



Advice

European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA): Suggestions of studies to be integrated in the Work Programme (2025)

Brussels, 1 September 2025

1. Background

The European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA)¹ 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, analyse EU market dynamics, and support business decisions and policymaking.

As in previous years, in 2024, the Market Advisory Council (MAC) adopted advice with suggestions of studies to be conducted by EUMOFA², including price structure analyses on saithe (France, Denmark, Germany) and on clams (Italy, France, Spain), a thematic analysis on the evolution of EU consumers on consumption of fishery and aquaculture products, and EUMOFA talks about sustainability and labelling as well as on the challenges of aquaculture products in food outlets. DG MARE graciously accommodated the mentioned suggestions in the 2025 work programme of EUMOFA.

The ex-post information provided by EUMOFA on volumes, values and prices of fishery and aquaculture products, including imports and exports, is greatly appreciated by the members of the MAC. The MAC committed to providing suggestions for the next annual programme.

¹ <https://www.eumofa.eu/>

² <https://marketac.eu/suggestions-for-eumofa-work-programme-2024/>

2. Price Structure Analyses³

These analyses consist of an assessment of prices of a specific product along the different steps of the supply chain. EUMOFA publishes three to four of these analyses per year. For each analysis, usually, there is a focus on three selected Member States.

2.1. Cod

Cod is one of the most popular species on the Portuguese market and is a product with a strong cultural tradition and high per capita consumption. Cod is an essential component of the fish sector in Portugal, allowing for an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of import, processing and distribution. Therefore, a price structure analysis on cod in Portugal would be welcomed.

Previously, in 2021, EUMOFA published a price structure analysis of frozen cod fillet with a focus on Belgium, France, and the Netherlands⁴. In 2018, EUMOFA published an analysis of the supply chain of dried salted cod from Norway to Portugal⁵. In 2017, EUMOFA published an analysis on fresh cod in the United Kingdom⁶.

2.2. Octopus

Octopus is a species with high commercial value, the demand for which has been growing, especially in Mediterranean and Iberian countries. Portugal and Spain, in particular, stand out for their significant consumption and export capacity of this product. In France and Ireland, the increase in landings of octopus has led to new business opportunities, so an assessment of the French and Irish markets would be relevant. The analysis of the mentioned markets would allow

³ <https://eumofa.eu/en/market-analysis>

⁴ https://eumofa.eu/documents/20124/55277/PTAT+Frozen+Cod+fillet_BE_FR_NL.pdf/

⁵ https://eumofa.eu/documents/20124/73082/Cod+in+NO_EN.pdf/

⁶ <https://eumofa.eu/documents/20124/44900/Fresh+Cod+in+the+United+Kingdom.pdf>

better understanding of issues related to seasonality, added value and positioning in external markets.

Therefore, a price structure analysis on octopus would be welcomed. In terms of geographical scope, the analysis should focus on Portugal, Spain, Ireland, and France. Previously, in 2020, EUMOFA published a price structure analysis on octopus in Italy, Spain, and Greece⁷.

2.3. Squid (*Loligo / Illex*)

Among the Member States in Southern and Western Europe, there is a high consumer demand for squid. A significant share of the squid in the EU market is imported. Large volumes are imported from the Falkland Islands, the only consistent source of *Loligo gahi* and home to numerous joint ventures with EU capital. Demand is also rising for squid from Mauritania, Morocco, Argentina, Peru, and India, all key Southern Hemisphere origins. The market dynamics (supply chains, prices, origin) are highly relevant. The imports of squid contribute to significant value-added among the processing, distribution, and retail sectors of the EU. More recently, it became a new market for fisheries in the Channel and southern North Sea, following the increase of landings over the past years.

Therefore, a price structure analysis on squid would be welcomed. In terms of geographical scope, the analysis should focus on Spain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Until now, EUMOFA has not published any price structure analysis on squid.

2.4. Shrimp and prawns

In a similar manner to squid, shrimp is highly consumed among the Member States in Southern Europe. A significant share of the shrimps and prawns in the EU market is imported. Most

⁷ https://eumofa.eu/documents/20124/35698/PTAT+Octopus_EN.pdf

imported supplies come from Ecuador, Argentina, India, China, and Vietnam. A comparison of wild and aquaculture supply chains would be essential, as these compete for the same market space. Therefore, a price structure analysis on shrimp and prawns would be welcomed. In terms of geographical scope, the analysis should focus on Portugal, Spain, and Italy.

Previously, in 2017, EUMOFA published a price structure analysis on the supply chain of cooked shrimp in France⁸.

2.5. Horse mackerel

Horse mackerel is one of the main small pelagic species of significant commercial interest for Spanish coastal fleets, including trawling, purse seine fishing, and small gears. It is especially relevant in the national fishing grounds in the Cantabrian Sea and in the North of Spain until the Bay of Biscay. As, following scientific assessments, the targeted fishery was closed between 2022 and 2025, it would be particularly relevant to focus on the market until 2022.

Therefore, a price structure analysis on horse mackerel would be welcome. In terms of geographical scope, the analysis should focus on Spain. Until now, EUMOFA has not published any price structure analysis on horse mackerel.

2.6. Sardines

Like horse mackerel, sardines are one of the main small pelagic species of significant commercial interest for Spanish coastal fleets, particularly in the fishing grounds in the North. Therefore, a price structure analysis on sardines would be welcomed, especially focusing on fresh products. In terms of geographical scope, the analysis should focus on Spain.

⁸ <https://eumofa.eu/documents/20124/73626/Cooked+shrimp+in+France.pdf/>

Previously, in 2017, EUMOFA published a price structure analysis on canned sardine in Portugal⁹.

3. Thematic Analyses

Thematic analyses consist of punctual market studies made upon request of DG MARE. These aim to respond to a specific need of the sector or policymakers.

3.1. Evolution of the Croatian market

While Croatia became a member of the European Union in 2013, data on the first sales and prices of Croatian products are not yet available on EUMOFA. To address the lack of publicly available data, it would be relevant to undertake a thematic analysis specifically on the Croatian market, which could analyse the evolution since acceding to the EU. The analysis should consider how the prices evolved in comparison with the rest of the EU. Due to their importance in the Croatian market, particular focus could be provided to anchovy, sardine, and hake.

The European Commission should take the opportunity to strengthen the cooperation with the Croatian authorities to ensure that the periodical transmission of quality data on first sales and prices starts as soon as possible.

3.2. Brexit

Over many years, the fisheries and aquaculture supply chain of the United Kingdom and the European Union became deeply integrated. The withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (“Brexit”) generated various complex impacts on the EU market of fishery and aquaculture products, affecting access to waters, trade flows, regulatory frameworks, supply chains, and market prices. Brexit negotiations have also led to the implementation of

⁹ <https://eumofa.eu/documents/20124/73907/Price+structure+in+the+supply+chain+-+canned+sardine+in+PT.pdf/>

decommissioning schemes for fishing vessels in some Member States. These measures have resulted in a lasting decrease in landings in those Member States and may, as a consequence, have had an impact on their markets.

In addition, the British Overseas Territories must not be disregarded. It is also important to note that the fleet targeting *Loligo gahi*, operated through joint ventures with European capital and based in the Falkland Islands (United Kingdom), has been significantly affected by the consequences of Brexit. Since the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, products from this fishery are considered imports from a third country. In 2024, a total of 64,540 tonnes of *Loligo gahi* were imported into the European Union – virtually all of it into Spain – from the Falkland Islands, with a total value of 215 million euros. This makes *Loligo gahi* the most imported species from British territory, underlining the significant impact of Brexit on this particular supply chain and its continued importance to the EU seafood market.

Therefore, it would be relevant to conduct a thematic analysis on the impact of Brexit on the EU market, focusing particularly on the most affected fleets and markets (Belgium, France, Ireland, and Spain).

3.3. Norwegian farmed salmon of “production” quality¹⁰

Norway classifies its farmed Atlantic salmon into three quality categories: “superior”, “ordinary” and “production”. Under Norwegian law, the lowest “production” grade is prohibited for export. However, correcting its visible defects at land-based processing facilities in Norway allows the fish to be transformed into fillets eligible for export to the EU and other markets.

The mentioned export ban causes significant market distortions within the EU market for processed salmon products (filets and smoked salmon). In 2024, the issue became more acute,

¹⁰ [MAC Advice on “EU – Norway’s Trade of Fishery and Aquaculture Products” \(24 July 2024\)](#)

as the share of “production grade” salmon reached unprecedented levels, comprising over 35% of Norway's farmed Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) output over eight consecutive weeks. In 2025, the share dropped again. The Norwegian export ban exerts a downward price pressure on “production” salmon compared to a market situation with sales in free and open markets, while the price on “superior” and “ordinary” grades would tend to be higher.

Therefore, it would be relevant to conduct a thematic analysis of the impact of the Norwegian export ban on the EEA market for salmon and salmon products, i.e. the price structure of the quality grades and its effects on prices forward in the value chain of value-added products (filets, smoked) in Norway and the EU, respectively. The analysis should cover the last three years. The effects of the EEA trade instruments should be considered as part of the analysis.

3.4. Joint Ventures in Fisheries

Joint ventures between EU operators and partners in third countries operate in areas with sovereign fishing rights, playing a key role in supporting local economies and contributing to wealth creation, job generation, and tax revenues both in partner countries and within the EU. They also facilitate the transfer of EU environmental, labour, and social standards, with notable local impact in regions such as Spain, particularly Galicia.

Primarily established using private capital, these ventures receive little or no EU structural funding despite their strategic importance. As part of the EU's Global Gateway Strategy (2021–2027), they can serve as instruments to strengthen supply chain resilience, reinforce EU values abroad, and advance sustainability objectives, contributing to several Sustainable Development Goals. Their role in ensuring food security, trade competitiveness, and sustainable resource use therefore warrants greater recognition.

It would be relevant to conduct a thematic analysis on joint ventures in fisheries, focusing on their geographical distribution, contribution to the EU supply of fishery and aquaculture products, economic and social impacts, and alignment with EU policy objectives. Such an analysis could also identify data gaps and propose mechanisms for regular monitoring, contributing to greater transparency and policy coherence.

4. Conclusion

In summary, the MAC believes that the European Commission should integrate the following topics in the next edition of the work programme of EUMOFA:

- Price Structure Analyses
 - Cod: Portugal
 - Octopus: Portugal, Spain, Ireland, and France
 - Squid: Spain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands
 - Shrimp and prawns: Portugal, Spain, Italy
 - Horse mackerel: Spain
 - Sardines: Spain

- Thematic Analyses
 - Evolution of the Croatian market (anchovy, sardine, hake)
 - Brexit (Belgium, France, Ireland, Spain)
 - Norwegian farmed salmon of “production” quality
 - Joint Ventures in Fisheries

The MAC takes the opportunity to thank the European Commission for the commitment to, in the near future, publish a price structure analysis on hake, as it is one of the main species of interest for the fishing value chain in Spain, France, and Ireland.