The European Retail and Foodservice Landscape

Opportunities for Canadian Fish and Seafood Products in the European Union

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Canada

New Nouveau Brunswick CANADA

Prince Edward Island CANADA

BRITISH COLUMBIA Canada

Newfoundland & Labrador CANADA

NOVA SCOTIA NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE CANADA

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Executive summary

When it comes to food consumption, consumer demands and distributors' product offers have always influenced each other. Therefore, in the current period deeply marked by the rapid diffusion of the consumer aspirations, supply and demand can change rapidly. In this context, conquering new markets can prove complicated for new suppliers, especially in a mass consumption food market. It was however a bit different for the European seafood market, which showed a certain resilience in this area. Changes were relatively slow until recently, and decisive product innovations ultimately remained marginal. But things are changing and the seafood segment is currently catching up with other food segments on the European market.

Recent geopolitical events that have affected the world and Europe in particular (COVID-19, Brexit, and the second Russian invasion of Ukraine) have had lasting consequences on the seafood supply chains to the European market, especially in the live/fresh/chilled segment. Due to increasing product management problems (including harder product logistics and skyrocketing operational costs), European supermarket chains are now replacing their staff-service fresh fish counters by grab-and-go seafood displays (pre-packed fish cuts in trays). If the fresh seafood segment is on one hand becoming more "consumer friendly", i.e. more convenient, the product offer is, on the other hand, getting reduced. Fewer seafood species are now dominating the seafood offer in an increasingly standardized and uniform European market. One of the lasting consequences of this new reality is the rapid disappearance of product knowledge by the European consumer, who thus falls back on traditional known species.

This nevertheless creates opportunities for Canadian seafood producers. First, as the historical psychological boundaries between seafood segments are tending to disappear. The new "convenient fresh fish segment" in supermarket by offering a growing number of refresh products[1] makes the connection between the frozen and the fresh segments. Secondly, the appetite of European consumers for processed products represents a significant short-term market opportunity for Canadian producers, particularly in the fish fillet segment. This refers, in principle, to many fish categories offered by Canada: whitefish (Hake, Ocean Perch)/ groundfish (Yellowtail flounder), but also Pacific Salmon, and Black Cod.

At middle term, more business opportunities for Canadian seafood suppliers have been identified to mitigate historical European fisheries whose resources are now at stake such as flatfish species, Sea urchin, or Shellfish species.

While business opportunities are real, it is however important for both the Canadian seafood industry and the seafood administration not to underestimate the significant work that must be undertaken to durably supply the EU27 market.

[1] Chilled seafood products processed from frozen raw-material

The very first task to be completed is a clarification of the Canadian seafood offer (current/to come) for the frozen fish fillets category (Hake sp., Ocean Perch sp., and Yellowtail Flounder): which available products, which quality, which supply chains (single and twice-frozen products)?

From a general point of view, it is also fundamental to quickly consider advocating for the Canadian origin as a whole in order to distinguish from other well-marketed origins on the European market such as Norway, Ireland, Scotland, Alaska, Iceland, etc. This promotion must stand on what characterizes the targeted distribution channels. In retail, special attention must be paid to product packaging, which now often represents the only information medium for consumers. The growing hegemony of food products' private labels in supermarkets requires a significant cooperation between seafood suppliers and retailers, the latter being solely responsible for communicating about their products. In the foodservice, due attention should be given to cooks and chefs especially for the introduction of new and unknown Canadian seafood species on the European market.

The main challenge for Canadian seafood suppliers is to move from what we consider a "push approach" (to keep producing how they have always done) to a "pull approach" (to understand the market expectations first, and then to produce accordingly).

Understanding the expectations of the European market is therefore fundamental for Canadian seafood suppliers, particularly regarding the way buyers operate. This is why we share in this study the elements that we believe are crucial to be taken into account in order to begin discussions with European buyers in the best possible conditions.

These recommendations are very factual and reflect the diversity of the European buyers' requirements depending on the considered market/s in retail (entry-level, core market, premium), in the foodservice, and in the fish processing industry.

However, we can only recommend Canadian suppliers to be accompanied to achieve durable business relationships with European buyers. The growing requirements of seafood buyers (particularly in terms of quality procedures), the rapid evolution of European consumer expectations, as well as the geographical -and sometimes cultural- distance that exist between Canada and the EU27 are all factors that require a daily and on-site management of this relationship. Based on our 25-year experience, we strongly believe in the role to be played by "neo sales representatives" in charge of a daily and smooth relationship between Canadian seafood suppliers and the European buyers.

The current stated desire of strong linkage between Canada and the EU27 (economic and cultural exchanges, defense, etc.) as well as the opportunity offered by the CETA create a positive momentum for the Canadian seafood industry on the European market.

PART 1– The 2025 reality of the EU27 market

The EU27 remains a leading global player when it comes to seafood. The EU's internal market is the world's second largest market of fishery and aquaculture products in terms of trade, after China. However, the EU market has been durably affected by recent global crises that have reinforced ongoing trends started 10 years ago at several levels of the seafood supply chains.

1.1. Abstract

Less seafood in volume and diversity

European consumers are the third fish eaters in the world after the Chinese and Indonesian ones, with an average of 23.7 kg/capita/year (European Commission, 2025). Southern European countries (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy) have traditionally been the main seafood consumers of the EU27 in volumes, value, and species diversity. If the European seafood consumption was pretty stable -or even slightly increasing- until 2012, it has started declining since then for several cumulated factors. The recent global crises affecting Europe including COVID-19, Brexit, and the 2nd Russian invasion of Ukraine led to major seafood supply problems and skyrocketing prices to consumers, accelerating deep changes in consumer habits:

a. Overall reduction of the seafood consumption in all European countries with the main fish-eating countries accounting for the highest consumption falls. The overall seafood consumption went down by 7.6% in Europe over the past 10 years with an average -5% between 2020 and 2023 (EUMOFA, 2024).

b. Durable consumption shifts to more affordable seafood products: from live to fresh, from fresh to refresh (defrosted) or to frozen, etc.

c. Durable reduction of the number of consumed seafood species with 3 to 4 species now dominating each national market (e.g. Atlantic Salmon, Atlantic gadids, Tropical Shrimps, and Tuna).

d. Increasing share of farmed seafood products (especially Atlantic Salmon and Tropical Shrimps) allowing more stable prices and more regular quantities to end-users.

e. Increasing demand for more ready-to-eat products (especially fish cuts: fillets, loins, steak-fillets, etc.), and lower demand for raw ones (whole round or H&G fish).

f. All these cumulated trends have contributed to a fast and irremediable loss of product knowledge by European consumers.

These trends apply to all European countries, without exception, especially because of the internationalization of the European food retailing across all the EU27.

Road logistics: Achilles' heel of the fresh food supply chains

The distribution of manufactured goods -and food products in particular- across Europe is handled by truck logistics, a sector of activity that has been poorly attractive to workers from Western Europe. Therefore, Poland has become in few years the undisputed European leader in road truck transport. Extremely competitive in terms of price, road transport provided by Poland has gradually led to the closure of truck players in other countries and to a strong European dependence on Polish companies. One of keys to success of Polish truck companies has been their low operational costs enabled by drivers from non-EU eastern European countries, especially Ukraine and Belarus. The recent international crises (especially Brexit and 2nd war in Ukraine) has led to the current lack of at least 400.000 truck drivers in Europe (IRU, 2025). This has led to a major deficit of trucks for upstream logistics (from production sites and/or import harbors in Europe to distributors' warehouses) resulting in longer routes to market (both in time and in distance), trucks optimizing their journeys. The situation for downstream logistics (last kilometer) is even worst with more and more traffic restrictions, even for light trucks. This is especially due to the booming of "low- emission zones" on urban areas all across Europe. This is critical for fresh food, and fresh seafood in particular with less frequent deliveries to final points of sale. This partly explains why European retailers are now prioritizing fresh fish cuts in prepacked trays (modified atmosphere preserved) that allow less product loss and longer shelf life in store.

Fast reshaping of the European food retailing

Representing nearly 80% of the overall food distribution in Europe, retailers highly influence European consumers' behaviors and are, reciprocally highly influenced by them.
The problem with such a system is that there are less and less food distributors in Europe (major bankruptcies and/or acquisitions in recent years) and that the remaining retailers are now bigger and more international than ever before. Therefore, any orientation in their distribution strategies ends up in major and durable changes on the market at large European scale. One of the main strategies embraced by all European retailers when it comes to food products has been the top priority given to the development of their "private labels" (PL): food products with the retailers' name/s on it as opposed to "national brands". PL have been massively demanded by European consumers since 2022 (beginning of the high inflation period) as they are generally 15% to 30% cheaper than national brands. In the meantime, PL have been a top-priority for retailers as they are an easy way to gain customers' loyalty (easy product marketing: a same retailer's communication message benefits to a high number of good categories in several countries). Therefore, in 2024 PL accounted for more than 50% of all the food volumes distributed by large-scale retailers in Europe. PL are also very strategic for retailers as they allow 10% more gross-margin for supermarkets than traditional national brands (CorreardB consulting, IDDRI, 2025).

Cost-killing to improve profitability has been European retailers' another obsession since the COVID-19. This is one of the reasons why European retailers whose supermarkets are equipped with "traditional fresh fish counters"[2] have decided to shut-them down in a near future due to too high operational costs. Historically, such counters where very important in southern European countries that have a strong emotional linkage with food (France, Spain, Portugal, Italy). In the current context of drop in fresh seafood consumption in supermarket both in volume and species diversity, these traditional fresh fish counters are now fast replaced by grab-and-go seafood displays (especially pre-packed fish cuts in trays). The shift from staff-service fresh fish counters to self-serve displays is also motivated by the current degraded fresh food logistics in Europe.

1.2. The COVID-19 period (2020- S1,2022)

1.2.1. 2020

From 2020 to 2022, the EU27 consumers changed their seafood consumption habits due to several cumulated factors related to the impact of the COVID-19 on the market:

- The closure of several HORECA establishments such as table service restaurants, cafeterias, and company canteens.
- The increase of stay-at-home requirements for most workers related to more home- cooking (fueling especially the "DIY trend": bread, yogurts, etc.).

Therefore, this situation not only had a positive effect on the consumption of fresh/chilled seafood in main European countries between 2019 and 2020 (see Chart 1 and Table 1), but it also led EU27 consumers to buy more raw fresh seafood products such as whole or H&G round fish or shell-on Shrimps (CorreardB consulting/MyFISH®, 2019-2022; France AgriMer 2023).

However, the increase in volume of the fresh/chilled seafood segment did not balance the overall decrease in the seafood consumption of the EU27 during the COVID-19 period as shown on Chart 2, and following a descending trend initiated in S2, 2017. Therefore, in 2019 and 2020, the overall EU27 seafood consumption went down by 6%, affecting both wild fisheries and the aquaculture sector. The main reason was the lower seafood availability on the EU27 market due to the negative impact of the COVID-19 on both the production side at global and European scales, and related logistical constraints (international product flows to the EU27 and transportation stages in Europe).

[2] Counters closer to full-service traditional fresh food shops, employing qualified staff capable of advising consumers

1.2.2. 2021

For the first time from 2017, the overall seafood consumption within the EU27 went up in 2021 by 2% compared to the previous year, mainly due to the contribution of farmed seafood species (essentially from Europe) such as farmed Salmon, Seabass, and Mussels. The year 2021 should be considered a turning point in terms of seafood consumption in Europe because for the first time in history, the share of farmed products exceeded 25% of total consumption (75% for wild products) to settle at around 30% (70% for wild products).

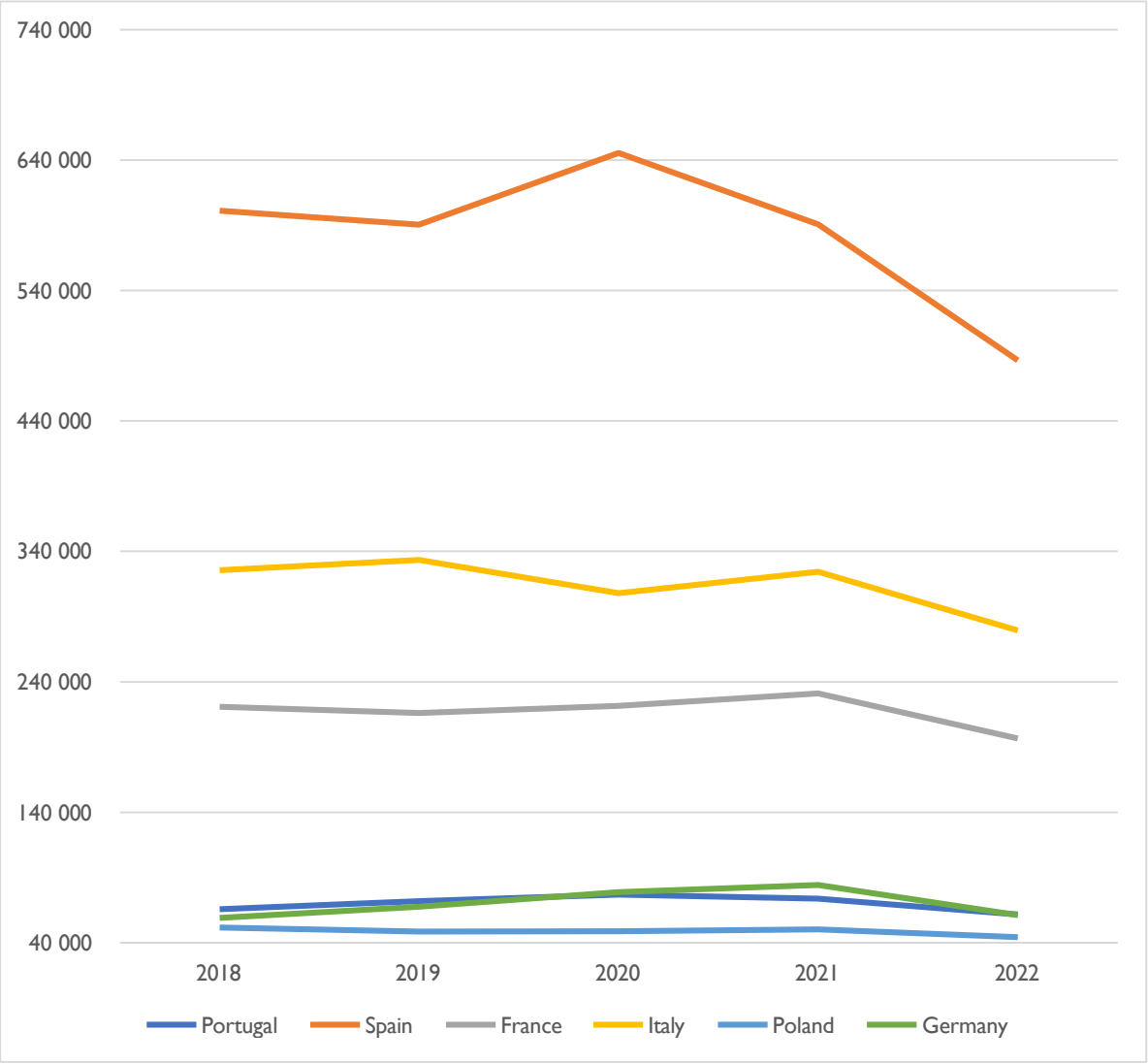


Chart 1: Evolution of the fresh seafood consumption in key EU seafood markets* between 2018 and 2022 (Metric Tons).

Sources: Data compilation CorreardB consulting (2024) from EUMOFA (2023-2024).

* Main EU Fish-eating countries and/or most populated countries within the EU27.

Period	Portugal	Spain	France	Italy	Poland	Germany
2020 vs 2019	+9.5%	+9.3%	+2.5%	-7.6%	+0.6%	+16.6%
2021 vs 2020	-4.3%	-8.5%	+4.4%	+5.3%	+2.7%	+7.8%
2022 vs 2021	-16.2%	-17.6%	-14.8%	-13.8%	-11.8%	-27.6%

Table 1: Evolution of the fresh seafood consumption in key EU27 seafood markets* between 2019 and 2022 (% of volumes).

Sources: Data compilation CorreardB consulting (2024) from EUMOFA (2023-2024).

* Main EU Fish-eating countries and/or most populated countries within the EU27.

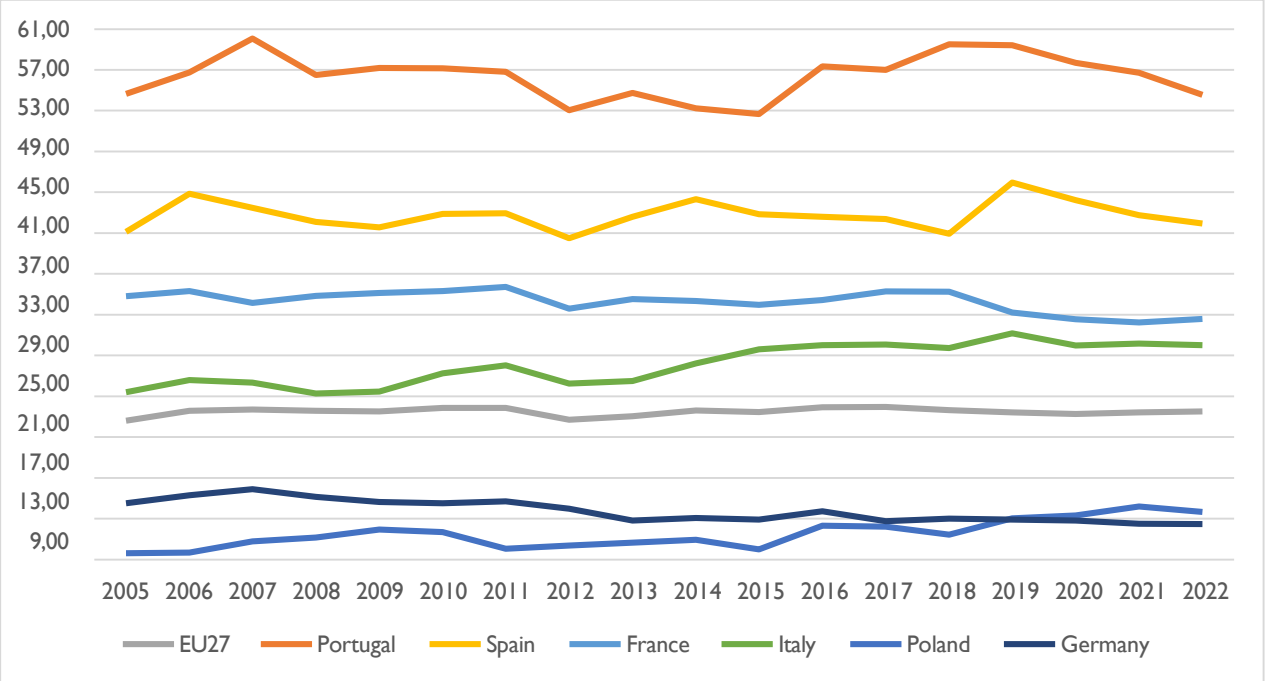


Chart 2: Evolution of the per capita fish and seafood consumption in the EU27 and in key EU seafood markets* between 2005 and 2022 (kg, expressed in Live Weight Equivalent).

Sources: Data compilation CorreardB consulting (2024) from FAO (2005-2022), and EUMOFA (2023-2024).

* Main EU-Fish eating countries and/or most populated countries within the EU27.

Period	Portugal	Spain	France	Italy	Poland	Germany
2020 vs 2019	-4.0%	-4.0%	-2.0%	-4.0%	+2.0%	-1.0%
2021 vs 2020	-2.0%	-3.0%	-1.0%	+0.4%	+7.0%	-2.0%
2022 vs 2021	-4.0%	-2.0%	+1.0%	-0.5%	-4.0%	-0.2%
2023 vs 2022	-3.5%**	-5.8%	-1.4%	-5.0%	-2.00%**	-0.3%**

Table 2: Evolution of the overall seafood consumption in key EU27 seafood markets* between 2019 and 2023 (% of volumes).

Sources: Data compilation CorreardB consulting (2024) from EUMOFA (2023-2024), KANTAR France (2024), CEDEPESCA (2024), LEGACOOP (2025), Statista (2025).

* Main EU Fish-eating countries and/or most populated countries within the EU27.

** Estimation CorreardB consulting (2025)

1.2.3. S1,2022

The improvement in the overall seafood consumption in EU27 in 2021 was short-lived, and already, in 2022, it decreased again by 1%, affecting particularly the countries of the Iberian Peninsula (Portugal, Spain), as shown in Table 2. The reasons for such a decline are multifactorial, and are developed in the following chapter "post COVID-19 period".

1.3. The post COVID-19 period (S2,2022- 2023)

1.3.1. Inflation hitting the seafood consumption

The year 2023 was undoubtedly an *annus horribilis* within the EU27 in terms of food consumption in general, and seafood in particular. The main reason was the strong period of inflation which hit Europe hard following the second invasion of Ukraine by Russia at the beginning of 2022 and whose effects on the world economy started from S2,2022, see Chart 3. Therefore, the production costs of European food product -and those imported from third countries- increased significantly, due to the sharp increase in the price of oil. The impact of the explosion in production costs was particularly brutal in the seafood sector and Europe had to face significant product shortages:

1. Temporary closures of European fisheries or fisheries from third countries historically exporting seafood to the EU27;
2. Ban on some seafood products from Russia.

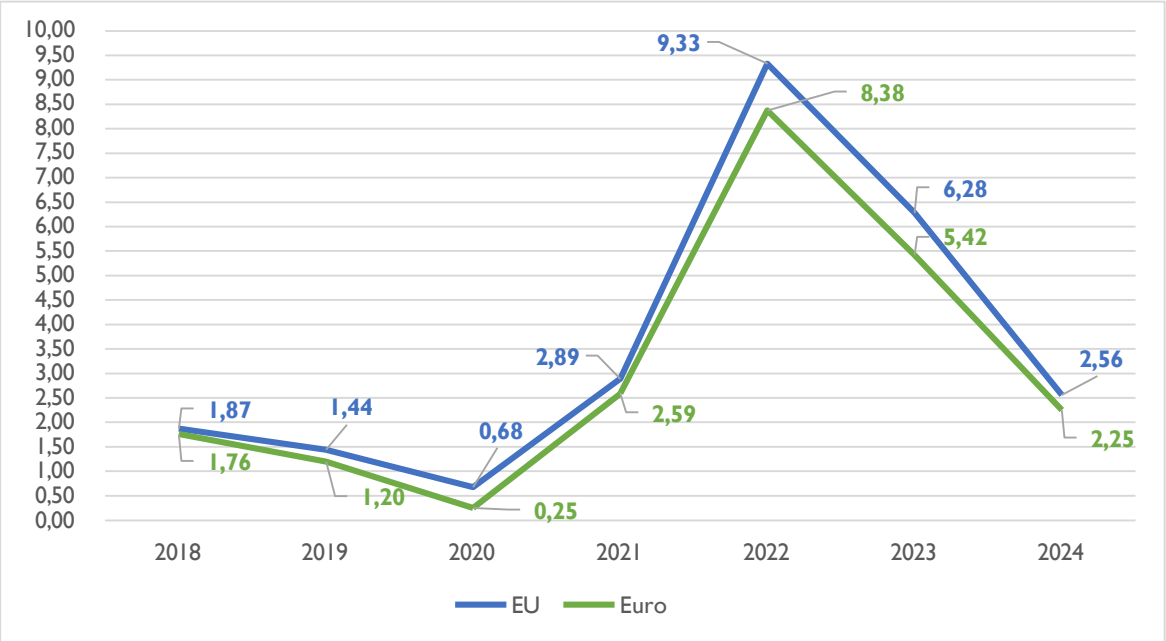


Chart 3: Evolution of the annual inflation in the EU27 and in the Euro zone between 2018 and 2024 (in % compared to the previous year).

Sources: Data compilation CorreardB consulting from Statista (2025).

This unexpected seafood shortage on the EU27 market - particularly fresh/chilled fish - was added to the recent difficulties for the EU27 countries to get seafood products from the UK due to Brexit in place in 2021: longer administrative export procedures for British fish exporters to the EU27, and longer routes to market for both UK and Irish seafood (Irish exporters highly depending on British routes to reach continental Europe).

These shortages of fresh and frozen seafood products on the European market were also compounded by an explosion in the logistics costs of fish to and into the EU27:

- Significant increase of maritime freight costs (upstream) but also,
- Skyrocketing cost of road freight transport (downstream) due to the sudden disappearance of a huge number of drivers in continental Europe between 2021 and 2023 (sea paragraph 1.4.1.).

As a consequence, the inflation affecting the overall seafood market in the EU27 rose over 10% in 2022 compared to the former year (Europanel/Kantar/GfK data, 2024) and the consumer price index for fish and seafood even experienced a 21% increase from June 2021 to February 2023 (EUMOFA DG Agri, 2024). This inflation resulted in a significant decrease in seafood consumption in the main European fish-eating countries in 2022 (see Table 2). The European retail sector was seriously hit with seafood sales dropping by nearly 17% in volume (Europanel/Kantar/GfK data, 2024). However, the good resistance of some key seafood markets such as France (see Table 2) and, to a lower extend, some minor eastern European markets limited the drop of the overall EU seafood consumption to only -1% in volume in 2022.

1.3.2. Reinforcing a 10-year decreasing trend

With a remaining high inflation rate (see Chart 3), 2023 followed the same declining trend and ended with a -2% seafood consumption in volume in the EU27 compared to the previous year (AIPCE-CEP, 2024). Southern European countries (Portugal, Spain, and Italy) were responsible for the biggest decrease in the overall seafood consumption among European countries especially because their domestic fisheries were seriously affected by the related economic downturn resulting from skyrocketing production costs.

Therefore, the EU market has experienced a fall of the per capita seafood consumption of 7.6% in volume over the last 10 years (AIPCE-CEP, 2024).

1.4. Accelerating the reshaping of the seafood offer in the EU

1.4.1. Road freight transport reshuffling the cards

A. Upstream logistics: the durable truck shortage

The EU27 seafood market highly relies on the road freight transport. Almost all seafood categories are transported across Europe by truck (live, chilled/fresh, frozen, preserved/canned, etc.). In recent years, the high price competitiveness of Polish companies has turned Poland into Europe's logistic leader. In 2018, Polish truck companies transported nearly 270 million tons of freight, which accounted for 23% of the EU road transport freight, 64% of the flows being international carriage within the EU (Eurostat data, 2020). Polish truck companies especially dominate the road freight sector in Western Europe. The European economy is therefore highly dependent on the Polish transportation companies. However, the recent crisis (COVID-19, Brexit, and war in Ukraine) and the related economic turmoil have seriously jeopardized this transportation sector. The share of Polish truck companies involved in bankruptcy or restructuring proceedings rose from 5 percent in 2021 to 13 percent in 2024 (over 3,000 companies in 2024). Not only the Polish truck sector has been severely affected by the high increase in price of diesel fuel, but it also has to face new challenges such as skyrocketing labor costs due to the current lack of truck drivers -still lacking 400,000 drivers across EU27- (IRU, 2025):

1. Lack of Ukrainian truck drivers due to the current war in Ukraine (the price competitiveness of Polish truck companies has highly relied on low wages of Ukrainian and Belarus drivers);
2. Retirement of current drivers (65% of the current truck drivers in Europe are expected to retire within a decade);
3. Lack of attractiveness for young people all across Europe (even in Poland).

This situation has thus had a domino effect on all European transport companies which have no capacity to compensate for the lack of Polish trucks, themselves facing serious economic profitability problems. Therefore, the lack of transport options is resulting in a reorganization of product flows across the EU, with transport times increasing considerably, especially in the food sector.

In the field of fresh seafood where freshness is an essential component, this new logistics reality has had significant consequences on destination markets, even for leading seafood transportation companies. Chart 4 shows an example of an increased transport time of fresh seafood before and after the COVID-19, between Paris Rungis wholesale market (#1 food market in Europe) and Rodez city in Occitania region[3] by STEF Seafood (#1 European fresh food transportation company).

[3] the southernmost administrative region of France

Chart 4: Example of logistics for fresh/chilled seafood from Paris Rungis to Rodez (Occitania region) before (left) and after (right) the COVID-19

Source: MyFISH®/CorreardB consulting (2023).

Until 2020, STEF seafood used to transport fresh seafood products between its logistics platform in Paris Rungis and Rodez city in Occitania. These products were destinated to school canteens and commercial restaurants through the private company MyFISH®.
The Rungis-Rodez route was as follows:

- **Day 1, 1:00 PM**: reefer truck leaving Rungis with fresh/chilled seafood
- Day 1, afternoon: logistics stop in Orléans city
- Day 1, 11:00 PM: arrival at Donzenac platform (Brive city). Fresh/chilled seafood transferred into light truck
- Day 2, 1:00 AM: departure of light truck to Rodez City
- **Day 2, 4:00 AM**: arrival at Rodez City, deliveries to school canteens and restaurants

However, in 2022 and due to new logistics constraints, STEF Seafood changed its journey by truck between Rungis and Rodez as follows:

- **Day 1, 1:00 PM**: reefer truck leaving Rungis with fresh/chilled seafood
- Day 1, afternoon: logistics stop in Orléans city
- Day 1, 11:00 PM: arrival at Donzenac platform (Brive city). Product loading (fresh food)
- Day 1, 12:00 AM: departure to Toulouse City (Occitania's regional capital)
- Day 2, 3:00 AM: arrival at Toulouse platform. Product loading/unloading (fresh food)
- Day 2, 6:00 AM: departure to Roquefort city.
- Day 2, 8:15 AM: arrival at Roquefort city. Product loading/unloading (fresh food)
- Day 3, 9:00 AM: Departure to Rodez City
- **Day 2, 10:45**: arrival at Rodez City

In this example, the new and longer route between Rungis wholesale market and Rodez city has increased the transport time by nearly 7 hours. Not only this has had a consequence on the freshness of the delivered chilled seafood to the destination markets, but it has also resulted, in this specific case, in the end of any fresh seafood delivery to school canteens and HORECA establishments near Rodez city as school canteens must be delivered with fresh food before 5:30 AM and table restaurants before 9:30 AM.

As a matter of fact, the lack of transport trucks in Europe has resulted in longer trucking routes in distance to aggregate more goods and optimize truck filling. The downside is that delivery times have been extended, directly impacting the supply of fresh seafood now available to European consumers, both in the retail and HORECA sectors.

B. Downstream logistics to end-users: the last kilometer headache

Transportation companies operating in Europe are also facing new challenges, such as low emission zones across the EU27 resulting in major investments in cleaner engine technologies, as well as additional operational costs due to longer routes to market, limited operational time and/or restricted accesses in urban areas, see Chart 4.

Chart 5: Overview of the current Low-emission zones within the EU27 in March 2025

Source: Data compilation CorreardB consulting from Google Maps (2025).

1.4.2. Changes in seafood offers in retail

A. Fast disappearance of traditional fresh fish counters

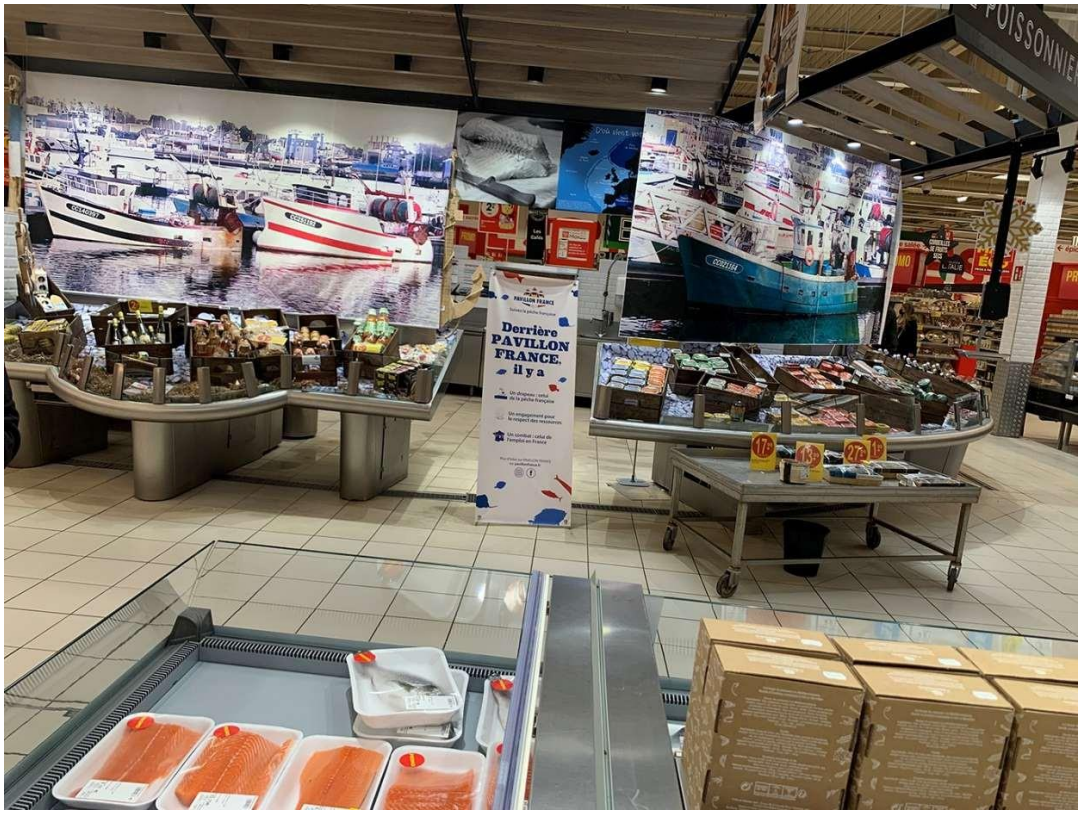
What has long differentiated the large hypermarkets of southern and northern Europe was the presence or not of "traditional" fresh counters, that is to say, closer to full-service traditional fresh food shops, employing qualified staff capable of advising consumers. This was particularly the case for the butchery, delicatessen, bakery, and seafood sections. These traditional fresh counters have been particularly important in southern European countries where consumers maintain strong cultural and emotional links with food (France, Spain, Italy, Portugal…). On the contrary, in the northern European countries where food plays more a nutritional role, fresh food counters in major hypermarkets have been turned into self-service displays offering pre-packed and ready-to-eat products. Therefore, in the United Kingdom, in the Scandinavian countries, or in the Netherlands, most of the seafood products are sold pre-cut (fillets, loins, portions, etc.) and pre-packed in refrigerated counters. Belgium has traditionally been a country where this cultural difference could be observed: in the southern part of the country (French-speaking Wallonia), the fresh fish counter has mainly been shaped on the southern model, while the north of the country (Dutch-speaking Flanders) has mainly promoted self-service seafood products.

For southern European countries, such a policy of "traditional" fresh food counters was of strategic importance because the entire store was benefitting of an image of *freshness*, and not only for the related counters (butchery, delicatessen, bakery, and seafood). However, to maintain these traditional fresh food counters has been pretty challenging as they represent very significant operating cost for retailers. In France for example, we consider that the net margin of a traditional fresh fish counter in hypermarket is around -6% (CorreardB consulting, 2010-2024) due to very significant expenses in terms of labor, operating costs -such as electricity, and fish ice-, but also due to significant product loss (fresh seafood products displayed to the public and not necessarily sold before the end of their shelf life and therefore thrown away). Moreover, since the COVID-19 crisis, major southern European retailers have been facing cumulated problems that have reinforce the negative net profit of these full-service fresh seafood counters due to the raise of operational costs:

- Increased price of energy (electricity),
- Incapacity of hiring qualified employees due to poor work attractiveness and leading to higher product loss,
- Weaker end-kilometer logistics for fresh seafood products as explained before and leading to lower product offer and higher product loss (reduced product shelf live).

As a consequence, after the COVID-19, several major southern European retailers have started the conversion of their traditional fresh seafood counters on the "northern model" i.e. revamping their full-service fresh seafood counters into more self-serve, grab-and-go seafood displays.

In France, Casino was the first retailer to replace full-service seafood counters in its major hypermarkets (named "Géant") from 2022 due to severe economic troubles of its food divisions. Cora Group started the same in 2023. If Carrefour Group has stated (2024) that its full-service seafood counters will not close in its major hypermarkets for now, the situation is different for its smaller outlets and traditional seafood counters in middle-size Carrefour supermarkets are expected to close one after the other. This is certainly not a short-term strategy: Carrefour Group acquired Cora in 2024 and Cora's former hypermarkets historically not equipped with full-service seafood counters will remain as such. Same strategy applies to the 25 Casino hypermarkets recently acquired by Carrefour and expected to be re-branded Carrefour hypermarket in 2025.



Picture 1: Overview of a traditional seafood counter converted in self-service displays (Casino hypermarket, France, 2022)

Explanation: on the back, displays of the traditional full-service fresh seafood counter are no longer filled-up with fresh/chilled seafood products, but with products from other segments such as: fish cans (sardines, tuna), fish soups in jars, fish pâtés, and white wine to pair with seafood products.

Source: Le Web Grand Conso (2022).

In Spain, the situation is pretty similar. Mercadona (Spain's #1 retailer) has started its fresh seafood counter transition in 2024, willing to stick more to the customers' new requirements (i.e. more pre-packed products offered at the self-service displays).

B. Long term impact on retailers' fresh fish offer

The fast reshaping of the European modern food retailing will have the following consequences on the retailers' offer of fresh/chilled seafood products:

1. Internationalization of the seafood product offer from northern to southern Europe: more finfish cuts (fillets, loins, portions; skin-on/skinless) especially farmed Salmon and groundfish, but also cooked farmed Tropical Shrimps.
2. End of the *in-store pre-packed* products due to the progressive disappearance of employees in the hypermarkets' fresh fish counters. Seafood products shall now be *pre-packed industrially* by seafood processors and delivered as such to distributors.
3. Moreover, pre-packed seafood products by seafood processors shall more and more be offered in modified atmosphere packing due to higher last-kilometer restrictions (need for longer product shelf life).
4. Last but not least, seafood packaging -consumer units- shall compensate the fast-disappearing product knowledge offered in store due to the closure of traditional fish counters. Therefore, accurate product information shall be displayed on seafood products and/or on related information channel (suppliers' websites, social media, etc.). If not, consumers will default to a limited offer of seafood products they know, quickly and permanently reducing the product offer in store (see point 1.).

Picture 2: Example of loss of product knowledge due to the lack of qualified employees now operating at traditional fresh fish counters in core supermarkets in Europe (Carrefour Hypermarket, France, 2023)

Explanation: On this picture, farmed Norwegian Salmon from Carrefour's Quality Lines ("Filières Qualité Carrefour") is promoted with MSC logo (Marine Stewardship Council ®) that only applies to wild seafood.

Source: CorreardB consulting (2023).

C. Strengthening the hegemony of retailers' private labels

In 2023, European consumers purchased 2% more retailers' private label products than in 2022 -a similar trend in 2024- because of high food inflation as addressed at paragraph 1.3.1. Food private labels are generally 15% to 30% cheaper than national brands. Therefore, in the EU27, private labels now represent about 50% of all food products sold in supermarkets (vs. about 15% in 2000). If we look more into detail, we can clearly establish that the countries which have the most reduced their fish consumption in the past two years for price reason (see Table 2) are also those responsible for the greatest increase in the consumption of private label products over the same period, especially Spain and Portugal, see Table 3.

	Portugal	Spain	France	Italy	Poland	Germany
2023 market share	55.2%	53.0%	44.0%	36.2%	40.7%	49.6%
2023 vs. 2022	+9.0%	+5.0%	+3.5%	+3.3%	+6.0%	+2.9%

Table 3: Overall food market share of retailers' private labels in key EU27 seafood markets* in 2023 (% of volumes).

Sources: Data compilation CorreardB consulting (2025) from NielsenIQ (2023-2024), PLMA Association (2024), LSA (2024), The European House Ambrosetti (2024).

* Main EU Fish eating countries and/or most populated countries within the EU27.

Europe is definitely in the forefront of retailers' private labels and this trend is certainly not over as shown by the last consumer survey on that topic (NielsenIQ, 2024), see Table 4.

	Portugal	Spain	France	Italy	Poland	Germany
% of questioned consumers	N/A	58.0%	54.0%	53.0%	53.0%	61.0%

Table 4: Percentage of consumers willing to increase their purchases of food private labels in 2025 in key EU27 seafood markets*.

Sources: NielsenIQ (2024).

* Main EU Fish eating countries and/or most populated countries within the EU27.

PART 2 – Consequences for the Canadian suppliers

2.1. Increased competition on the EU27 market

The competition between seafood suppliers have become harder on the EU27 for several reasons. First the number of seafood wholesalers has been drastically reduced due to a durable trend of acquisition of independent stakeholders by larger operators. The same trend takes place among food distributors (retail and foodservice), ending up with less but larger international companies.

Beside this structural reshaping of the European seafood supply chains, Europe is also currently seen as a fallback market for international seafood suppliers in the current context of international trade disputes (especially tariffs war started by the new US administration with China, Canada, EU27…). Therefore, Europe more and more appears as a safe haven for seafood business, especially because the Euro currency is expected to remain strong against the USD (Euro strengthened by the Trump administration's current policy and the EU27 massive investments into military defense to come).

In this context, price will remain the #1 concern for European seafood buyers as:

1. The European overall seafood consumption is going down.
2. Purchasing prices have become the #1 criteria for European food consumers.
3. European seafood distributors want more for less money: more value-added products (fish cuts instead of raw products) + more and more preserved packing = extra costs.
4. Less seafood buyers on the EU27 market means larger tenders with more quantities that is to say a greater bargaining power for retailers.
5. More aggressive competition from historical seafood suppliers is expected on the EU27 market, especially from China, already well established in Europe and whose historical key markets are at stake (declining Chinese domestic demand, tariffs war to come with the USA).

2.2. Business opportunities mean more customer understanding

The EU market situation as described above may suggest complicated business perspectives for Canadian seafood suppliers due to the ongoing decline of seafood consumption in the EU27, the new structural constraints of the sector, and the increased competition with more producing countries. However, there are also clear opportunities for reliable seafood suppliers willing to commit into durable business relationships with European buyers. The main challenge for Canadian seafood suppliers is to move from a "push approach" (to keep producing how they have always done) to a "pull approach" (to understand the market expectations first, and then to produce accordingly).

A. The retailer-supplier win-win relationship allowed by private labels

The fast development of retailers' private labels called both by European consumers and European retailers as detailed previously is a major business opportunity for suppliers. Durable business with suppliers is the backbone of private labels for retailers as their name, image, and reputation are conveyed by the related products. Retailers' credibility is therefore at stake when it comes to private labels. The reality in this regard is that very few food suppliers historically engaged into retailers' private labels have withdrawn from this business.

However, if private-labels represent an indisputable business opportunity for Canadian seafood producers, it is definitely not something that can be achieved from one day to another as a trust relationship must be initially established with end-users. This is especially complicated for new suppliers as:

- There is no reason for retailers to switch to a new supplier as any change may result in product shortage, quality problems, image issues, etc.
- New suppliers may not be fully able to deliver the demanded seafood products, considering that the market is looking for more value-added ones (cuts, pre-packed, etc.).
- A supplier usually has no second chance with food retailers when it comes to private labels and must do it right the first time. Any business disappointment will irremediably end up in an immediate and durable black list of the related supplier.

This is the reason why it is important for Canadian seafood suppliers to understand how the European food retailing works first. Food retailers not only search for good products (i.e. sticking to the consumers' requirements, safe, available, and constant) and affordable products. They are also looking for everything that may sustain their business or, in other words: customer assistance. More than ever before, consumers and retailers feed themselves reciprocally. As explained at paragraph 1.4.2, the loss of seafood product knowledge by European consumers reflects a loss of product expertise at retail stage (especially from seafood buyers). Therefore, Canadian seafood suppliers shall be able to help mitigate that problem by supplying:

- An accurate information on related fisheries: fishing season = product availability; fisheries closures = potential lack of products and need for alternatives; updated marine science on state of fisheries, climate change, sea pollution = middle/long-term supply perspectives.
- Geopolitical constraints (e.g. tariffs) = potential product shortages or opportunities.
- Communication/marketing elements (e.g. the image of "Canada" as a whole) to support seafood sales.
- An update on seafood product developments (new products/new packaging/new species) to keep the retailers' range of Canadian seafood products dynamic and attractive to consumers (and irreplaceable by other origins).

B. Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer (Sun Tzu)

To get close to the European seafood buyers (retail, foodservice) is absolutely key for Canadian seafood producers to achieve durable seafood business in the EU27. If some major Canadian seafood companies have already established reliable business relationships in Europe, it is important to realize that very few Canadian seafood producers really understand the EU27 market requirements as Europe has not always been considered as a priority market for Canada. It is a clear disadvantage for Canadian fisheries compared to competing and well-established fisheries in Europe for similar species: EU countries, Norway, Iceland, Scotland, Faroes, USA, China…

We therefore highly recommend Canadian seafood suppliers to get accompanied to get closer to the European buyers. We consider that 3 spurs to action shall be taken advantage of in this regard:

1. Be aware of all the updated market data supplied by Canadian authorities (especially Trade commissioners at EU country and Brussels levels).
2. Get accompanied by European intermediaries ("neo sales representatives") in charge of making the linkage between Canadian producers and European buyers, especially for the daily work: planning the quality/social audits of producers' processing plants, following the retailers' quality control plans, managing potential product recall, following product deliveries, working on promotional campaigns, etc.
3. Join forces with other Canadian suppliers. If the competition between seafood suppliers is the reality of the daily business in any fishery, it is important to behave as a team when approaching the European retailers, especially for private labels. Such a strategy may mitigate the risk of product shortage for a target seafood species and then reinforce the durability of the related seafood products in the retailers' product portfolio. It may also allow the development of a larger range of Canadian seafood references for retailers, increasing the legitimacy of Canada compared to other origins.

C. Focus on already identified market opportunities and adapt your offer accordingly

After you have established reliable connections on the European market it is important for Canadian seafood suppliers to focus on products of immediate business interest. In this regard, the state of the offered products is today as important as the related seafood species.

One of the identified concerns when it comes to Canadian seafood is that the Canadian seafood industry has often given priority to raw products (whole round fish, H&G…) and not to value-added finished ones (fish fillets, loins, steaks…). Most of the Canadian finfish products ending-up in Europe have therefore been reprocessed elsewhere (western Europe: Urk, Vigo, Boulogne/Mer; eastern Europe: Poland…; China). The problem for Canadian fisheries is that they are not benefitting from the related added-value, what is a shame

considering the CETA agreement in place with the EU27 (zero tariffs on valued-added products exported from Canada to the EU). From a European perspective, Canadian seafood reprocessed outside Canada is not necessarily price competitive compared to other origins due to additional logistics cost and labor cost in reprocessing country. It is therefore important for Canadian seafood suppliers to proceed to precise cost-analyses scenarios for their finished seafood products offered to European buyers, especially for the following seafood categories of market interest for Europe.

Commercial name	Latin name	Type of product	Destination market	Competition	Special points of attention
Hakes	Merluccius productus & Merluccius bilinearis	Fish blocks PBO Fish blocks deep skin Single frozen PBO fillets Single frozen deep skin fillets	Industry: France, Spain Industry: Italy, Spain Retail/foodservice: France & Spain Retail/foodservice/industry: France & Spain Retail/foodservice: Italy & Spain Retail/foodservice/industry: Italy & Spain	M. capensis (S. Africa/ Namibia) M. hubbsi (Argentina) M. productus (US) = Serious problems of supply from these 3 origins on the EU market	Fillets: - nearly all the offered Hake fillets on the EU market are single frozen - need for fine grading for foodservice (contained price per fillet). Also applies to Y. flounder and O. perch
Yellowtail flounder	Limanda ferruginea	Single (?) & twice frozen fillets	Industry/retail/foodservice: France, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium (natural & coated finished products)	Limanda limanda (Atlantic North-East) Limanda aspera (Alaska then twice frozen in China)	European flatfish fisheries fast declining. European flatfish reprocessing industry at stake (Urk, Boulogne/ Mer, Vigo…) Reprocessing (filleting) of Canadian Y.F. in Europe not always price competitive for twice frozen to date
Redfish	Sebastes mentella & Sebastes fasciatus	H&G frozen Single frozen PBO fillets Twice frozen PBO fillets	Reprocessing: Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Portugal Retail/foodservice/industry: Germany, Netherlands, France, Belgium	Sebastes norvegicus/ marinus, mentella, (Norway, Iceland, EU) Sebastes spp. (China)	Reprocessing (filleting) of Canadian Redfish in Europe not always price competitive compared to other offers of Redfish fillets
Sea Urchins	S. droeba-chiensis & S. Franciscanus	Fresh live Frozen roe (incl. 1kg blocks)	France (Mediterranean basin, French Brittany), Spain, Italy	European sea urchins (Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea)	European fisheries very fast declining Major consumption season: End January-Easter
Pacific Salmons	Oncorhynchus spp.	Chilled skin-on fillets air-shipped Chilled H&G (decreasing demand) H&G frozen	Retail/upper foodservice: all Western Europe, especially France, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Italy Retail (Pink): France, Belgium, Germany Industry (Chum, slicing): Spain Smoking industry (Coho, Chum): France, Germany	US Pacific Salmon Qualitative farmed Atlantic Salmon (e.g.: Irish organic, Scottish Label-Rouge)	Chilled fillets: demand for skin-on pacific Salmon (Keta, Coho, Sockeye) exceeding the Canadian offer
Black Cod (Sable fish)	Anoplopoma fimbria	Chilled & frozen skin-on fillets	Upper foodservice (gastronomic & Japanese)/ cruise ships: France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany	US origin, mainly H&G	Still unknown species on most markets need for marketing/ communication information

Table 5: Short-term business opportunities on the EU27 market for Canadian seafood if products are available
Source: CorreardB consulting (2025)

D. Anticipate market opportunities in a near future

Anticipation in the seafood sector is key, for several reasons. First the industry's reactivity is limited by annual constraints: annual fishing season/s from a production side, and annual calls for tenders from a distribution side. Therefore, if seafood producers miss business opportunities, they will certainly have to wait the year after to seize new ones.

Moreover, it is important to reaffirm that fisheries depend on not-always controllable factors by producers such as climate change, fish migration, sea pollution, etc. Therefore, today's reality from a production side is not always tomorrow's one. As a consequence, it is important to be well aware of the state of the Canadian fisheries in a near future, as well as their competing ones. Any decline of a competing fishery may represent a strategic business opportunity for Canadian seafood suppliers and shall be anticipated accordingly.

Last but not least, the "pull approach" that must be integrated by Canadian seafood suppliers when tackling a target market shall also help anticipate new consumer trends that can be profitable for the Canadian industry.

Product category	Situation	Species	Business opportunities
European flatfish fisheries	Fast decline of European flatfish fisheries (Atlantic Ocean), harming especially the fishing & processing industries in Netherlands, France, Denmark, Germany… Reasons: unclear (climate change/ overfishing/ sea pollution)	All flatfishes (Dab, Plaice, Sole spp.: Megrim, Witch…, etc.)	All Canadian flatfish fishes Dab/Sole like. Interest for Halibut & Turbot to be confirmed
European shellfish fisheries	Fast decline of European flatfish fisheries (Atlantic Ocean), harming especially the fishing & processing industries in Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain Reasons: unclear (climate change/ overfishing/ sea pollution)	All shellfishes (Clams spp., Cockles spp., Winkles, Whelks, etc.)	Good opportunity to set up new business with Europe for Canadian shellfish producers as a complementary offer with mussels/oysters.
Marine plants	Durable trend of reduction of meat/ seafood consumption by new European generations for ecological and/or health issues	Various	Marine plants remain a very niche market in the EU27 but there are more and more M.P. used as ingredients in Asian and/or upper foodservice as well as ingredients in vegan food

Table 6: Potential business opportunities on the EU27 market for Canadian seafood suppliers in a near future
Source: CorreardB consulting (2025)

PART 3 – Focus on listed Canadian seafood species

3.1. Hakes (Merluccius productus and M. bilinearis)

The EU27 is a world leading market for whitefish species. It stands on two main sources of supply. From one hand, most of the European catches (EU27 but also Iceland, Norway, the Faroes, Scotland…) are dedicated to the EU27 fresh fish market with the main species being Atlantic Cod, Saithe, Haddock, Ling-like species, and European Hake (Merluccius merluccius). On the other hand, the frozen whitefish segment mainly relies on imports from neighboring countries (Norway, Iceland, Faroes) but also from USA (Alaska Pollock and North Pacific Hake – Merluccius productus), Russia (Alaska Pollock), South-Africa and Namibia (Capensis Hake – Merluccius capensis), Argentina (Hubbsi Hake – Merluccius hubbsi), and Chile (Gayi Hake – Merluccius gayi). The EU27 imports roughly 675,000 MT of frozen whitefish products, see Table 7.

Products	Single frozen	Twice frozen	Total	% of total
Overall frozen whitefish species: fish fillets and fish blocks	400 000 MT	275 000 MT	675 000 MT	100%
Incl. Alaska Pollock	140 000 MT	164 000 MT	204 000 MT	30%
Incl. Hakes (all species)	144 000 MT	5 000 MT	149 000 MT	22%

Table 7: Volumes of frozen whitefish products imported in the UE27 in 2023 (groundfish species, Metric Tons)

Source: Data compilation Colfisher (2025) from FAO, Rabobank (2024).

The EU27 market of frozen whitefish products has been stable until recently. From now on, it is going to remain steady and is even expected to slightly increase due to the following cumulative elements:

1. This market is definitely driven by price. In this regard, the market price setter is Alaska Pollock whose price has been historically low since 2023, due to increased world catches (FAO Globefish, 2024), making it highly price-competitive compared to European groundfish species;
2. The EU27 demand for imported frozen whitefish products (especially fillets) will remain high due to several elements: the lower availability of some traditional European groundfish species (e.g.: Atlantic Cod), the increased demand of whitefish-based processed products for the European retail sector (see points 3 and 4);
3. The internationalization/standardization of the modern food retailing with new common product standards (natural whitefish fillets, coated whitefish fillets) being spread all across the EU27 (especially gaining market share in eastern- and southern-European countries);
4. The growing appetite of the EU27 consumers as a whole for more "neutral-tasting" products (e.g.: Atlantic Salmon, Whitefish, Tropical Shrimps…);

5. The growing interest of both EU27 consumers and food distributors (retail/ foodservice) for more practical, ready-to-eat, and value-added products, especially groundfish cuts: skinless boneless fillets, skin-on fillets, loins, coated fillets, etc.

The Hake category is of major importance for Europe and represents over one fifth of the imported frozen whitefish products in the EU27 (see Table 6). The Capensis Hake is the preferred species of the European destination markets (see Chart 6), followed by Hubbsi Hake.

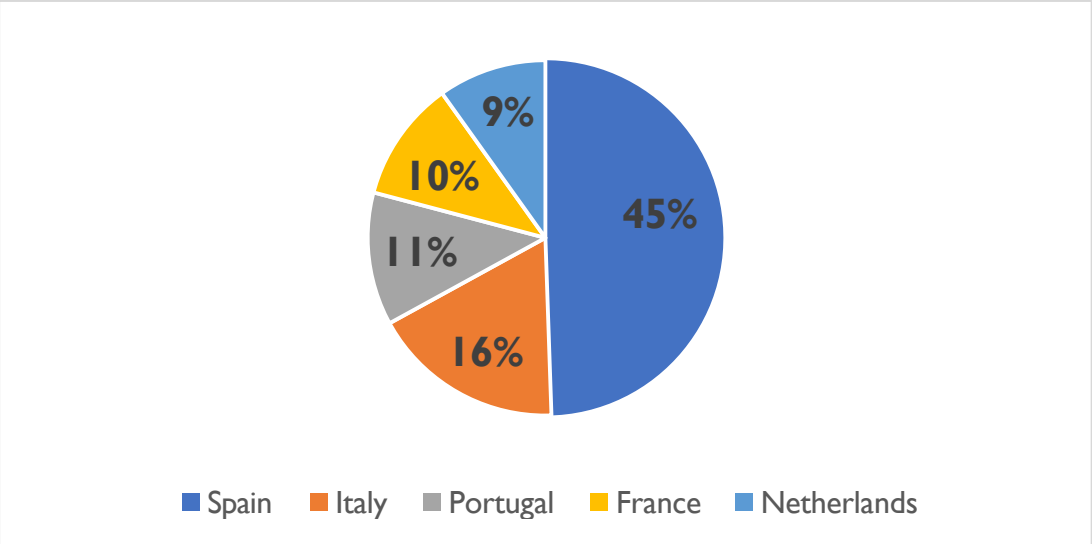


Chart 6: Main European buyers of Capensis Hake - (% of the imported volumes)

Source: Colfisher (2025)

Explanation:

Spain, France, Italy, and Portugal: processing and destination markets
Netherlands: processing for re-export to destination markets such as Spain, France, and Italy

The Capensis Hake is predominant in the segments of frozen natural fillets and coated fillets ("meunière coating" [4] -see also the Yellowtail Flounder section- or breaded) in Spain, France, and Italy. The segment of coated fillets has gained market shares in recent years and coated Hake fillets are now found both in the frozen and chilled segments (chilled = refresh = based on frozen raw material fish).

The Gayi hake is considered of lower quality by European buyers and is reserved for lower-price entry-level frozen Hake fillets offered to the EU27 consumers.

To mitigate the potential lack of Capensis and Hubbsi species on the EU27 market, and/or to offer qualitative and price competitive Hake products to both the retail and the foodservice channels, the European buyers also started to import North Pacific Hake (Merluccius

[4] "Meunière" is a traditional European coating recipe made of lemony, buttery pan sauce

productus) frozen blocks nearly 10 years ago. Today, Productus Hake is an important species for Hake portions (from block portioning), especially on the Italian market (for breaded portions and fish fingers) and to a lower extend, on the French market (natural portions, see picture 6).

Pictures 3, 4, 5, and 6: Examples of frozen natural Hake products distributed in the retail sector in Europe.

Explanation:

Pictures 3 and 4: Hake fillets in Spain: 3 = Capensis Hake packed in plastic bag (national brand Pescanoa), 4 = Hubbsi Hake packed in plastic bag (private label Carrefour)
Picture 5: Hake fillets in Italy = Capensis Hake packed in carton box (national brand Findus)
Picture 6: Hake portions from fish block in France = Productus Hake packed in carton box (private label Sytème U)

Sources: Pescanova, Carrefour, Findus, Système U (2025).

Pictures 7, 8, and 9: Examples of frozen coated Hake fillets distributed in the retail sector in Europe.

Explanation:

Picture 7: frozen coated Hake fillets in Spain (battered) = Capensis Hake packed in carton box (national brand Pescanova)
Picture 8: chilled coated Hake fillets in France (crispy breadcrumbs) = Capensis Hake packed in modified atmosphere tray (national brand Cité Marine)
Picture 9: frozen coated Hake fillets in Italy (breaded) = Capensis Hake packed in carton box (national brand Findus)

Sources: Pescanova, Cité Marine, Consilia (2025).

The current Hake situation in Europe is that the demand for frozen fillets remains high on the traditional destination markets (Spain, France, and Italy). However, in the meantime increased imported quantities of frozen Hake fillets appears to be unlikely at short term, potentially due to:

1. Lower catch perspectives of Capensis Hake in South-Africa
2. Lower product availability of Hubbsi Hake from Argentina due to current economic difficulties in that country harming the Argentinean supply chain
3. Lower product availability of US Productus Hake in Europe due to poor US catches.

In this context, there are clear short-term market opportunities for Canadian Hake suppliers on the EU27 market. The main demanded products are as follows:

- Destinated to the Spanish market: PBO skinless-bonless or Deepskin[5] products = frozen fillets (preferably single frozen), and fish blocks

[5] A cut that removes both the fish's pinbone and fat line

- Destinated to the French market: PBO skinless-bonless = frozen fillets (preferably single frozen), and fish blocks
- Destinated to the Italian market: Deepskin products = frozen fillets (preferably single frozen), and fish blocks

The major challenges for the Canadian Hake suppliers on the EU27 market are as follows:

- To give the priority to single-frozen Hake fillets (and to fish blocks to a lower extend).
- Capacity to supply with the required product qualities, especially PBO for France and Spain, and deepskin for Italy and Spain.
- Capacity to offer quantities on a regular basis (essential for processing planning in Europe).
- Importance to know how to manage post-harvest product inventory to avoid any lipid oxidation of Hake products (totally inacceptable for destination markets).
- Need to advocate the species Merluccius bilinearis, still unknown on the EU market, especially by end-users in terms of organoleptic properties (taste, texture, color, fillets sizes, etc.) and price/market positioning compared to other well-established Hake species on the European market.

3.2. Yellowtail Flounder

Europe is a world leading market for flatfish species that relies on two sources of supply: the European domestic catches mainly destinated to the fresh/chilled segment, and imports for the frozen/processed segment.

The future of the European flatfish fisheries is at stake. The situation is clear: the volumes of flatfish species landed in Europe between 2015 and 2023 have been nearly divided by 3, see Table 8. The reasons given are manifold with, among other things the impact on fish stocks of overfishing, global warming, sea pollutions, and the rising number of offshore windfarms.

Species	2015	2023	Difference
Common Sole (Solea solea)	20 540 MT	10 924 MT	-47%
Plaice (Pleuronectes platessa) + Common Dab (Limanda limanda) + Lemon Sole (Microstomus kitt)	103 422 MT	32 798 MT	-69%
Total	123 962 MT	43 722 MT	-65%

Table 8: Volumes of flatfish species landed in Europe (incl. the UK) in 2015 and 2023 (Metric Tons, whole fish)

Source: Data compilation CorreardB consulting (2025) from EUMOFA (2015-2024).

As a consequence, the situation for the European fishing fleets involved in flatfish catch (see Chart 7) is catastrophic (European Commission, 2025):

- The Dutch fleet has already been reduced by 13% in 2023;
- The Belgium fleet has reduced its catches of flatfish species by 60% in volumes in 2024;
- The French catches of Common Dab are expected to decrease every year again between 15% and 20%, between 2024 and 2028.

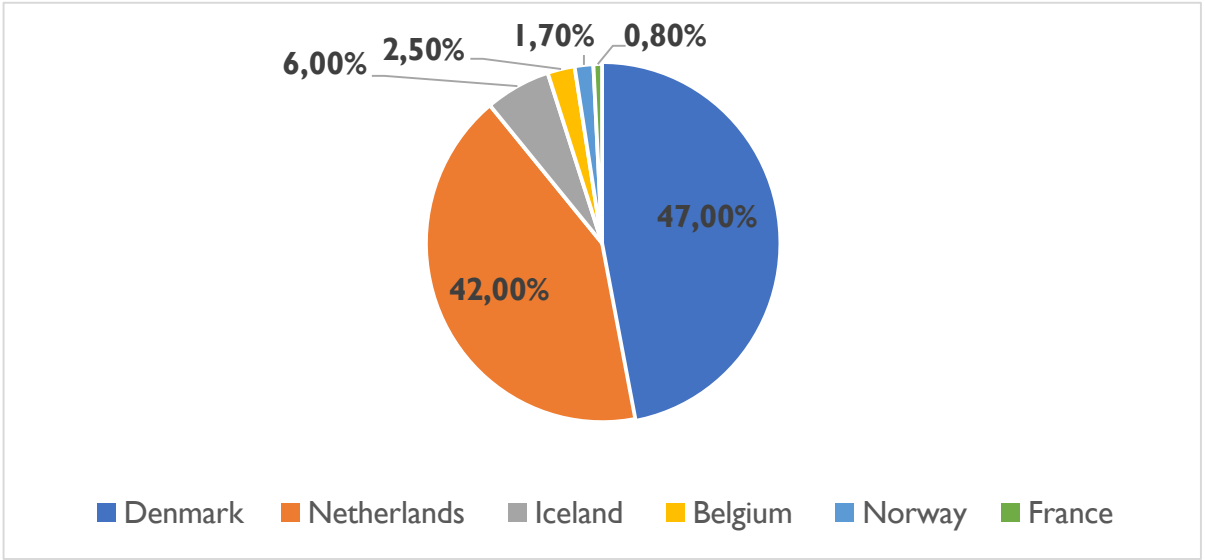


Chart 7: Main European fishing fleets for Common Dab -Limanda limanda- (% of the total fresh production)

Source: ReportLinker (2023), update CorreardB consulting (2025)

Under these conditions, Europe's traditional flatfish processing hubs are in danger. Hundreds of jobs are threatened (especially those specialized in the manual filleting of flatfish), particularly in Urk in the Netherlands, Boulogne/Mer in France, and, to a lower extend in Vigo in Spain or in Grimsby in the UK. Therefore, the option to import Yellowtail Flounder (YF) products from Canada to mitigate the lost quantities of European flatfish (especially in Urk) has gained importance. Several Dutch importers/processors have been importing YF fresh (when available) and frozen products to be reprocessed in Urk (filleting and packing). These Yellowtail Flounder products are mainly destinated to national brands such as Findus ending in limited markets such as Italy, Switzerland (non-EU), and the Netherlands, see picture 10.

Picture 10: Example of frozen Canadian Yellowtail Flounder fillets packed in the Netherlands and sold in supermarkets in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland (consumer unit: 400g carton box).

Source: Migros (2025).

The main problem that plays against a larger diffusion of Canadian Yellowtail Flounder in core supermarkets in the EU27 is its higher price compared to more affordable Yellowfin sole fillets (Limanda aspera) twice frozen in China.

As a consequence, in less than 10 years, Limanda aspera has replaced the European Common Dab (Limanda limanda) for most of the natural frozen Limanda sp. fillets sold in core supermarkets and foodservice channels across Europe. In the meantime, Limanda aspera has also replaced the European Plaice (Pleuronectes platessa) and Lemon Sole (Microstomus kitt) for the processing of coated frozen fillets (especially the "meunière" recipe).

Several importers of frozen fish fillets (especially in France) have tried to set up new routes to market for Canadian Yellowtail Flounder frozen fish in Europe, having it filleted in alternative European countries offering lower labor costs such as Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria with poor results so far. Further options shall be therefore offered by Canadian Yellowtail Flounder suppliers to EU buyers to make Yellowtail Flounder fillets (single or twice frozen) more price competitive compared to other flatfish species available in Europe (traditional European species especially Common Dab and Lemon Sole / Pacific yellowtail Flounder twice frozen in China).

3.3. Salmons (Atlantic and Pacific)

Europe is the main world market for Salmon. Farmed Atlantic Salmon is the second most consumed seafood species in Europe (after the Tuna category) with more than 2.5kg per capita consumed annually in the EU27 (in live weight equivalent, EUMOFA 2024).
In 2023, the total Salmon supply within the EU27 reached 1.327 million metric tons (AIPCE-CEP, 2024), a slightly decrease in volumes compared to the record year 2022. Norway, the world's largest Salmon farmer, is the single biggest supplier to the EU, accounting for 80 percent of all Salmon and 89 percent of whole fresh Atlantic Salmon consumed within the bloc last year, see Charts 8 and 9.

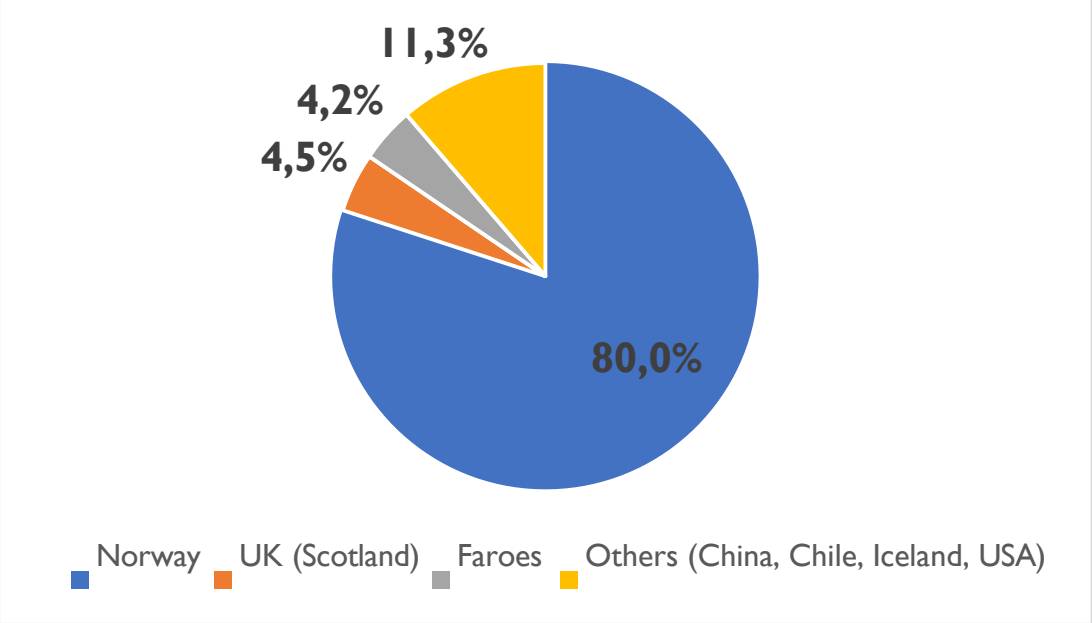


Chart 8: Main Salmon exporters to the EU27 in 2023 - (% of the imported volumes)

Source: AIPCE-CEP (2024)

Explanation:

Norway, UK, Faroes, Iceland: Atlantic Salmon
USA, Chile: Pacific Salmon species
China: reprocessing

The main destination market for Atlantic Salmon in the EU27 is the chilled seafood segment. The European Union is also a significant processor of smoked Salmon with well-established smoking plants in Poland, France, Lithuania, Germany, and Denmark. The apparent consumption of smoked Salmon in the EU27 in 2022 was 139,384 metric tons.

The EU27 mainly imports whole Salmon, especially from Norway, see chart 9.

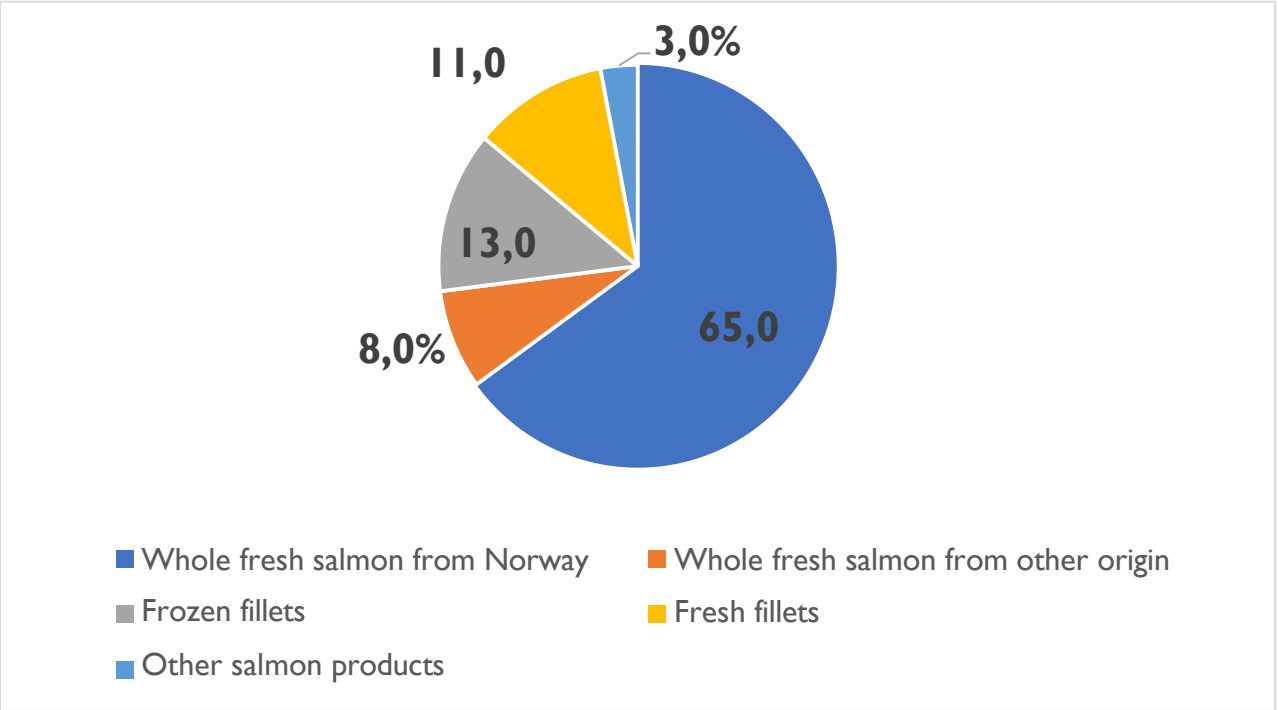


Chart 9: Main Salmon products imported in the EU27 in 2023 - (% of the imported volumes)

Source: AIPCE-CEP (2024)

No place for new challenging suppliers of Atlantic Salmon

The Norwegian Salmon producers have had a 30-year positive business relationship with European retailers (especially in France) that partly explains why they have based their exports on whole fresh Salmon essentially. This gives the European retailers the possibility to have the Norwegian Salmon processed into fillets, loins, and steaks directly in the destination markets to better stick to the distributors' sales momentum, in real time. Therefore, whole fresh salmon is processed all across the UE (France, Poland, Germany, Netherlands, Spain…) either by European processors, or directly by Norwegian processing plants established within the EU27. Such a strategy has enabled the Norwegian Salmon industry to flood the European market with price competitive products all across the EU27. Therefore, the Norwegian Salmon producers have a total control of the supply chain that includes production (Norway, but also Norwegian assets elsewhere in Europe including Scotland), logistics to processing sites, fish processing, and fish distribution to European seafood wholesalers. The Norwegian Salmon industry's ability to respond just in time to European food retailers in terms of product portfolio, product packaging, logistics and business dynamics precludes any possibility for new suppliers of Atlantic Salmon to establish themselves sustainably in the EU27 market. In that context, there is no real room for new supplies of Atlantic Salmon from Canadian suppliers on the EU27 market.

Opportunities for Pacific Salmon

- **Fresh segment**

The biggest Salmon markets for fresh/chilled Salmon in the EU27 are France, Germany, Spain, and Italy (Eurostat-Comext, 2023). As explained before, these markets all rely on farmed Atlantic Salmon, mainly from Norway.

France, Germany (and Italy to a lower extend) are considered as mature markets for Salmon. In France for example, the cooperation between the retailer Carrefour and Norwegian Salmon producers Hallvard-Leroy (now Leroy) or Marine-Harvest (now Mowi) started in the 90s. In France and Germany, Atlantic Salmon has become a seafood commodity, a true "chicken of the sea". The expansion of several processed product forms in retail sales has been crucial for increasing demand in these mature markets and/or help sustain the consumers' interest for Salmon. With the current internalization of the modern food retailing (see paragraph 1.4.2), the demand for more processed products is also increasing in the less mature Salmon markets, especially in Spain and Poland. This trend aligns with consumer preferences for easier-to-prepare seafood options across the EU27. The price increase related to more value-added Atlantic Salmon products is an issue for the European consumers but may partly be mitigated by higher product volumes demanded by European food distributors (more uniformed offer of processed products across Europe, bigger sizes of remaining food retailers, potential joint-purchases between retailers, etc.).

Pictures 11, 12, 13, and 14: Examples of value-added Atlantic Salmon processed products sold in the fresh fish counters in the retail sector in Europe

Explanation:

Flavored fresh Atlantic Salmon steak-fillets offered on the European retail market by Mowi (ex-Marine Harvest)
Picture 11: Seasoning = aromatic herbs
Picture 12: Seasoning = 3 peppers & Sichuan Bay
Picture 13: Seasoning = thyme & lemon
Picture 14: Seasoning = Thai spices

Source: Mowi (2025).

If innovation has contributed to maintain the European sales of Atlantic Salmon at a high level in volume and, most of all in value, the overall sales of farmed Atlantic Salmon remain flat since 2022 (or even slightly decreasing in volume as stated before). The reasons are multiple and beside the consumer price positioning we should also certainly take into account a certain consumer weariness regarding the traditional core market of Atlantic Salmon products. A growing proportion of European consumers (especially those with the highest purchasing power) are now turning to alternative sources of salmonids that are perceived (rightly or wrongly) as higher quality than Norwegian Salmon, i.e. less fatty, more natural, healthier, and more sustainable. This explains in particular the growing success of the following products:

- Farmed European Sea Trout
- Farmed organic Atlantic Salmon, especially from Ireland
- Farmed *label rouge*[6] Atlantic Salmon from Scotland
- Farmed Pacific Salmon from Chile (Coho species)
- Wild Pacific Salmon from the USA (especially in the smoked and frozen segments)

European processors have understood this trend well and alternative offers to traditional Norwegian Salmon have multiplied in retail in recent years, both in the fresh segment (Sea Trout, Organic and Label Rouge Atlantic Salmon) and the smoked segment (Sockeye, Coho, and Chum Pacific Salmons). Pacific Salmon supplies to European smokers come mainly from the USA (H&G frozen). This gradual diffusion of wild Pacific Salmon products across Europe has helped generate a real demand for fresh fillets (skin-on) from European core retailers (particularly in the French, Belgian and Dutch markets). Since the US offer of air-shipped fresh Pacific Salmon products is not really available for the European market (historically reserved for the US states on the west coast of the USA – California in particular), several European importers have positioned on the direct import of fresh Pacific Salmon fillets from Canada. As a matter of fact, Canada benefits from a significant competitive advantage here, particularly in terms of air logistics from British Columbia to the European international airports. We therefore invite Canadian Pacific Salmon suppliers to favor this export channel, as European demand exceeds the current Canadian offer of fresh Pacific Salmon fillets. This is an interesting option for the Canadian industry as it allows the added value of Pacific Salmon filleting to be retained in Canada. Moreover, prices achieved in the fresh segment are higher than in the frozen one (whose production costs appear to be higher, including a longer product immobilization, cost of cold storage, etc.).

In addition, this Canada-EU direct route to market for Pacific Salmon fresh fillets also allows Canadian producers to quickly and easily connect with European retailers. For the latter, fresh Pacific Salmon fillets appear as an "extra" reference in their product portfolio, and any

[6] Label Rouge is a French label that applies to food products that have been produced or prepared in a way that ensures a superior quality over other similar products. Well known in France, Label Rouge is more and more recognized in neighboring European countries

product shortage would have a limited impact on their normal operations. The risk is therefore limited for European distributors but the advantages for them are certain, particularly in terms of improving their image among consumers, offering a fresh, natural, healthy, and sustainable Salmon product (and potentially tastier than traditional Norwegian Salmon). Products of interest: Coho, Sockeye, and Chum (Keta) species; skin-on fillets; sizes: 400-600g/ 600-700g/ 700-1200g (depending on species and availability).

- **Frozen segment**

If farmed the Norwegian Atlantic Salmon dominates the fresh processed Salmon category in the EU27, the frozen category has been nearly exclusively based on wild Pacific Salmon processed in China (twice frozen). Pink salmon fillet products are available in all cuts and sizes, in a variety of packaging, and at all price ranges. The most common Pink Pacific Salmon products are as follows (see pictures 15 to 18):

- Twice frozen skinless-boneless fillets
- Twice frozen skinless-boneless steak-fillets
- Twice frozen skinless-boneless portions from fish blocks

Pictures 15, 16, 17, and 18: Examples of Pink Pacific Salmon frozen products offered in the French retail

Explanation:

Picture 15: Twice frozen Pink Pacific Salmon steak-fillets packed in carton box (private label Leclerc, entry-level)
Picture 16: Twice frozen Pink Pacific Salmon fillets individually packed in vacuum (private label Carrefour)
Picture 17: Twice frozen Pink Pacific Salmon portions (from fish block) packed in carton box (national brand Findus)
Picture 18: Single frozen H&G Pink Pacific Salmon individually wrapped in plastic film and conveying special ASMI/Alaskan communication (unbranded product reserved to retailer Auchan)

Sources: Leclerc, Carrefour, Findus, Auchan (2025).

Frozen H&G Pink Pacific Salmon remains an important item for the European retails, especially in France. It is perceived as a price-competitive product, but also as a more natural alternative to farmed Atlantic Salmon. It is therefore used to convey positive message to consumers, especially on product naturality and sustainability (see picture 18 – conveying a sustainability message from Alaska).

Pacific Salmon steaks (H&G's slices) are getting rare on mature Salmon markets (e.g. France) as they no longer correspond to the consumers' need for more practical products and have been replaced by steak-fillets. Steaks of Chum Pacific Salmon however remain an important item on the Spanish and Portuguese markets (import of frozen H&G Chum Pacific Salmon sliced into steaks in Galicia).

The major challenges for the Canadian suppliers of frozen Pacific Salmon on the EU27 market compared to the current offers of US Pacific Salmon are twofold:

1. The capacity of the Canadian suppliers to supply enough quantities to cover retail and foodservice contracts;
2. The price competitiveness of the Canadian offer of frozen Pacific Salmon products, especially:

- H&G Pacific Salmon species:
    1. Chum for slicing on the Spanish market (retail/foodservice)
    2. Coho, Sockeye (upper products) and Chum (entry level) for European Salmon smokers (especially France and Germany)
    3. Pink on the French retail market (GMC color)
- Twice frozen Pink Pacific Salmon cuts (fillets, steak-fillets, and portions from blocks) especially compared to the US offer processed in China.

Case study:

Frozen H&G Pink Pacific Salmon for French retailers may be a strategic market gateway to enter the European retail's market. As stated before, H&G Pink Pacific Salmon may easily benefit from a true positive image for consumers if marketed and communicated accordingly, beyond the normal price consideration. Relevant product communication on the attached product label (sustainability, nutritional benefits…) as well as supportive elements such as recipes/preparation instructions, attached fish sauce/marinade, … may help French retailers make the switch from US to Canadian suppliers.

3.4. Redfish (Ocean Perch)

Redfish species of the North Atlantic Ocean (Sebastes spp.) have been of high commercial interest for Europe for decades. The European fishing fleet (including Russia) accounts for nearly 91% of the landings for a total annual catch of roughly 170,000 MT, see chart 9. There are two species of commercial interest: the Golden Redfish (Sebastes norvegicus, formerly named Sebastes marinus), and the Deepwater Redfish (Sebastes mentella).

Sebastes marinus (now norvegicus) used to be preferred for upper products by European seafood distributors and Sebastes mentella for more price accessible ones. The difference in market positioning between the two species is not that important any longer as Europe has been facing reductions in Sebastes mentella landings in recent years. As a matter of fact, most of the European stocks of Sebastes mentella are considered as either depleted or over-exploited (ICES 2021-2023). The stocks of Sebastes norvegicus appear to be in better conditions, especially around Iceland, the Faeroes, and Scotland.

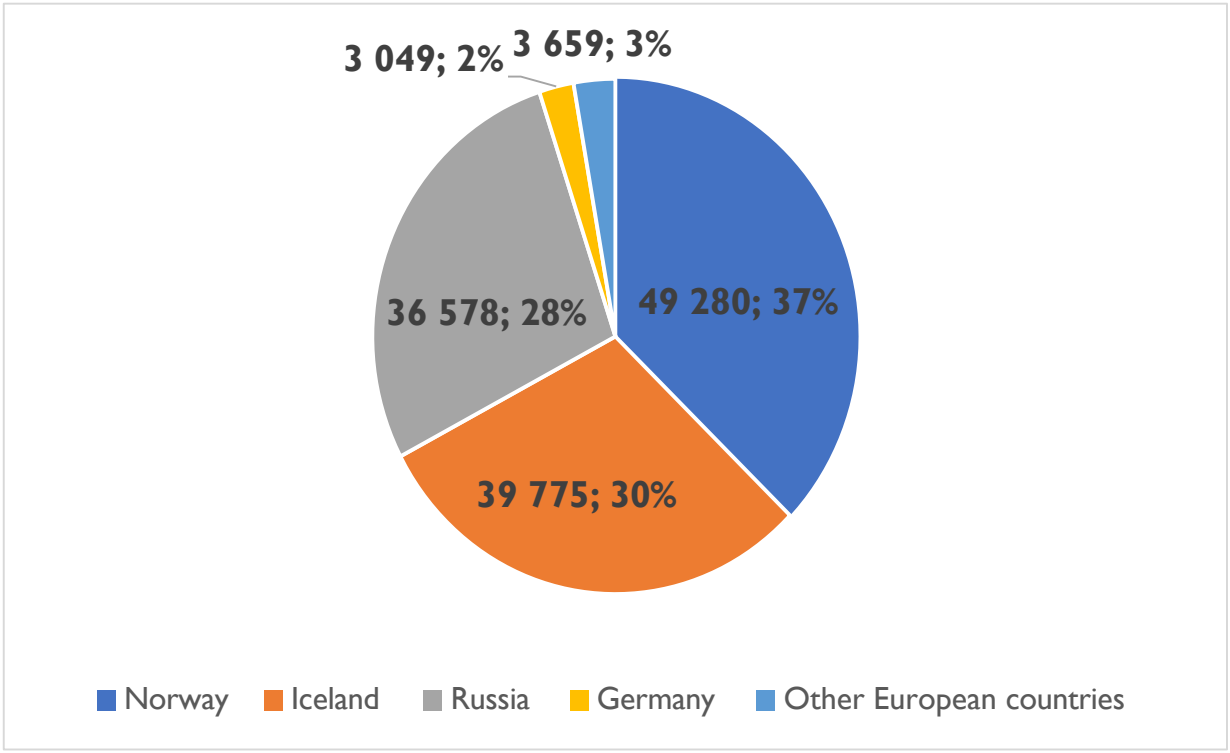


Chart 9: Main European fishing nations of Redifsh species (Sebastes norvegicus/marinus and S. mentella) in 2022 (metric tons and percentage of total landings)

Source: FAO (2025)

The main Redfish eating-countries of the EU27 are Germany and France, representing together more than 50% of total EU27 consumption of Redfish. To a much lower extend, Belgium and Lithuania also have a tradition in eating Redfish.

Half of the catches are destinated to the fresh market, and half to the frozen one. In both cases, final European consumers are looking for Redfish fillets. Fresh fillets can be either offered skinless or skin-on (see pictures 19 to 21), whereas frozen fillets are skinless (single frozen, sea or land processed, see pictures 22 to 25).

Fresh whole redfish may also be shipped to Germany, France, and the Netherlands to a lower extend for being filleted there.

Frozen Redfish is exported as single frozen skinless fillets to destination markets (Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium) from Iceland and Norway. Additionally, limited quantities of frozen H&G Redfish may be imported to be filleted in Europe (Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain).

Pictures 19, 20, and 21: Examples of fresh Redfish fillets from Iceland and Norway distributed in the retail sector in Europe.

Explanation:

Picture 19: Redfish fillets in Germany packed in modified atmosphere tray (national brand Deutsche See)
Picture 20: Redfish fillets in France packed in modified atmosphere tray (private label Carrefour)
Picture 21: Redfish fillets in Belgium packed in modified atmosphere tray (private label Delhaize)

Sources: Deutsche See, Carrefour, Delhaize (2025).

<u>Pictures 22, 23, 24, and 25</u>: Examples of frozen Redfish fillets from Iceland and Norway distributed in the retail sector in Europe.

Explanation:

Picture 22: Redfish fillets in Germany packed in carton box (national brand Followfood)
Picture 23: Redfish fillets in Germany packed in skinpack tray (national brand Deutsche See)
Picture 24: Redfish fillets in France packed in plastic bag (private label Picard)
Picture 25: Redfish fillets in Belgium packed in plastic bag (private label Carrefour)

<u>Sources</u>: Followfood, Deutsche See, Picard, Carrefour (2025).

<u>The major challenges for the Canadian Redfish suppliers</u> on the EU27 market are as follows:

- <u>Capacity to supply with Sebastes mentella on a long perspective</u> to replace part of the lost European landings (state of Canadian fishery and organization of the Canadian supply chain?)
- <u>Capacity to supply with</u> the required product qualities, <u>frozen fillets</u> for the German and French market, or, to a much lower extend, frozen H&G to Germany and reprocessing countries
- <u>Capacity to offer a precise frozen fillets sizing/grading</u> (e.g.: 70-150g and 140-200g for the retail sector, 40-100g for the social foodservice, 120g+ for commercial foodservice)

- Need to advocate the species Sebastes fasciatus, still unknown on the EU market, especially by end-users in terms of organoleptic properties (taste, texture, color, fillets sizes, etc.) and price/market positioning compared to other well-established Redfish species on the European market (Sebastes norvegicus/mentella)

3.5. Black Cod (Sablefish)

The Black Cod market in the EU27 remains confidential and limited to niche markets, mainly in the upper-foodservice including:

- Japanese and Asian fusion cuisine
- Upper traditional restaurants (Germany, Netherlands, France, Denmark, Italy…)
- Cruise ships also appear to be a good market gateway for Black Cod

fillets To date, Black Cod is not available in core retail supermarkets.

Most of the import (USA, Canada) are still based on H&G frozen (1.8-2.2kg), with frozen fillets (IWP frozen fillets in 10kg box) gaining importance on the European market (400-600g and 600-800g sizes), see picture 26. However, some top-end European restaurants have been looking for higher quality products (single frozen fillets, skin-on, belly out). Special partnerships have therefore been established in this regard between European buyers (France, Netherlands, and Germany) and suppliers able to offer pristine quality on the EU market (e.g. the Alaskan small-boat cooperative Seafood Producers Cooperative). As a matter of fact, some investors believe in the future development of a durable demand for high quality Black Cod products in Europe. This is the reason why recent investments in Black Cod fish farming in Europe have been made by AquaFounders Capital in Zeeland, Netherlands (the Black Cod Company).

Picture 26: Thawed Black Cod fillet imported in Europe in 10kg box (Skin-on fillet, belly-out, IWP frozen)

Source: Blue World® Seafood (2025).

One of the major market weaknesses of Black Cod on the European market is that the species remains highly unknown (scientific name + commercial names in several languages). In this regard, seafood buyers from the European foodservice sector insist on the following elements of market differentiation:

- Special product marketing and communication efforts shall be done to raise interest from new European buyers.
- Key role shall be played by prescribing chefs.
- Seafood finfish species already present in European top-end restaurants shall be identified as potentially replaceable by Black Cod to help buyers take the plunge (especially species with mild/buttery flavors/textures: Patagonian Toothfish? Greenland Halibut?).

3.6. Marine plants – Macroalgae

Macroalgae are regarded as a promising alternative for biofuels, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and functional food (Duarte et al. 2017, Hasselström et al. 2020). Global macroalgae production is on a steady rise since several decades, but only 1.4% of the global algae biomass production takes place in Europe today, with Norway accounting for the higher European production with about 180,000 MT produced annually (France Agrimer, 2024). The total annual macroalgae production of the EU27 is roughly 300,000 MT with over 95% naturally grown (wild, sea harvesting). France, Ireland, and Spain are the top 3 in number of macroalgae production companies for a cumulated annual production of nearly half of the EU27 production, see Chart 10. These 3 countries are also the top 3 European importers of macroalgae, see Chart 11.

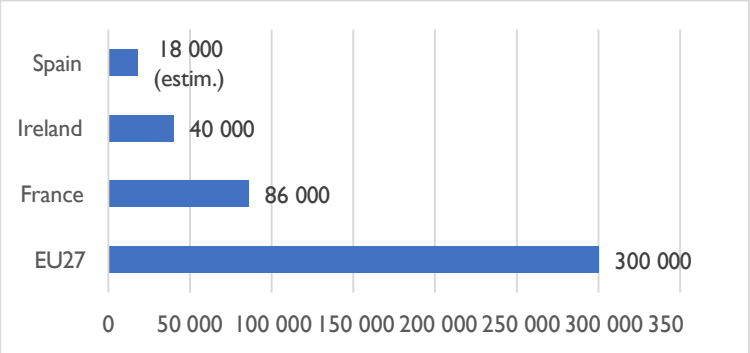


Chart 10: Top 3 macroalgae producing countries in the EU27 (annual production, Metric Tons – wet weight).

Sources: Data compilation CorreardB consulting (2025) from European Commission (2021-2023), France Agrimer (2024), Board Bia (2024).

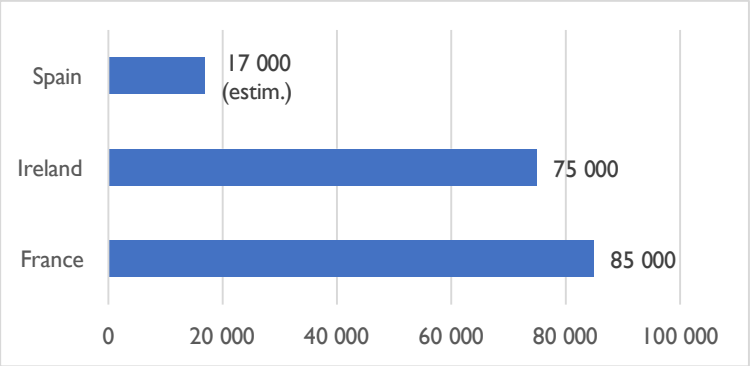


Chart 11: Top 3 macroalgae importing countries in the EU27 (annual imports, Metric Tons – wet weight).

Sources: Data compilation CorreardB consulting (2025) from FAO (2022) and Ministère français de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire (2024).

France is the European country where the annual consumption of macroalgae is the highest of the EU27 (Bretagne Développement Innovation, 2012). The totality of both the domestic and imported volumes (about 170,000 MT) is used domestically mainly for the production of hydrocolloids in the Bretagne region and destinated to the French food/health industries. In comparison, Ireland only consumes less than 15,000 MT of macroalgae every year, mainly for food use: food supplements (e.g. Ascophyllum) and food vegetables (CorreardB consulting, 2025). The rest of the Irish macroalgae (about 100,000 MT) is (re-)exported, especially to Asian countries.

Destination markets for EU27 macroalgae are multiple and include, among other things:

1. Non-food usages

- Hydrocolloids:
    1. Extraction of alginates from Laminaria spp. (brown seaweeds).
    2. Extraction of carrageenan from Kappahycus spp. and Euchema spp. (red seaweeds).
    3. Extraction of agar from Gracilaria spp. and agarophyte.
- Beauty/wellness:
    1. Use of Laminaria spp. and fucales for body wrapping/facial masks.
    2. Use of several molecules extracted from various macroalgae for cosmetics.
- Other usages:
    1. Animal feed, bio-stimulants for crops, biofuels, textiles, coloring, building insulation, etc.

2. Human food usages

The food uses of macroalgae are mainly of two kinds: sea vegetable for direct consumption, and ingredients and additives used in the food industry.

- Sea vegetables: we can distinguish two categories of sea vegetables used in the EU27, those which are part of the culinary tradition of the Atlantic coasts in Europe (mainly in Ireland, Bretagne - France, and Galicia - Spain), and those which are part of the Japanese/Asian cuisine (the latter being also increasingly used as food ingredients in European dishes, see below).
    1. Main sea vegetables for traditional European cuisine (coastal restaurants and/or upper ones): Sea lettuce (Ulva lactuca) and Sea spaghetti/thongweed (Himanthalia elongata) in France and Spain, Dulse (Palmaria palmate) - also known as dillisk, and Irish Moss (Chondrus crispus) in Ireland.
    2. Main sea vegetables for Japanese/Asian food: Wakame (Undaria pinnatifida) and Nori algae (Pyropia spp.).

- Food ingredients and food additives:
    1. Additives: the uses of macroalgae extracts as food additives are numerous and are subject to ongoing research and development, particularly in terms of texturizers (alginates, carrageenan, agar…) and colorings.
    2. Ingredients: the development of macroalgae-based ingredients is still in its infancy, but several uses are already showing promise, particularly:
        - Ingredients for Japanese/Asian food, especially Wakame and Nori algae .
        - Ingredients for European food, especially Sea lettuce and Sea spaghetti.
        - Seasonings destinated to seafood-base processed products (e.g. food pâtés) from sea vegetables (e.g. Sea lettuce).
        - Extract of seaweeds' proteins for vegan ready-meals.
        - Extract of Omega-3 oil from macro- and microalgae (e.g. from the microalgae Schizochytrium sp.).

<u>Pictures 26, 27, and 29</u>: Examples of food products containing seaweed ingredients distributed on the French market.

Explanation:

Picture 26: Brown-crab pâté in jar flavored with Nori algae. Processor: Conserverie de l'Ile d'Yeu (Bretagne)
Picture 27: Seaweed-based green pesto sauce (Nori, Sea lettuce, and Thongweed). Processor: Marinoë (Bretagne)
Picture 29: Vegan tuna enriched with Omega-3 algae oil (Schizochytrium sp.). Processor: Petit Navire-Thaï Union, 2024 innovation.

<u>Sources</u>: Conserverie de l'Ile d'Yeu, Marinoë, Petit Navire-Thaï Union (2025).

The macroalgae sector is considered of major importance by the EU authorities especially for climate mitigation (food and non-food applications). Therefore, many projects have been launched in the EU27 after the COVID-19 period to strengthen the European industry. It especially includes private-public cooperation and investments, and share of good production and manufacturing procedures between stakeholders across Europe.

However, the EU27 macroalgae sector is facing major challenges:

- Its high dependence on macroalgae imports due to a current <u>non-sufficient domestic production.</u>

- The growth of its domestic production is limited due to cumulated constraints such as the lack of manpower for harvesting (wild production), difficulties to access free land (farmed land production), heterogenous bureaucracy across the EU27.
- The absence of true positive image of macroalgae for European consumers, especially at food level. The historical consumption of macroalgae is limited to few coastal Atlantic areas in Europe (Ireland, Bretagne-France, Galicia-Spain, Scotland…). Therefore, the idea of use of macroalgae in human food remains very limited in the EU27, even in the big fish-eating countries. In France for instance if 96% of French people see macroalgae as a healthy and sustainable product when it comes to food, they also consider that there are many obstacles to direct food consumption, including the lack of product knowledge and the appearance of macroalgae food products (France Agrimer 2024). The situation is pretty similar in Spain where the absence of tradition of eating seaweed is a major obstacle to their market development (Valencia Fruits, 2023).

3.7. Sea Urchins

In Europe, the Sea urchins' market is pretty traditional and is mainly located in the Mediterranean countries. Sea urchins are also sometimes a trendy food item in some upper restaurants, especially in northern countries of the EU27, especially Germany, Denmark, and Sweeden.

France is certainly the #1 Sea urchin eater in Europe, followed by Italy and Spain. However, these markets are still relatively smalls and the drastic reductions of domestic catches (especially in France) due to depleted fisheries are now balanced by imports of live products from other European countries, see Chart 12.

The French market is estimated around 420 MT annually, but a higher offer of more price-competitive Sea urchins may certainly help increase this market by at least 50% (CorreardB, 2025), especially in the areas of historical consumption: Mediterranean Coast between Marseille and Nice cities, and Bretagne Region. Iceland has turned into France's main Sea urchin supplier, through the establishment of efficient road logistics from Iceland to Boulogne/Mer city. Norway, Spain, and Ireland are the other main origins of imported Sea urchins in France.

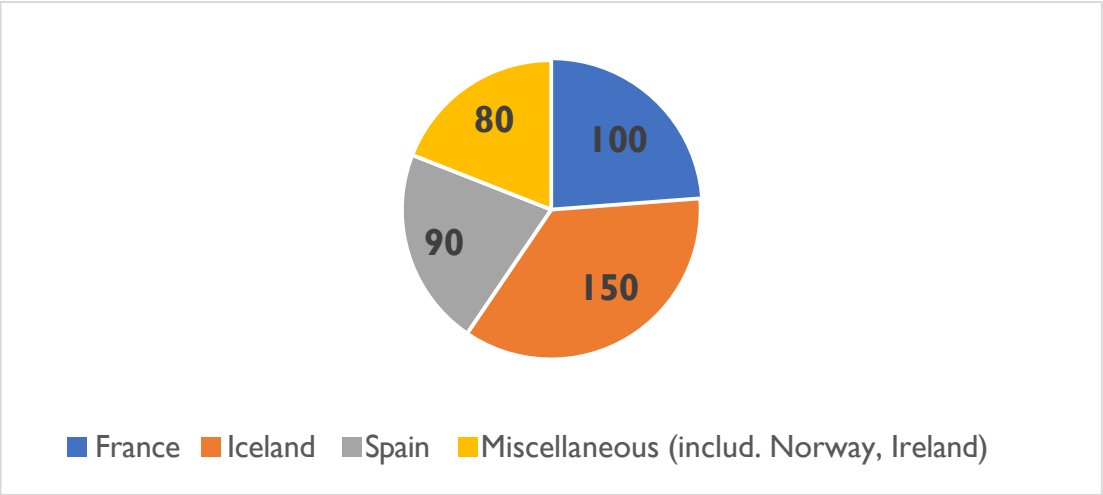


Chart 12: Main Sea urchin suppliers to the French market (annual supplies, Metric Tons – live fresh).

Source: Estimations CorreardB consulting (2025)

The purple Sea urchin (Paracentrotus lividus) is the most favored species across Europe, especially in France and Spain and accounts for the higher volumes caught by these two countries. The second species caught in the French waters is the violet Sea urchin (Sphaerechinus granularis) on the Atlantic coast (especially in Bretagne). However, French consumers are pretty open to other species as they also consume green Sea urchin (Strongylocentrotus droebachiensis) from Iceland and Norway and edible Sea urchin (Echinus esculentus) from Ireland and Scotland. The most important criteria when buying live Sea urchin is the gonad yield (the higher the better, especially in southern France). Therefore, the annual consumption peak is in January-late March when the Sea urchin's gonads are the bigger, before the spawning season. Sea urchins are especially eaten during the so called

"oursinades" [literally *people gathering to eat Sea urchins*] in various places of the French Mediterranean coast, from small villages to big cities, see pictures 30, 31, 32, and 33.

Pictures 30, 31, 32, and 33: Examples of typical "oursinade" celebrations taking place in Winter/early Spring from small villages to big cities in southern France

Sources: Cities of Sète, Palavas les Flots, Office du Tourisme Archipel de Thau (2025).

An alternative to live Sea urchin is the market of pasteurized Sea urchin's roe usually sold in jars (France, Italy) or cans (Spain) and called "corail d'oursin" in France (urchin's coral), "caviar de erizo" in Spain (urchin's caviar), and "polpa di riccio" in Italy (urchin's pulp), see pictures 34 to 36. These products can either be processed in the consumption markets (France, Spain, and Italy) from fresh or frozen roe (usually imported from Iceland or Norway), or directly imported as finished products from Iceland. These products are available all-year round in gourmet shops and are also present in core retail supermarkets for the Christmas season.

Pictures 34, 35, and 36: Examples of Sea urchin's roe products offered in France, Spain, and Italy

Explanation:

Picture 34: Sea urchin roe sold in 50g jar in France (processed in France or imported from Iceland)
Picture 35: Sea urchin roe sold in 110g jar in Italy (processed in Italy)
Picture 36: Sea urchin roe sold in 120g can in Spain (processed in Spain)

Sources: Maison Perard, Le Mareviglie, Los Peperetes (2025).

3.8. Sea Cucumber

In Europe, the consumption is rare, and most bycaught sea cucumbers are processed into dried or frozen products before being exported to the Asian markets. In EU27 the consumption of sea cucumbers is pretty limited to Chinese distribution channels (specialized retail and foodservice).

However, with a growing demand for sustainable and healthy food, sea cucumbers may become a next big thing for European aquaculture, same as marine plants. Therefore, the European Commission has been supporting several research projects on sea cucumber farming, especially in France that appears to be one of the most dynamic European countries in this regard (Bretagne and Nouvelle Aquitaine regions). Southern Spain also appears to be an interesting place to grow sea cucumber with recent private investments in this regard.

The main problems related to sea cucumber farming in Europe are as follows:

- Need for large land areas to guarantee acceptable pound profitability (limited production/hectare).
- Absence of European domestic demand; need for better organized downstream supply chains to export markets.

Main farmed species in the EU27: Holothuria spp. (forskali, arguinensis…).

3.9. Canadian Lobster

Introduction to the Lobster market in Europe (Homarus spp.)

One of the most exciting 2025 information related to the European lobster market was the recent release of a study by the US consulting firm IMARC[7], which forecasts that the EU Lobster market will be *propelled by an annual growth rate of 3.44% between 2025 and 2033*. Without wishing to prejudge the optimism of our colleagues, it seems that this prospect is greatly exaggerated, if not completely far-fetched. Based on our experience, the European market of Lobster -Homarus spp.- has been on the contrary a mature one for several years, and is even experiencing a decreasing demand -depending on the considered product segment-, due to several cumulative elements: either species-related, or caused by durable changes in the supply chain.

Live Lobster

The European market of Lobster (Homarus spp.) is above all a chilled market, especially in the main consumption countries: France, Spain, and Italy. The European market of live Lobster stands on two species: the European Lobster -Homarus gammarus- (caught by EU or UK fishing fleets), and the American Lobster -Homarus americanus- imported from the USA, and Canada. Historical connections have been established between North-American suppliers and European importers either in destination market (e.g.: France), or in countries where products are reexported within the EU (e.g.: the Netherlands, Belgium…). Lobster may be considered as a top-end seafood product especially from a non-European point of view. However, it is a cultural seafood for consumers in France, Spain, and Italy (especially fueled through the ages by the presence of the European Lobster on the European Atlantic coasts). Therefore, live Lobster is not limited to high-end and/or seafood-specialized restaurants. In Europe (especially in France and Spain), live Lobster has also been widely distributed in core supermarkets, especially during the Spring season (period of major landings of European Lobster), and around Christmas… until now. But things may change fast, especially because of the fast disappearance of traditional fish counters in supermarkets (see paragraph 1.4.2), as well as harder last-kilometer transport conditions for live/fresh seafood (see paragraph 1.4.1). Accessing the product at retail stage is therefore getting harder for European consumers who, in the meantime, quickly lose their ability in preparing and cooking live Lobster (see also paragraph 3.10 – Snow Crab). Cooking live Lobster has even become an obstacle for a growing number of European consumers due to animal welfare consideration[8]. Several NGOs are now actively campaigning for a ban on boiling lobsters, particularly in areas of major consumption (e.g.: in the French ski resorts during Christmas/Winter vacation).

[7] https://www.imarcgroup.com/lobster-market-europe

[8] Several European countries have already banned the common culinary practice of throwing live crustaceans into boiling water while they are still conscious. In the EU: Austria and some parts of Germany and Italy, non-EU countries: UK, Switzerland, and Norway

The main market elements that influence the European market of live Lobster are:

- Price consideration (in that regard, live Lobster shall not be considered as a top-end seafood product from a European perspective, but more as an expensive core-market seafood). Price positioning will be key at several levels: Canadian vs. US offers, but also North-American offer as a whole vs. European lobster availability (especially during the European Spring season). In this regard, the question of potential EU tariffs on imported Lobsters will be crucial (reciprocal tariffs on US products?).
- Quality issues (especially mortality). Several key French importers of live American Lobster have stated recurrent high Lobster mortality with Canadian Lobsters especially those that are road transported to Montréal and then air shipped to France (no direct flight from Halifax). Therefore, several French importers prefer US Lobster (especially those not wishing to work with importers from the Netherlands nor Belgium).
- Consumer perception. The European consumer's ability to remain attached to Lobster will be decisive for the future of the category. It stands on two key and clearly identified decision-making elements:
    1. Personal ethical considerations are increasingly gaining importance in the European society: animal suffering, but also the legitimacy of consuming big wild crustaceans like Lobster potentially endangered (or perceived as such), rather than farmed crustaceans whose biomass is therefore not at stake (e.g.: farmed Tropical Shrimps – large size, called "gambas").
    2. Out of stock, out of luck. Product unavailability and/or lower product visibility in core supermarket may probably have durable consequences at short-middle term on the European consumer's linkage with live Lobster: from a dissuasive loss of product knowledge (preparation/cooking), to a definitive shift to other seafood products (or even to other alternative food products, e.g.: duck foie-gras).

High-Pressure Lobster meat

We were also requested in this report to look at the High-Pressure Lobster meat (HPLM) category, that includes all techniques of High-Pressure shucking (HPP: High-Pressure Pasteurized, and UHP: Ultra High-Pressure). The HPLM remains a very limited market in the EU27 and is mainly destinated to top-end restaurants in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Scandinavia, etc. All the available products are offered frozen and are usually directly produced in North-America (Canada and the USA), see pictures 37 and 38.

Pictures 37 and 38: Examples of UHP Lobster meat processed in Canada and sold in the EU foodservice

Explanation:

Picture 37: Frozen UHP raw Lobster Meat (tail) sold in Belgium
Picture 38: Frozen UHP raw Lobster Meat (tail) with shell sold in Germany

Sources: Pittman seafood, Gourmet Versand (2025)

The number of European processors is very limited due to both the high related processing cost (machinery's acquisition and maintenance), and the price competitiveness of imported HPLM products. France has been among the first movers for processing HPLM in Europe. One company is mainly processing Canadian Lobster (5DO company in French Brittany) when another -originally a duck foie gras processor- has specialized in processing European Lobster (Rougié company -Euralis group- in Vendée area), see pictures 39 and 40.

Pictures 39 and 40: Typical HPP Lobster meat products processed in France and sold in the EU foodservice

Explanation:

Picture 39: Frozen HPP raw Lobster Meat (tail and claws) from Canadian Lobster
Picture 40: Frozen HPP raw Lobster Meat (tail and claws) from European Lobster

Sources: 5DO, Rougié (2025)

The presence of HPLM in the European retail remains anecdotal due to high consumer price (over €200/kg), see pictures 41 and 42. Presence on the market is often time-limited, especially around Christmas/Easter.

Pictures 41 and 42: Two rare examples of high-pressure Lobster meat products sold in the EU retail

Explanation:

Picture 41: Frozen UHP raw Lobster Meat (tail) sold in Belgium and the Netherlands (2 x 100g pieces) – Pittman seafoods national brand. Canadian Lobster processed in Canada
Picture 42: Frozen HPP raw Lobster Meat (tail and claws) sold in France (150g) – Picard Private label. European Lobster processed in France

Sources: Pittman seafood, Picard (2025)

The points of attention for the Canadian suppliers of HPLM on the European market are as follows:

- Traditional European consumers still prefer live Lobster perceived as the freshest product of the category (France, Spain).
- Market gateway to the foodservice: HPLM is primarily intended for high-end commercial restaurants. The main arguments are its practicality (ready to be used as a food ingredient), as well as its easier stock management compared to Live Lobster (no need for specific equipment such as fish tanks, easy storage, long shelf life, present all year round on the menu, etc.).
- Market gateways to the retail: presence in the European retail sector is still highly limited but HPLM might be a good alternative for consumers uncomfortable with animal suffering. Moreover, HPLM products might be good Lobster alternatives in the future for European retailers considering the disappearance of their traditional fresh fish counters (being replaced by grab-and-go seafood displays). Best times for products to be available in supermarkets: Easter and Christmas.
- Focus shall be given to main European cities where space is limited both at housing and restaurant levels and where consumers and restaurant managers may be therefore reluctant to use live Lobster.
- Market gateways to the cruise ship companies: we were also requested to check any potential business development of HPLM for cruise lines. Therefore, we have verified the frozen seafood products listed in the 2025 calls for tenders of two major

European companies operating in the core-market cruising[9]. The purchase of HPLM is not on their agenda, as the product was deemed too expensive for core-market cruise lines who usually offer all-inclusive package to passengers (room and board). Very high-end cruise lines should more likely be targeted in this regard.

- In any case, and regardless of the targeted market/s, it is generally difficult to ensure a long-term business development with a single product, especially in the retail sector. Building a product range is often essential in this regard. Developing complementary high-pressure shucked products in cooperation with other Canadian fisheries may be therefore strategic in the medium term (King crab meat, Snow crab meat, Roe-on Scallops…?).

[9] 2025 calls for tenders for frozen seafood products – Costa (Italian company), and Aida (German company). Source: CorreardB consulting, 2025

3.10. Snow Crab

Introduction to the traditional EU27 Crab market

The EU27 Crab market is concentrated with the highest consumption focused in France and Spain which together represent over 60% of the total European consumption of fresh/live and frozen Crab (CBI, 2020). Crab is a niche market in Europe and Crab purchases are mostly associated with special occasions (Easter, Christmas, social events, etc.). The European Crab market highly relies on Crabs caught and processed domestically, especially Brown Crab (Cancer pagarus), Spinous spider crab (Maja squinado) and Velvet swimming crab (Necora puber). Brown crab represents over 70% of the volumes of European Crabs and the main European suppliers to the EU market are the UK, Norway (both non-EU), as well as France, and Ireland.

The French market is the most developed in terms of the type of products and quantities it consumes. France is especially the leading European importer of live, fresh, and chilled Crabs. For prepared and preserved Crabs (especially pasteurized whole cooked, pasteurized claws, and Crab meat), France represented 33% of the total 2020 European imports (CBI, 2020). France is also the second EU importer of frozen Crab, after Spain. Imports of frozen Crab products, especially claws and meat, usually compensate for the lack of availability of fresh Crabs during the off-peak season.

If the Crab segment is of historical importance for EU countries like France and Spain, it is however seriously endangered by the fast disappearance of the traditional fresh fish counters in the European retail (see paragraph 1.4.2.A). Thus, it is becoming more difficult for the French and Spanish consumers to be aware of the Crab products and even harder to find them at the live/fresh/chilled segment (EUMOFA, 2021). Therefore, the traditional Crab market is at stake in the European retail as European households not having any longer the knowledge on acquiring, cooking, or preparing live/fresh/chilled Crab products, especially whole Crab. The consequences are already visible with the segment of cooked farmed Tropical Shrimps now outrageously dominating the fresh/chilled crustacean category in the -more and more standardized- European supermarkets.

Snow Crab consumption

If the EU import of Snow Crab is not something new (USA, Greenland, Norway…), the related quantities have remained pretty confidential compared to other imported species such as Brown Crab (UK, Norway), Asian Crab species (especially canned and frozen meat), and King Crab to a lower extend (USA, Canada). First considered as an invasive species in Europe, Snow Crab has become a seafood resource of high commercial interest, especially for Norway which has significantly increased its fishing quota since 2022, see Chart 13.

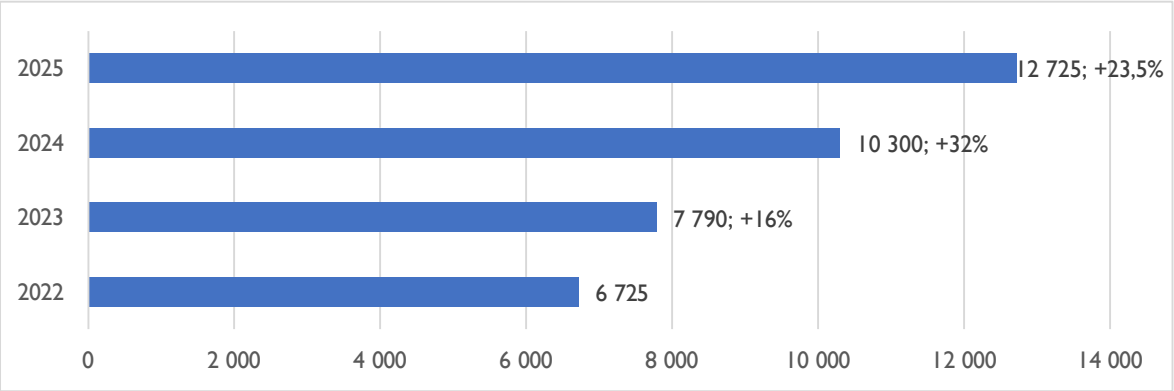


Chart 13: 2022-2025 Norwegian fishing quotas for Snow Crab (Metric tons, and % of increase from the year before)

Source: Norwegian Seafood Council (2022-2025)

Most of the Norwegian catches of Snow Crab are destinated to the US market and the Norwegian sales to the EU27 market remain very limited. The main reason is that the Snow Crab is little known in the large EU seafood markets resulting in very low consumption (Norwegian Seafood Council, 2023). French and Spanish consumers have shown low product familiarity, especially compared to other traditional European Crab species, but also compared to King Crab to a lower extend.

If Spain and France seem to be the most promising European markets for Snow Crab, most of the current Norwegian sales to the EU are made with frozen cooked clusters shipped to the Netherlands (seafood wholesalers reexporting to destination markets), see picture 43.
The Norwegian Seafood Council has stated that it is of high economic importance to develop the EU market of Snow Crab but also insists on the fact that it will certainly take time and resources to build a strong EU demand. In Spain and in France Snow Crab frozen cooked clusters end up in high-end and/or seafood specialized commercial restaurants and are not present at retail stage (even in core supermarkets).

Picture 43: Norwegian frozen-at-sea Snow Crab cooked clusters sold on the EU market

Source: Norwegian Seafood Council (2025).

The main challenges for the Canadian Snow Crab suppliers in the European market are as follows:

- The Snow Crab species remains unknown on the EU27 market in general and in Spain and France -the main European Crab-eating countries- in particular. Beyond that species' specificity, Canadian Snow Crab suppliers must also deal with the fast loss of product knowledge at consumer level when it comes to seafood as a whole and affecting especially the category of big crustaceans.
- Norway's production of Snow Crab is fast growing and already represents a price aggressive competition to historical supplies (Greenland, USA, Canada). Norway benefits in Europe of a strong competitive advantage: its historical strong position in the European seafood market for several key live/fresh/chilled seafood (especially farmed Atlantic Salmon, gadids species, and crustaceans such as Langoustines and Brown Crab). Snow Crab is therefore considered as a new seafood reference to be offered by Norwegian suppliers to their historical customers.
- The Crab market is limited in Europe (mainly Spain and France), and historical Crab suppliers to the EU must face now new and unexpected domestic Crab offers, especially from invasive species. As a matter of fact, French landings of Spinous spider Crab[10] have doubled in less than five years (over 10,000 metric tons of landed Crab expected in 2025) flooding both the French and Spanish markets. Spanish Crab processors have also started the business development of new processed Crab products from two invasive Portunidae Blue Crab species[11] affecting Spain (Craex company, Barcelona).
- The European market of frozen Crab (Spain and France), is looking for processed products, especially frozen cooked clusters, especially to compete with King Crab's frozen cooked clusters and Brown Crab's frozen cooked claws.

[10] Ravaging fish nurseries and Mussels' and Scallops' spat in the Bretagne (Brittany) and Normandy regions
[11] Callinectes sapidus and Portunus segnis, respectively native to the Western American coast and Indo-Pacific Ocean

PART 4 – Business development timeline and action plan

This document includes and supplements the information given in paragraph 2.2.C, Table 5.

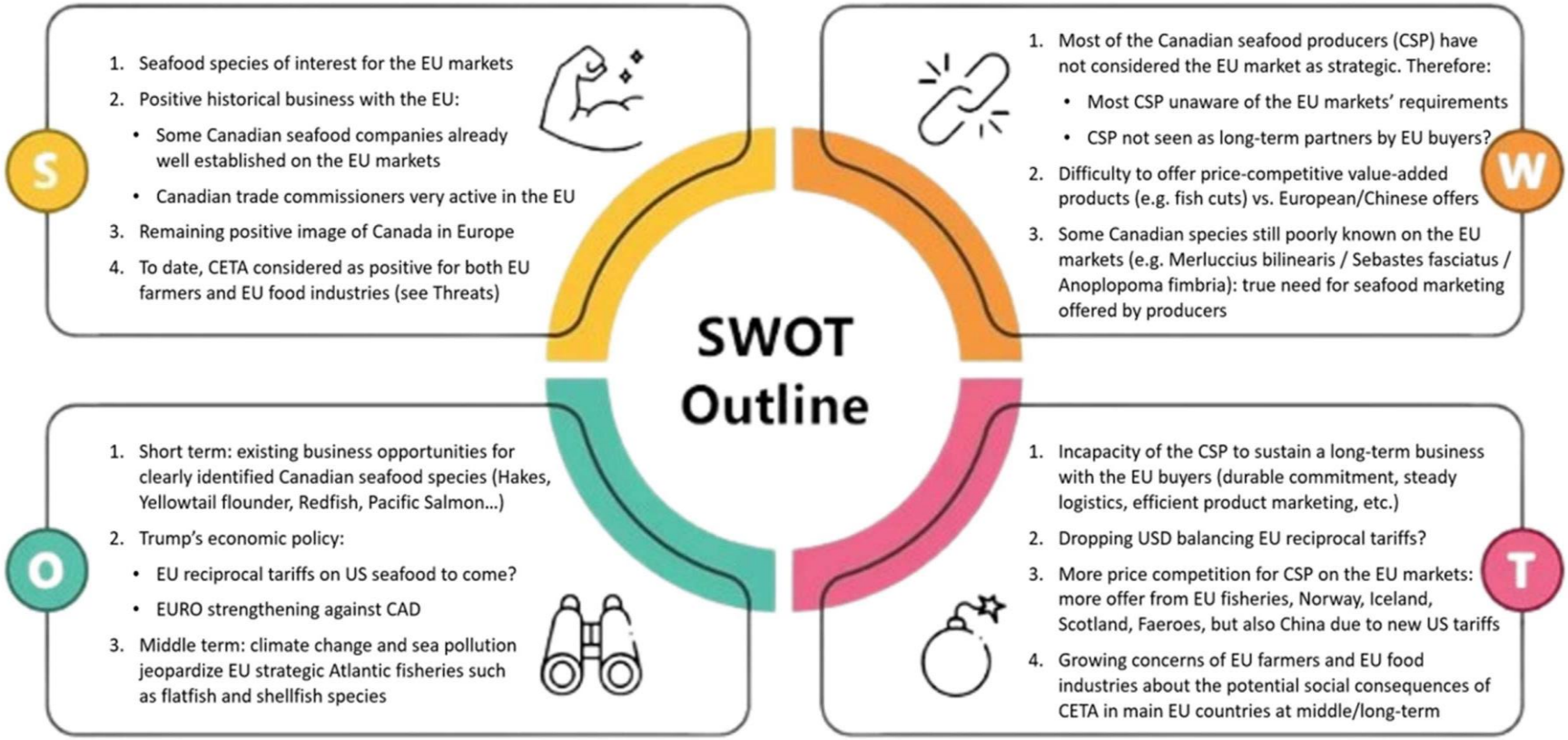
SEAFOOD SPECIES	EUROPEAN BUYER	PRODUCT TYPE	ROUTE TO MARKET	DESTINATION	PROGRESS	EXPLANATION / ACTION PLAN
Hakes	Frozen fish processors / Frozen fish importers	Skinless boneless frozen fillets	Sea	ES, FR, IT	When available at Canadian stage, see Action plan	Need for product clarification from Canadian suppliers: • Product availability of single frozen fillets from Canada (skinless boneless)? • Which fillet quality is achievable? PBO and/or deepskin? • Able to supply European buyers on a regular basis (important for EU processors & foodservice companies)? • Merluccius bilinearis: will require much product advocacy, especially on species' organoleptic characteristics as species is unknown in the EU
Hakes	Frozen fish processors / Frozen fish importers	Fish blocks	Sea	ES, FR, IT	When available at Canadian stage, see Action plan	• Same points as for Hake fillets • Guarantees shall also be given on the absence of lipid oxidation of frozen Hake products

Yellowtail Flounder	Frozen fish processors / Frozen fish importers	Skinless boneless frozen fillets	Sea	FR, BE, DE, NL	When available at Canadian stage, see Action plan	Need for product clarification from Canadian suppliers: • Which supply chain for twice frozen fillets: filleting/twice freezing in Canada, China, Western Europe, Eastern Europe…? Which price competitiveness vs. Limanda aspera (Yellowfin Sole filleted and twice frozen in China)? • Product availability of single frozen fillets from Canada?

Atlantic Salmon	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	• No room for market due to well established European offer
Pacific Salmon	Fresh fish importers/ wholesalers	Skin-on chilled fillets from fresh	Air shipped	FR, BE, DE, NL	From next fishing season	• Focus on Coho, Sockeye, and Chum • Make buyers aware of product availability during fishing campaign
Redfish (Ocean Perch)	Frozen fish processors / Frozen fish importers	H&G frozen	Sea	DE, NL, ES, PT	Ready-to-go, but See action plan	• Limited demand for H&G frozen in the EU market (strong competition of fillets) • Main challenge will be the price competitiveness of H&G frozen vs. available offers of fillets (chilled-fresh European and Imported frozen)
Redfish (Ocean Perch)	Frozen fish processors / Frozen fish importers	Skinless frozen fillets	Sea	DE, FR, NL, BE	When available at Canadian stage, see Action plan	Need for product clarification from Canadian suppliers: • Which supply chain for twice frozen fillets: filleting/twice freezing in Canada, China, western Europe, eastern Europe…? Which price competitiveness vs. single frozen imported fillets (especially single frozen from Norway/Iceland)? • Product availability of single frozen fillets from Canada? • Which ranges of fillets grades are available, especially for foodservice? • Sebastes fasciatus: will require much product advocacy, especially on species' organoleptic characteristics as species is unknown in the EU
Black Cod (farmed)	Frozen fish importers/ wholesalers	Skin-on frozen fillets	Sea	FR, BE, NL, DE	Ready-to-go, but See action plan	• Focus on current EU buyers of H&G Black Cod. Buyers' preference for Single or Twice frozen to be assessed • Further business development will require efficient product marketing
Marine plants	Processors / importers (food and non-food)	Many	Many	FR, IRL, ES	Starting business, see action plan	• New and non-mature business • Need further customer prospecting

Sea cucumber	Asian food distributors	Frozen and dried whole	Sea	All EU27	Ready-to-go	• Be aware of very low EU demand • Need further customer prospecting
Sea urchins spp.	Fresh fish importers/ wholesalers	Live	Air shipped	FR, ES, IT	Ready-to-go	• Verify EU quality requirements for non-EU imported fresh urchins
Sea urchins spp.	Canned fish processors (canned roe)	Frozen urchin's roe	Sea	FR, ES, IT	Ready-to-go	• Confirm processors' requirements (especially block size/packing)
Lobster	Fresh/live fish importers/ wholesalers	Live Lobster	Air	FR, ES, NL, BE	Ready-to-go, but See action plan	• Mature market, historical suppliers and buyers well connected • The main purchasing considerations for European buyers is the price-quality ratio of live Canadian Lobster vs. US origin (especially if potential EU reciprocal tariffs on US lobster), and vs. European Lobster in Spring time
Lobster	Top-end frozen seafood importers/wholesalers Top-end restaurants (direct approach)	High-Pressure shucked Lobster Meat (HPLM), frozen	Sea	FR, DE, NL, BE, AT, DK, IT	Ready-to-go, but See action plan	• Limited niche market. Canadian, US, and EU (French) offer already established • Potential further developments expected in European main cities. Areas where Lobster boiling is controversial shall be given priority • At middle term: building a larger range of products is necessary (King Crab meat, Snow Crab meat, Scallops…)
Snow Crab	Frozen fish importers/ wholesalers	Frozen cooked clusters	Sea	FR, ES, NL, DK, PT	Need to create market demand See action plan	• Focus shall be made on Spain, France, and Portugal to a lower extend • Take advantage of the Norwegian industry's current work to create a market demand considering that it will take time and resources • Be aware of the strong competition from other Crab species in France and Spain (especially invasive species in the EU waters) whereas the overall consumption is going down due to changes in consumer preferences and lower product availability in retail

PART 5 – Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats & Opportunities on the EU market for Canadian suppliers



PART 6 – Key recommendations to approach EU27 seafood buyers

6.1. Importers/wholesalers for unbranded and entry-level products

In this case, and based on our 25-year experience, in case of legal market issues (safety problem, fraud on seafood species, non-compliant product sizes, non-compliant labelling - including lack of legal information such as species' Latin name, fishing area, fishing gear, etc.) seafood supplier (Canada), seafood importer (EU27) are usually jointly responsible from an EU legal point of view (50% each).

1. **Get your processing plant's registration number updated and maintained by the EU** Health and Consumer Protection Directory General (SANCO) for export to the EU27. This point is especially important when the Canadian seafood supplier is exporting seafood products processed in several processing plants or when several seafood suppliers operate in a same processing plant.

2. **Get your processing plant's HACCP plan updated**.
   The Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) is the backbone of the food processing plant's Quality Assurance system. It must be updated annually as it reflects the daily reality of the related factory. Any change in the seafood process (raw material, machinery, hand processing, manpower, etc.) shall end-up in a revised and updated HACCP analysis by an identified and dedicated HACCP team within the company.

3. **Make sure your seafood product's traceability system is in place** (that is to say, functioning, and assessed/tested).
   This point is especially important when the Canadian seafood supplier is exporting seafood products coming from several processing plants. Traceability system/s shall apply from raw material/s, through post-harvest operations (sorting/grading; processing; packing; palettization; shipping).

4. **Get your recall procedure in place** (that is to say, functioning, and assessed/tested). No one likes a product recall. For seafood distributors, especially retailers, it is a nightmare as it is causing severe negative consequences for them, especially in terms of image, money, legal liability, etc. In case of a recall, reactivity is key. Therefore, make sure your recall procedure is efficient, managed by a dedicated recall team within the company, and communicated to the company's employees.

5. **Get your packaging EU approved**.
   EU food distributors' legal responsibility does not limit to the inner-product itself, but applies to all the consumer unit that also includes the packaging. Therefore, make sure that the related packaging (in the case you ship finished products directly packed in Canada) are EU approved (heath considerations). Therefore, get a certificate of EU compliance from your packaging suppliers that precisely refers to the related packaging/s (metal can and varnish, poly-complex plastic bag, vacuum cooking plastic bag, skin-pack…).

6.2. Retailers for core-market private labels

In this case, and based on our 25-year experience, in case of legal market issues (safety problem, fraud on seafood species, non-compliant product sizes, non-compliant labelling - including lack of legal information such as species' Latin name, fishing area, fishing gear, etc.) both the seafood supplier (the one in charge of the product's final packing in consumer unit - either directly in Canada, or in the EU27) and the related food distributor are respectively liable for the totality of the entire damage (100% each).

1. **Be as transparent as possible**.
   The retailer's reputation is at stake when it comes to food private labels. Therefore, retailers must be sure that you are the best option for them, with the lower market risks (legal and/or risk of image). As a consequence, always remember that before you talk about seafood products you must create an atmosphere of trust with the buyers. Take time to make your interlocutor realize that you understand its concerns. Always remember that to have the best seafood product is not everything, it is only the "cherry on the cake". If your product was not good, you would not be negotiating in front of the retail buyer. What will make the difference is everything extra you can offer or, in other words, customer understanding and assistance.

2. **Get your Quality Assurance System updated.**
   Retailers will require an overview of your QA System as both their reputation and legal responsibility are at stake with private labels. They will especially pay special attention to the following elements: Raw material approval procedure, Good Manufacturing Procedures, and Quality Control Plan (during processing, before shipping products).

3. **Communicate on your processing plants' private certification/s.**
   An easy and quick way to reassure an EU retailer is to share the conclusions of the past private audits/and or certifications performed in your processing plant/s (if any), such as IFS (International Featured Standard), BRC (British Retail Consortium), retailers' private audits, etc.

4. **Advocate your seafood product/s.**
   As stated in this report, the fast reshaping of the modern food retailing has resulted in a brutal and -often- durable loss of product knowledge by retail buyers, especially in the seafood segment. Therefore, supply with all the product information that may help make the difference: "beautiful story" on Canada (pure country…), responsible fishing and processing, product's added-value (natural, healthy…), etc. Always remember: a simple fish fillet is comparable to any other, when a marketed one is not.

5. **Count with potential financial penalties**.
   The financial negotiation with retailers does not necessarily limit to product price consideration only. It often also includes pecuniary penalties/fines in case of non-conformance product (product non-compliant with the EU regulation and/or with the retailer's requirements set in contract). Potential pecuniary penalties to seafood supplier is something that must be discussed freely, from the very beginning, and shall be taken into account during the financial negotiation process.

6.3. Retailers for premium private labels

In this case, and based on our 25-year experience, in case of legal market issues (safety problem, fraud on seafood species, non-compliant product sizes, non-compliant labelling -including lack of legal information such as species' Latin name, fishing area, fishing gear, etc.) both the seafood supplier (the one in charge of the product's final packing in consumer unit -either directly in Canada, or in the EU27) and the related food distributor are respectively liable for the totality of the entire damage (100% each).

1. **Focus on product provenance**…
   The premium food section shall be considered as a unique food experience offered to final consumers. In this regard, help make the related seafood products as desirable as possible for consumers by supplying retailers with decisive purchasing arguments in terms of sustainability achievements and social commitments (especially the support of seafood communities).

2. **… and product destination.**
   To establish a durable business relationship with buyers of premium seafood, it is essential to create an emotional relationship between products and final consumers. Thus, the latter must be able to consume the related products in the way that will best enhance them. Always keep in mind that European consumers are rapidly losing seafood product knowledge and must get guidance to optimize their cooking experiences with seafood. Therefore, make preparation and cooking instructions

available as much as possible (product's packaging, supplier's website, social media, Canadian seafood communication campaigns supported by the Canadian administration, in-real-time cooking during shows relayed by videos on internet, etc.).

3. **Consider social commitments as the new obligation.**
   From entry-level to premium food products, the supplier's and distributor's commitments are as follows: food safety > food quality > Sustainability commitments > Social commitments. Premium food products, and especially seafood, now require clear transparency on social considerations especially the fight against child labor/ modern slavery/discriminations (race, color, gender, religious belief, etc.), and the need for guarantees given to workers (safety at work, wages, social healthcare, etc.). In this regard, be open and prepared to retailers' potential social audits.

4. **Keep retailers updated on new market opportunities.**
   The premium food segment is the one that requires the highest involvement of suppliers for the establishment of a long-term business relationship with retailers. An important part of the service expected by food retailers from their premium food suppliers is an update on new market opportunities to help them keep the lead in the highly competitive retailing landscape in Europe. When it comes to seafood, it is especially important to keep the retailers informed of new product offer (new cuts, new processing technologies, new innovative packaging) for the target species, but also new available species to strengthen the current existing range of Canadian seafood products, as well as alternative products to avoid shortage during high consumption peaks, etc.

5. **Make your choice (of retailer to work with), and be loyal**.
   Food retailers are often seen as non-trustable business partners that can reject a historical business partnership at any new call for tenders. The reality is a bit different and, most of the time, retailers like stability in their food supplies for their private labels (considering that any change may end-up in problems as stated in paragraph 2.2.A). The segment of premium private labels is even more protected by retailers as it represents their highest quality commitment to the consumers. Therefore, not only the seafood suppliers of premium private labels are most of the time pampered by retailers, but they are also often requested to work exclusively for them and for no other European competitor for the considered products. In this context, when you are about to sign a contract with a European retailer for the supply of seafood products destinated to the premium seafood segment, commit to being loyal, and enjoy a durable wedding.

6.4. Social and Commercial foodservice companies

Most of the former recommendations do also apply when approaching the European foodservice companies. The reason is the standardization of the purchasing processes between European food buyers. In this regard, foodservice companies have embraced the retailers' working procedures especially in terms of calls for tenders, food product's quality assurance, and quality control plans. However, certain requirements of the foodservice sector are specific to it and need to be well taken into account by seafood suppliers.

1. **Get your products graded/calibrated as much as possible**.
   One of the main constraints imposed to foodservice companies by their clients is to be able to achieve a cost per plate as precise and as durable as possible. Therefore, foodservice companies need to deal with very calibrated products: any weight difference would lead to variations in cost per plate, what is absolutely not acceptable from an end-user perspective. Precise and durable product calibration is especially mandatory for any contract in the social foodservice sector (health & care, retirement houses, hospitals, school / companies' / jail's canteens, etc.).

2. **No product shortage is allowed**.
   Product shortage is rarely an option in any business. It is even stricter when it comes to social foodservice where a precise number of plates shall be served at every meal. Therefore, product inventory shall be managed accordingly through appropriate buffer storage and efficient downstream logistics. Any risk of shortage shall be highly anticipated and notified to the foodservice companies to give them enough time to find suitable product alternatives.

3. **Count with the growing importance of processed products**.
   If high-end and/or seafood-specialized restaurants still prefer unprocessed seafood products (live crustaceans, whole or H&G fish, etc.), the core commercial foodservice and the social foodservice segments have both been suffering of a growing and durable lack of specialized labor, especially at cooking level. Therefore, restaurants' managers are more and more looking at ready-to-prepare seafood products (e.g.: vacuum packed pre-cooked fish fillets).

4. **Advocate your products to cooks and chefs** (commercial foodservice).
   If the Social foodservice segment focuses on well-known generic seafood products (e.g.: white fish fillets), the commercial foodservice segment is more open to less common products. Thus, the best way to have cooks and chefs of the Commercial foodservice segment embrace new products (new cuts, new packaging, new species, etc.) is to train them on how to use them. Do not hesitate to share tutorials and videos in this regard with cooks and chefs. Another option is to organize training

sessions directly in the cooks and chefs' kitchens. Such events may be organized by the Canadian administration to promote, in a very practical way, a larger range of seafood products to the foodservice.

5. **Learn from your foodservice experience to gain new markets.**
   Despite specific business constraints (e.g.: product grading, logistics/deliveries, absence of product shortage) the foodservice segment is often considered as an easier market gateway for new food suppliers, compared to the retail sector. In the foodservice sector, food products are usually supplied in bulk (vs. consumer units for the retail), no product branding is needed, and sales volumes are known well in advance (based on companies' schedules of meals to be served). Therefore, any positive experience as a seafood supplier in the European foodservice sector may help Canadian companies touch more easily new markets: either in the foodservice segment (European foodservice companies being giant international groups covering a large range of restaurant categories in several countries), but also in the European retail sector (European retailers and foodservice companies now sharing the same buying/quality procedures and requirements).

6.5. European fish processors

Seafood processors are often considered by seafood suppliers as another easy way to enter a new market: supply of raw/half-finished products (e.g.: whole fish, H&G fish, fish blocks…), no need for final-consumer's packaging, no need for product marketing/communication, etc. However, the supply with non-finished products to the EU processors does not mean the absence of constraints, as well as lower responsibilities for Canadian seafood suppliers.

1. **Have your Quality Assurance in place, and relevant.**
   Canadian seafood processing plants must be EU approved for export to the EU27 (EU plant's registration number updated and maintained by the EU Health and Consumer Protection Directory General - SANCO). A complete Quality Assurance system must be in place and updated. It includes the HACCP plan, the Good Manufacturing Procedures, and the Quality Control Plan (during processing, and before product shipping). As far as raw material fish and packaging are concerned, due approval procedures shall be implemented, and the related technical specifications made available.

2. **Make sure to fit into your customer's procedure requirements.**
   The prior sending of product samples by the Canadian supplier is usually requested before the effective start of the business relationship with EU processors. Sample check will take place at reception in Europe, and product analysis may be performed by independent external companies, including physical, microbiological, and chemical product testing. This step is necessary, but is not sufficient in itself.

As for the Canadian seafood suppliers, the European seafood processors do have a legal obligation to have an efficient Quality Assurance system in place for their own processing operations. Thus, the reality of how Canadian suppliers operate must be reflected in the documents emanating from the European processors. Be aware that to fill-in all the requested documents may take long. This step is however crucial for both Canadian suppliers and European customers to get to know each other, aiming at building a trustful business relationship.

3. **Full product traceability shall be available.**
   A product traceability system shall be established at Canadian supplier level. Upstream traceability must allow seafood products to be traced back to the fishing operations (fishing date, fishing area, fishing boat, fishing gear…). This information is not only important for the EU customer but also for legal reasons, especially for the completion of the related custom documents in due form. The traceability system shall also apply at processing stage, both for raw material and post-harvest operations (sorting/grading; processing; packing; palettization; and shipping). A product recall procedure is also requested to be implemented and tested regularly.

4. **Favor quality audits of your processing plant/s.**
   In order to finalize the Canadian supplier's validation by the EU processors, the latter may perform quality audits at the supplier's facility/ies in Canada. Such audits may also be conducted by independent third-party companies on behalf of the related EU processors. Last but not least, some EU processors may only require an international audit certificate such as IFS, BRC, etc. In any case, transparency is key in this regard. We therefore highly encourage Canadian seafood suppliers to share the results of their past quality audits, as well as the related action plans (if not confidential), and the achieved improvements since then. Such an attitude will certainly speed-up the establishment of a trustful relationship with the EU processors.

5. **Be aware of the EU processors' incoterms preferences.**
   Be aware that EU processors generally impose their preferred incoterms, which can vary from one client to another within the same destination market. Having a Canadian supplier impose its own Incoterms can lead to a bottleneck in cooperation.

Conclusion

We are convinced that new business opportunities for the Canadian seafood suppliers exist on the EU27 market. The Canadian seafood industry already benefits from significant advantages in Europe, including a positive image and a historical presence of several Canadian operators in strategic seafood segments (Lobster in particular). The CETA is also considered, from a European perspective, as a positive element of cooperation with Canada. Last but not least, this also comes in the current period of geostrategic linkage being reinforced between Canada and the EU27 and which is taking place at different levels (economic, cultural, defense, etc.).

Several short-term business opportunities have already been identified for Canadian seafood suppliers, for different species, and in different distribution channels. Other opportunities have also been discussed, especially to partly compensate for the fragility of certain European fisheries whose resources appear to be in decline.

Ultimately, the main challenge facing the Canadian seafood industry will be its ability to answer the specific needs of the European buyers:

- In terms of product offer, the European market being now mainly oriented towards price-competitive processed products (fish cuts in particular).
- In the daily management of the relationship with European buyers whose procedural requirements (especially quality procedures) are constantly increasing, regardless of the distribution channel (retail/foodservice).

Supporting Canadian suppliers in their business relationships with European buyers therefore seems essential to help achieve lasting successes that benefit everyone. This support should take several forms:

1. Developing/sustaining the image of the Canadian seafood on the EU27 market: increased on-the-ground support from the Canadian administration (promotional campaigns aimed at consumers in supermarkets, workshops on preparing/cooking Canadian seafood products in foodservice, etc.).

2. Facilitating the daily management of the commercial relationship with European buyers: field support either provided by an already established Canadian sales office in Europe, or by a "neo sales representative" also able to deal with product quality concerns.

Appendix 1 – Product portfolio on the EU27 market for the target Canadian seafood species

Available upon request.

Please contact Julie.Ferguson-Ceniti@international.gc.ca.

Appendix 2 – List of potential EU27 seafood buyers for the target Canadian seafood species

Available upon request.

Please contact Julie.Ferguson-Ceniti@international.gc.ca.