (12th May against 5th May).



RETAIL & CONSUMPTION

SEVERAL CAMPAIGNS TO EAT LOCAL FISH

In order to support local brown crab fisheries in [Ireland](#), severely impacted by the COVID-19 lockdowns, [Board BIA \(the Irish Food Board\) has launched promotion campaigns](#) in supermarkets, making products and information available for consumers.

As in France, the [Italian](#) fishery organizations wants to promote domestically caught products to support the fishery sector facing difficulties, with promotional campaigns or a "[made in Italy](#)" label.

In [Germany](#), in the first quarter of 2020, an 11% increase of household purchases of fish [has been reported](#) compared to last year (+25% for canned fish, +14,2% for frozen fish products), as well as a strong [increase of salmon consumption](#).

In [Spain](#), [retail sales](#) of fresh and frozen fish were more than 20% higher in week 17 compared with the same week last year. Moreover, open-air restaurants are reopening in several regions, [raising expectations in the fishery sector](#).

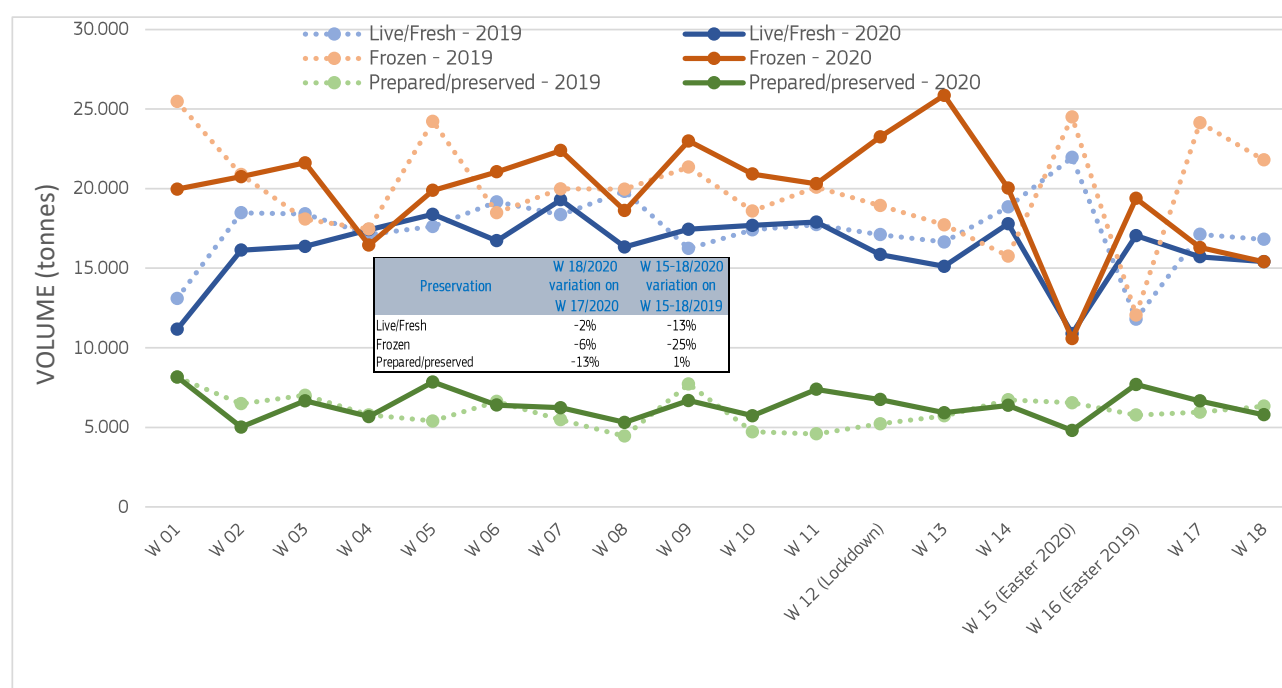


TRADE AND LOGISTICS

MAIN EU IMPORTS CONTINUED TO DECLINE IN WEEK 18

In week 18 of 2020, extra-EU imports of major species from main suppliers totalled 37.441 tonnes and EUR 154 million. Compared with week 17, this represented declines by 6% in volume and by 11% in value. If compared with the beginning of lockdown², volumes fell by 23% and values dropped by 30%, mainly due to frozen products.

Seven products accounted for almost 60% of the volume-decrease from week 17 to week 18: sardine from Morocco (16%), squid from the Falkland Islands (14%), salmon from Norway (8%), warmwater shrimps from Ecuador (8%), yellowfin tuna from Ecuador (4%), mackerel from Iceland (4%) and squid from India (4%).



Alaska pollock: from week 17 to week 18, 40% increases in both volume and value, driven by supplies from China. The average import price grew by 2%, to reach 2,84 EUR/kg, despite a slight appreciation of CNY against EUR.

Warmwater shrimps: from week 17 to week 18, imports of frozen products from Ecuador fell by 35% in both volume and value terms, and the average import price decreased by 2% (from 5,54 EUR/kg to 5,44 EUR/kg), also linked to the slight USD appreciation against EUR.

Sardine: from week 17 to week 18, Moroccan supplies of sardine, largely comprising prepared/preserved products, dropped by 80%. Thanks to a 42% price-increase (which rose from 1,75 EUR/kg to 2,49 EUR/kg), the decrease in terms of total value was by 72%.

² As also shown in the charts, week-12/2020 is assumed as reference starting week of market effects deriving from lockdown.

As China re-opens, **Ireland** is experiencing increase in interest from the **Chinese market** for shellfish. However, logistic costs are at a high level (around 3,50 EUR/kg for air freight for fresh/live lobster and brown crab, with all other transport and handling costs to be added), and sales are still low. For Irish exporters, a new direct passenger flight from Ireland to China could contribute to lower air freight cost.

EU imports of fresh gilthead seabream from Turkey is on the rise. In week 18, they amounted to 686 tonnes, about 100 tonnes lower than in the corresponding week in 2019. Italian imports totalled 200 tonnes – the same level as seen before the lockdown. A slight upward import price trend was observed over the last 3 weeks. EU imports of **European seabass** increased from 235 tonnes in the week of lockdown to 450 tonnes in week 18.

According to DB Schenker, due to increased airfreight capacity over the past weeks, airfreight costs on several routes are now about half what they were directly after the restrictions were imposed in Europe and the USA. As transport of *inter alia* medical supply from China to Europe have increased, the price of return-freight to China has decreased. There are flights between Europe and the USA, but as the demand for return-freight to Europe is low, the airfreight cost is still relatively high³.

From 26th April to 3rd May, EUR depreciated against currencies of the main suppliers: USD (-1%), NOK (-2%), CNY (-1%), GBP (-1%) and ISK (-0,5%). At the same time, marine fuel prices⁴ in Europe remained flat, averaging at 0,20 EUR/litre (which is around 60% lower than the same period in 2019). The lowest were registered in Belgium, Greece, and the Netherlands (0,16 EUR/litre in each country), and the highest in Spain (0,27 EUR/litre).

To learn more about the market situation, [you can access the most recent weekly data \(up to week 18 of 2020\) on extra EU imports in Europe](#).

For any question or comment, 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 <https://ilaks.no/kostnadene-for-flyfrakt-er-halvparten-av-hva-de-var-da-pandemien-forst-brot-ut/>

⁴ Source: MABUX. As data for Saturdays and Sundays are not available, prices analysed for 2020 refer to the following days: 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th April and 1st and 4th May.