

Advice

European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EUMOFA): Price structure analysis of the supply chain of EU tuna sector within the global tuna market

Brussels, 30 March 2023

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. The ex-post information provided by EUMOFA on volumes, values and prices of fisheries and aquaculture products, including imports and exports, is greatly appreciated by the members of the MAC.

Under the Work Programme of Year 7 (2022-2023), the MAC committed to suggest topics to DG MARE for price structure analyses and thematic analyses studies via EUMOFA. On 3 February 2023, the MAC adopted advice with several suggestions for the consideration of DG MARE². Under the present advice, the MAC would like to put forward an additional suggestion for a study on the supply chain of the EU tuna sector.

2. Scope

Tuna, in terms of volumes of sales, is one of the most important products in the fisheries and aquaculture market, both in the EU and globally. The EU value chain, both producers and processors (including canned and frozen/fresh presentations), is suffering from a fierce competition in the EU market.

¹ <https://www.eumofa.eu/>

² <https://marketac.eu/mac-suggestions-of-studies-to-be-integrated-in-eumofa-work-programme-2023/>

The study should focus on skipjack tuna (*Katsuwonus pelamis*), yellowfin tuna (*Thunnus albacares*) and bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) to analyse the price and value structure in fisheries supply, using the EUMOFA datasets (prices at different levels of the chain) and, when possible, double checking with national trade data from third countries.

In terms of geographical scope, the study should focus on EU Member States and, in particular, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, The Netherlands, and Italy, as these are the main EU markets receiving these products.

The following steps of the supply chain shall be studied for the five past years, including the associated prices and their evolution.

- Production of raw material: comparing the EU production with the global one, including quantity fished per specie and per flag (French, Spanish and Italian flagged vessels included in one only “EU flag” for confidentiality / competition reasons), ocean of origin (including RFMO where possible), gear, MSC label, state of the product (frozen or refrigerated when landed – if relevant fresh). This information is needed for EU vessels and required, where possible, for other flags (with an indication where the data is not available). To protect confidentiality and competition law, individual vessels or fishing companies shall not be identified.
- Exports of raw material outside the European Union: volumes and price of whole tuna fished by EU flagged vessels to non-EU countries, volume and value.
- If available and possible according to competition rules, re-export data from outside EU-canneries to EU. Export data from third countries to be considered, including volume and value.
- Direct whole tuna sourcing of EU canneries from EU flagged fleet, including volume and value per specie.
- Import of raw material inside the EU: distinguishing whole tuna and semi-processed tuna loins falling under the Combined Nomenclature codes 1604 14 16, 1604 19 31/39, 1604 14 26 (skipjack) / 36 (yellowfin); including origin/provenance of the products, volume and value. It should distinguish products entering the EU market with or

without customs tariff. In the case of products free of custom tariff, it should be mentioned whether they enter the EU market under the general suspension (frozen tuna with end use procedure under Article 254 of Regulation No 952/2013), a preferential trade agreement (also considering the rule of origin) or an autonomous trade facilitation (ATQ).

- Imports of canned tuna falling under the Combined Nomenclature codes 16041421, 16041428, 16041431, 16041438, 16041441, 16041448, 16041490, 16041939, 16042070 in the EU market would also be relevant; volume and value, including origin/provenance of the products and ingredients as well as the market trends, including new trends in direct human consumption of fresh/frozen products, which are a new destination for tuna supplies.
- If available and possible according to competition rules, canned tuna production in EU coming from EU flagged vessels in volume and value: market trends, including new trends in direct human consumption of fresh/frozen products, which are a new destination for tuna supplies.
- “Defrosted” market in EU (and compare with global market where possible) including volumes and value per specie, flag of origin, fishing gear, ocean of origin (including RFMO where available) and type of product (e.g., sashimi, steak, among others).

Under this study, it would be particularly important to check how the COVID-19 pandemic³, the Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine, and the energy crisis are affecting the prices. Furthermore, the study should check, from an economic perspective, how subsidies granted by third countries⁴, different labour practices, uneven sanitary controls, IUU practices (including consideration of “yellow cards”), and Autonomous Tariff Quotas (ATQs) influence the price structure along the supply chain and market flows. In the same spirit, the study could evaluate the development implications in third countries where the EU fleet is landing their fish, including the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement (SFPA) perspective.

³ <https://marketac.eu/covid-19-pandemic/>

⁴ As an example: <https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/business-finance/china-pushing-its-banks-to-prop-up-seafood-sector> and <https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/supply-trade/chinese-fisheries-minister-yu-kangzhen-promotes-distant-water-fleet-in-visit-to-zhoushan>.



The described issues would be relevant to feed the debate on the elaboration of a Regulation concerning the management of ATQs for certain fisheries products for the period between 2024 and 2026⁵, ensuring a better understanding of the situation and contributing to policymaking with the best available science. It would also be relevant for the development of measures related to the impact of the crisis currently faced by the sector⁶.

⁵ It is important to keep in mind that, as part of the [Joint Communication](#) “Setting the course for a sustainable blue planet – Joint Communication on the EU’s International Governance agenda”, the EU will work on increasing the sustainability of imports of fisheries products that benefit from ATQs drawing on the ongoing EU study on this topic. Other Advisory Councils have also shown interest in the topic (e.g., [LDAC Opinion on ATQs for Tuna Loins for the period 2021-2023](#)).

⁶ <https://marketac.eu/disturbances-in-the-market-of-fisheries-and-aquaculture-products-due-to-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/>