European Commission

CASE STUDY

MONK IN THE EU

EUMOFA

European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products

Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

JULY 2026

Manuscript completed in July 2026.

The European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2026© European Union, 2026

The reuse policy of European Commission documents is implemented based on Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 June 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39).

Except otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0) licence (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission June need to be sought directly from the respective rightsholders. The European Union does not own the copyright in relation to the following elements:

PDF ISSN 2314-9671 KL-01-26-047-EN-N

ISBN: 978-92-68-42417-9 DOI: 10.2771/3741056

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND COMMENTS:

Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
B-1049 Brussels
E-mail: contact-us@fishery-aquaculture-market-observatory.ec.europa.eu

Monk in the EU

Monk species are valuable benthic fish, commercially important for several specialised and mixed fisheries along the EU coast, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. The main species are the common monkfish, the blackbellied angler, and the American angler. In 2024, EU catches of monk (all species included) amounted to 27.239 tonnes. Monk species are available all year long, although higher volumes are available in spring. To complement EU production, around 20.000 tonnes of monk species are imported each year from non-EU countries, mostly from the UK, Namibia, Norway, and China. In 2025, the main EU importers of monk products from third countries were France and Spain. These two MS are also major traders of monk at EU level. In 2023, EU apparent consumption of monk reached 0,13 kg per capita, of which almost two thirds originated from EU fisheries. Spain, France, and Italy are the main consumption markets for these species in the EU-27.

1.1. Biology resource and exploitation

© Scandinavian Fishing Year Book

Monk refers to several species belonging to the *Lophius* genus in the order Lophiiformes. The most commercially important species include the European angler or common monkfish (*Lophius piscatorus*), the American angler (*Lophius americanus*), and the blackbellied angler (*Lophius budegassa*). The common monkfish is found in the EU's Atlantic waters, from the Azores to the North Sea, in the Northwestern Atlantic, and the Eastern Central Atlantic. It is also found in the Mediterranean and Black Sea[1]. The American angler is found in the Northwestern and Western Central Atlantic[2], while the blackbellied angler is found in the EU's Atlantic waters as well as in the Eastern Central Atlantic, the Southeastern Atlantic, and the Mediterranean and Black Sea[3].

Monk commonly live in muddy and sandy bottoms at depths ranging from 20 metres to 1.000 metres, and even at depths of up to 2.000 metres. Adults feed mainly on fish such as Norway pout and blue whiting, while juveniles feed on marine invertebrates such as crustaceans[4]. Its normal size is between 70 and 200 cm in length and weighs between 4 to 8 kg, largest individuals weigh around 40 kg, but can reach up to 58 kg[5]. Spawning occurs at the end of the winter period, consisting of thin sheets of transparent material with millions of eggs[6]. Hatching usually occurs in late spring around May and June, when larvae enter a planktonic phase and are usually between 10 and 12 mm long. Once they reach 5 to 6 cm, they sink to the bottom. Sexual maturity is reached after 6 to 7 years when the fish is about 70 cm.

The most important commercial stocks in European waters are located in the Irish Sea, the Bay of Biscay, the North Sea, and along the Atlantic–Iberian coast[7]. Monk species are usually caught by bottom trawlers, both in specialised and mixed fisheries[8]. Monk is managed by total allowable catches (TAC). In 2025, the agreed EU TAC reached 68.140 tonnes, a 4% increase compared to 2024, but a 20% decrease since 2020. This trend is due to a reduced TAC in the United Kingdom and Union waters (-86% compared to 2020) following Brexit.

[1] https://fish-commercial-names.ec.europa.eu/fish-names/species/lophius-piscatorius_en#ecl-accordion-header-distrib-habitat

[2] https://fish-commercial-names.ec.europa.eu/fish-names/species/lophius-americanus_en?fao-code=ANG#ecl-accordion-header-distrib-habitat

[3] https://fish-commercial-names.ec.europa.eu/fish-names/species/lophius-budegassa_en?fao-code=ANK#ecl-accordion-header-distrib-habitat

[4] https://doris.ffessm.fr/Especes/Lophius-piscatorius-Baudroie-773/(rOffset)/0

[5] Ibidem

[6] Ibidem

[7] https://fish-commercial-names.ec.europa.eu/fish-names/species/lophius-piscatorius_en#ecl-accordion-header-conserv-meas

[8] Ibidem

1.2. Production

Global production

In 2024, global production of monk species reached 52.935 tonnes. The main producers were the EU-27 (51% of the global catches), the UK (32%), and Norway (12%). Other minor producers were the Faroe Islands (1.122 tonnes) and Morocco (786 tonnes).

Over the last decade (2015-2024), global production of monk fell by 11% although with some interannual fluctuations. A peak was reached in 2017 with 66.224 tonnes. Among main producing countries, trends were contrasted with an 8% decrease in the UK and a stronger decline in the EU (-26%) in relation to Brexit, the UK and Union waters representing the main catch area of monk for the EU fleet. However, among smaller producers, Norwegian catches more than tripled over the period (331%) and catches from the Faroe Islands rose by 75%.

Global catches of monk originated mostly from the Northeastern Atlantic (92% of the global catches in 2024), and to a lesser extent from the Mediterranean and Black Sea (6% of the global catches), and the Eastern Central Atlantic (1%).

Table 1. **WORLD CATCHES OF MONK (volume in tonnes live weight)**

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
EU-27	36.759	39.355	40.512	36.868	29.183	25.271	26.354	28.726	28.857	27.239
United Kingdom	18.165	20.484	20.410	18.554	17.674	18.075	19.859	18.575	17.546	16.783
Norway	1.446	2.118	2.480	3.369	4.251	3.409	3.691	3.312	4.811	6.238
Faroe Islands	643	966	893	1.281	2.573	2.561	1.904	1.566	1.442	1.122
Morocco	764	687	812	756	731	771	814	830	751	786
Others	1.422	1.687	1.116	1.381	1.103	979	1.071	701	823	767
Total	**59.199**	**65.297**	**66.224**	**62.210**	**55.514**	**51.066**	**53.693**	**53.709**	**54.229**	**52.935**

Source: FAO.

EU production

In 2024, the EU-27 catches of monk species reached 27.239 tonnes. The main EU producer was France (68% of the total EU catch), followed by Spain (11%), and Denmark (8%). Other producers were Belgium (6%), Italy (3%), and Greece (2%).

French catches of monk originated almost exclusively from the Northeastern Atlantic (96% of the catches) and to a lesser extent from the Mediterranean and Black Sea (4%). Similarly, most of the Spanish catches originated from the Northeastern Atlantic (80%), while 17% originated from the Mediterranean and Black Sea, and 3% from the Eastern Central Atlantic.

Over the last decade (2015-2024), the EU production of monk decreased by 26% in relation to the decrease in catches by the main producers. However, a decade peak was reached in 2017 at 40.512 tonnes. Among major fishing countries, French catches strongly decreased over the period (-20%), Spanish catches followed an even stronger decline (-58%), whereas Danish and Belgian catches increased in the meantime (by respectively 32% and 39%). As mentioned earlier, this decreasing trend is related to reduced quota shares for many stocks in the UK waters for the EU fleet, including several monkfish stocks. France has been the largest loser, because its fleet depended heavily on monkfish fishing in UK waters[9].

[9] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2026/789357/EPRS_BRI%282026%29789357_EN.pdf?utm

Table 2. **EU CATCHES OF MONK (volume in tonnes live weight)**

Country	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
France	23.027	24.441	24.018	21.534	19.200	17.417	18.700	19.545	19.157	18.435
Spain	7.297	7.713	7.837	7.292	2.115	1.678	1.442	3.141	3.796	3.044
Denmark	1.667	2.479	3.092	2.799	2.894	1.998	2.141	2.132	1.959	2.194
Belgium	1.104	1.433	1.578	1.091	1.192	1.435	1.571	1.629	1.650	1.533
Italy	1.553	1.270	1.677	1.567	361	283	949	858	834	905
Greece	481	433	489	657	844	731	659	568	615	473
Others	1.630	1.586	1.821	1.928	2.577	1.730	892	853	845	654
Total	**36.759**	**39.355**	**40.512**	**36.868**	**29.183**	**25.271**	**26.354**	**28.726**	**28.857**	**27.239**

Source: FAO.

1.3. First sales in the EU

In 2025, reported first sales of monk species in EU countries[10] amounted to a volume of 25.150 tonnes and a value of EUR 165 million[11]. The main EU countries in terms of first-sales volume and value were by far Spain (38% of total volume and 39% of the value) and France (38% and 37%), followed by Denmark (10% of the volume and 9% of the value) and Ireland (9% of the volume and 7% of the value).

First sales consisted mainly of *Lophius piscatorius* (common monkfish) and of *Lophius budegassa* (blackbellied angler) which accounted for 28% and 21% respectively of the first-sales volume and for 29% and 21% of the value in 2025. 38% of the volume and 37% of the value were reported under the Monkfishes nei (*Lophius spp.*) category and 11% of the volume and 11% of the value reported under the Anglerfishes nei (*Lophiidae)* category.

Table 3. **EU FIRST SALES OF MONK FOR THE MAIN SPECIES (volume in tonnes net weight, nominal value in 1.000 EUR, price in EUR/kg)**

	Nominal value (1.000 EUR)	Volume (tonnes)	Nominal price (EUR/kg)	% val. 2025
Monkfishes nei	61.431	9.573	6,42	37%
Angler (=Monk)	48.215	7.048	6,84	29%
Blackbellied angler	35.288	5.349	6,60	21%
Anglerfishes nei	17.505	2.883	6,07	11%
Others	2.304	296	7,78	1%
Total	**164.742**	**25.150**	**6,55**	**100%**

Source: EUMOFA.

Most of the first sales consisted of fresh monk (98% of the total volume), while frozen monk represented 2% of the first sales in volume. Fresh first sales included gutted monk (65% of the fresh first sale volume), whole monk (28%), and to a lesser extent gutted with liver in monk (3%), gutted and headed monk (2%), and monk tail (1%). Frozen first sales consisted mostly of whole fish (45% of the frozen volume), tail (20%), gutted monk (13%), and tailed monk (10%).

In 2025, first-sales prices were highest for size 2 whole/gutted monk[12] (weighing between 4 and 8 kg), reaching 6,92 EUR/kg, followed by size 1 monk (weighing more than 8 kg), reaching 6,42 EUR/kg, size 4 monk (between 1 and 2 kg) reaching 6,21 EUR/kg, size 3 monk (between 2 and 4 kg) reaching 6,06 EUR/kg, and size 5 monk (between 0,5 and 1 kg) reaching 5,38 kg. The higher price of size

[10] Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden.

[11] Source: EUMOFA.

[12] Marketing sizes are defined for fresh whole/gutted and fresh headed monk - https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31996R2406

2 monk may be due to the presence of a large tail that can be portioned into many thick "fillets" (compared to smaller sizes) and the higher proportion of usable fillet relative to their body weight compared to larger individuals[13].

French first sales consisted almost exclusively of monkfishes nei (98% of the French first sale volume), and to a lesser extent common monk (1%) and blackbellied angler (1%). Spanish first sales comprised mostly blackbellied angler (54% of the Spanish first-sales volume), followed by common monk (42%), and shortspine African angler (3%). Danish first sales consisted exclusively of common monk while Irish first sales consisted exclusively of anglerfishes nei.

Table 4. **EU FIRST SALES OF MONK FOR THE MAIN PRESERVATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS (volume in tonnes net weight, nominal value in 1.000 EUR, price in EUR/kg)**

Preservation	Presentation	Nominal value (1.000 EUR)	Volume (tonnes)	Nominal price (EUR/kg)	% val. 2025
Fresh	**Gutted**	100.855	16.077	6,27	61%
	Whole	44.765	6.882	6,50	27%
	Gutted and headed	5.972	517	11,55	4%
	Gutted with liver in	5.488	809	6,79	3%
	Tail	2.479	178	13,95	2%
	Total fresh	160.736	24.706	6,51	98%
Frozen	**Whole**	1.527	196	7,79	1%
	Tail	1.180	89	13,32	1%
	Tailed	600	45	13,41	0,4%
	Gutted	304	58	5,26	0,2%
	Total frozen	3.964	439	9,02	2%
Total		**164.742**	**25.150**	**6,55**	**100%**

Source: EUMOFA.

In 2025, first sales decreased by 35% in volume and 20% in value compared to 2016. Interannual variations were observed with the lowest volumes and value reached in 2022 at 26.206 tonnes and EUR 152 million, before increasing again over the next 3 years. Declines were particularly sharp between 2016 and 2017 and between 2019 and 2020, with first sales decreasing by 12% and 16% in value.

Spanish first sales were the most impacted with a 47% decline in volume over the decade, and a 36% decline in value, resulting in a 4% decrease in nominal price (24% in real terms), reaching 6,79 EUR/kg in 2025. Over the same period, French first sales decreased by 33% in volume and by 17% in value, resulting in a 56% rise in the nominal price (30% in real terms). In 2025, monk first-sales price in France reached 6,41 EUR/kg.

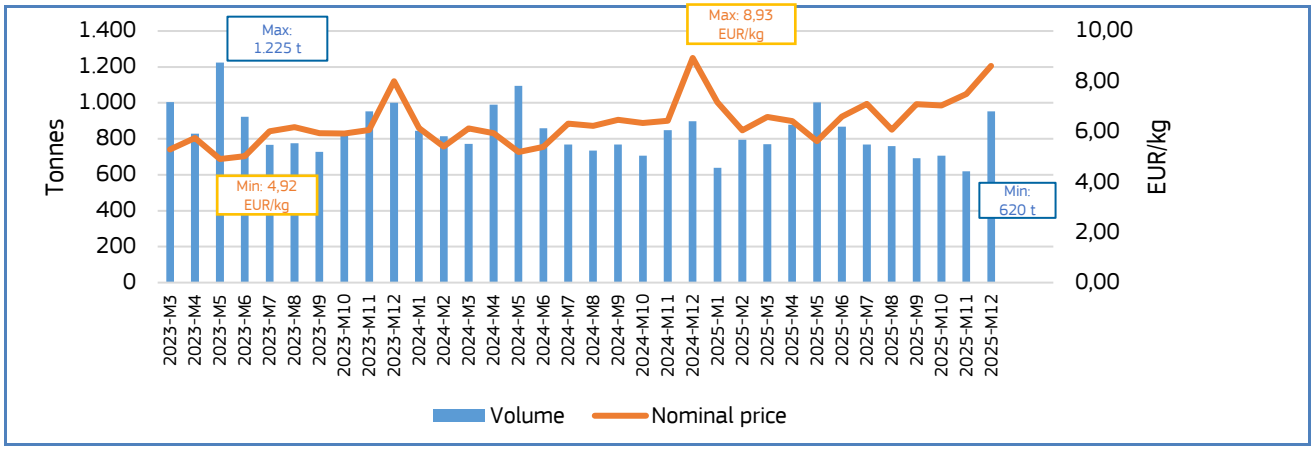
In 2025, the most important places of sale[14] for monk in volume terms were Vigo, A Coruña, and Ondárroa in Spain (respectively 20%, 3%, and 3% of EU total first-sales volume), Le Guilvinec, Roscoff, and Lorient in France (12%, 10%, and 4% of the total EU volume, respectively), and Kilmore Quay in Ireland (3% of EU first-sales volume).

First-sales data do not show a clear seasonality pattern with volumes available all year-long. However, the highest first-sales volumes are generally reached during spring, especially peaking in May. Price trends are related to these volume fluctuations with higher prices in winter and lower prices in spring when higher volumes are available.

[13] https://www.easyfish.net/en/frozen-monkfish-supply-sourcing-guide-2025/

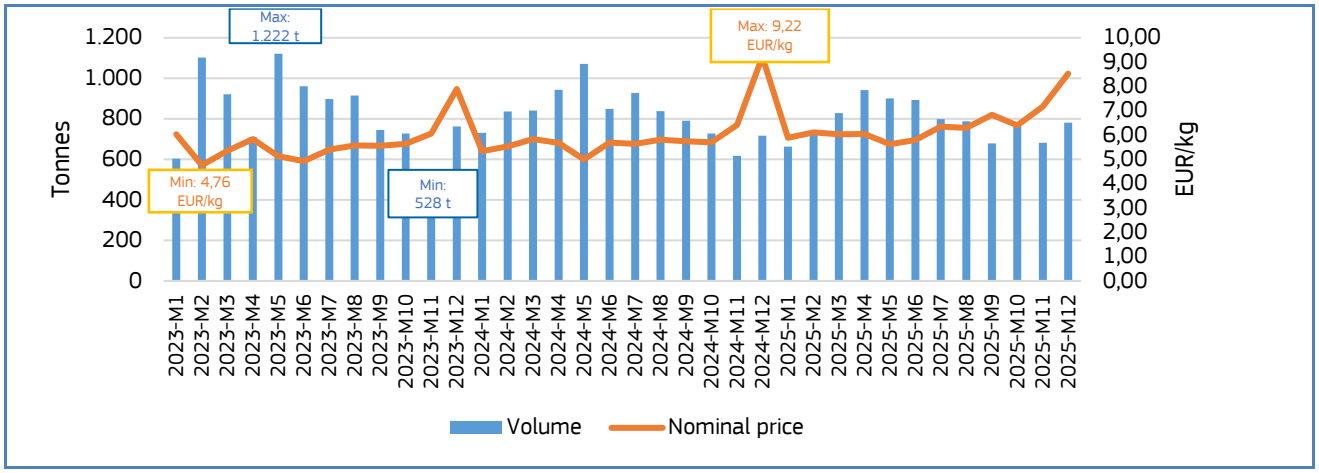
[14] Places of sale for Denmark are not available.

Figure 1. **FIRST SALES: MONK IN FRANCE (volume in tonnes net weight and price in EUR/kg)**



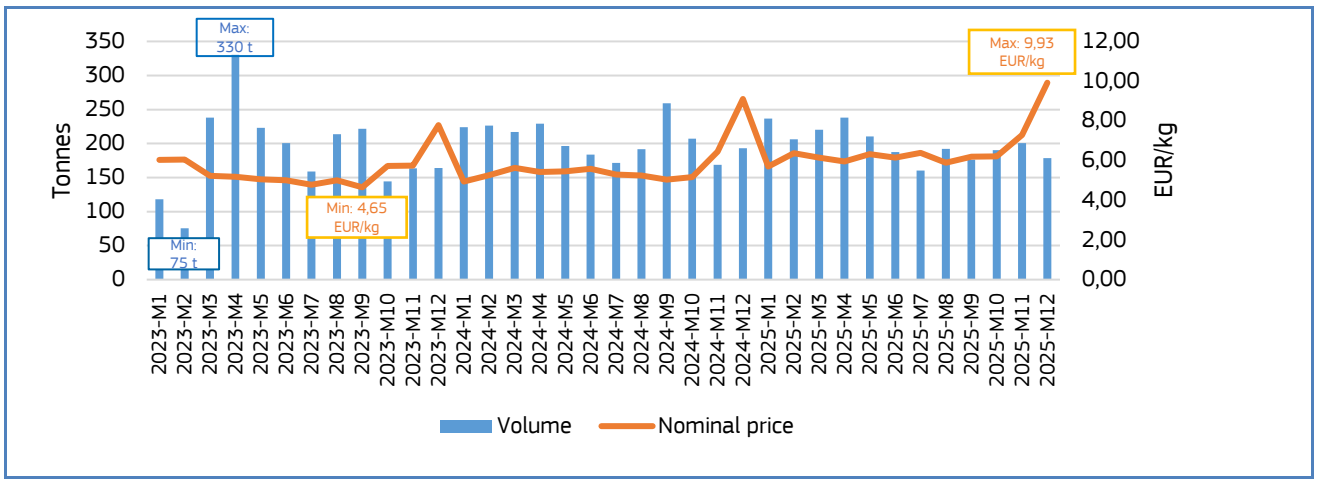
Source: EUMOFA.

Figure 2. **FIRST SALES: MONK IN FRANCE (volume in tonnes net weight and price in EUR/kg)**



Source: EUMOFA.

Figure 3. **FIRST SALES: MONK IN DENMARK (volume in tonnes net weight and price in EUR/kg)**



Source: EUMOFA.

1.4. International trade

In the CN nomenclature used for registering EU import-export data, monk is specifically reported as fresh whole fish and frozen whole fish, frozen fillets or frozen meat.[15]

In 2025, the EU-27 imported 22.619 tonnes of monk at a value of EUR 164 million, mostly frozen whole (50% of total value of imports) and fresh whole (45%). The major provider of monk to the EU market was the UK, accounting for 38% of the extra-EU import value, followed by Namibia (22%), Norway (13%), and China (12%). Other suppliers to the EU market were South Africa, the United States, and the Faroe Islands (accounting for 9%, 3%, and 2% respectively of the extra-EU import value in 2025). France and Spain were the main importers accounting each for 28% of the monk extra-EU import value, followed by Italy (12%), and Denmark, Portugal, and Sweden (7% each). Overall, extra-EU imports of monk increased significantly in volume (20%) and even more in nominal value (58%) since 2020, resulting from a 28% nominal price rise. Imports from all major suppliers increased over the 2020-2025 period: 46% in value for imports from the United Kingdom, 68% for imports from Namibia, 235% for Norway, 84% for China.

Table 5. **EXTRA-EU IMPORTS OF MONK (tonnes net weight, 1.000 EUR, EUR/kg)**

	Nominal value (1.000 EUR)	Volume (tonnes)	Nominal price (EUR/kg)	% val. 2025
Fresh whole	72.851	7.656	9,52	45%
Frozen whole	81.891	13.105	6,25	50%
Frozen fillets	8.042	1.645	4,89	5%
Frozen meat	725	213	3,40	0%
Total	**163.509**	**22.619**	**7,23**	**100%**

Source: EUMOFA elaboration of Eurostat-COMEXT data.

In the same year, EU exports to third countries were limited and amounted to 823 tonnes at a value of EUR 4,4 million. Fresh products accounted for 84% of the total extra-EU export value, frozen whole monk accounted for 12% of the total extra-EU export value, frozen fillets 3%, and frozen meat 1%. The main destinations in value terms were the UK (58% of the total value), followed by Norway (16%), and to a lesser extent by Andorra (6%), Switzerland (3%), and Cuba (3%). Ireland was by far the main exporter of monk to third countries (57% of the extra-Export value), followed by Spain (18%) and Denmark (15%). Extra-EU exports have decreased by 15% in volume and by 22% in nominal value since 2020, due to an 8% decrease in nominal price over the same period.

Table 6. **EXTRA-EU EXPORTS OF MONK (tonnes net weight, 1.000 EUR, EUR/kg)**

	Nominal value (1.000 EUR)	Volume (tonnes)	Nominal price (EUR/kg)	% val. 2025
Fresh whole	3.691	736	5,02	84%
Frozen whole	526	68	7,75	12%
Frozen fillets	148	17	8,89	3%
Frozen meat	29	3	9,66	1%
Total	**4.394**	**823**	**5,34**	**100%**

Source: EUMOFA elaboration of Eurostat-COMEXT data.

In 2025, intra-EU exports of monk amounted to 19.885 tonnes at a value of EUR 162 million. Intra-EU trade was dominated by fresh products, which accounted for 70% of the export value, whereas frozen whole products represented 23%, frozen fillets accounted for 6% of the value, and frozen meat 1%. The main exporting countries of fresh monk within the EU were Denmark (34% of intra-EU fresh export value), France (27%), Ireland (12%), and Sweden (10%). Intra-EU exports of frozen whole monk originated mainly from Spain (46% of the intra-EU frozen whole export value) and to a lesser extent from Portugal (18%), and the Netherlands (12%). The Netherlands and Portugal were the main exporters of frozen fillets (respectively 23% and 22% of the frozen fillets intra-EU export value) while frozen meat was mostly supplied by Spain and Portugal (48% and 22% respectively of the frozen meat intra-

[15] 03028950 - Fresh or chilled monkfish "*Lophius* spp."

03038965 - Frozen monkfish "*Lophius* spp."

03048960 - Frozen fillets of monkfish "*Lophius* spp."

03049965 - Frozen meat "whether or not minced" of monkfish "*Lophius* spp." (excl. fillets)

EU export value). Spain was the main destination market, absorbing 28% of the intra-EU fresh export value, 41% of the frozen whole intra-EU export value, 50% of the frozen fillets export value, and 36% of the frozen meat export value.

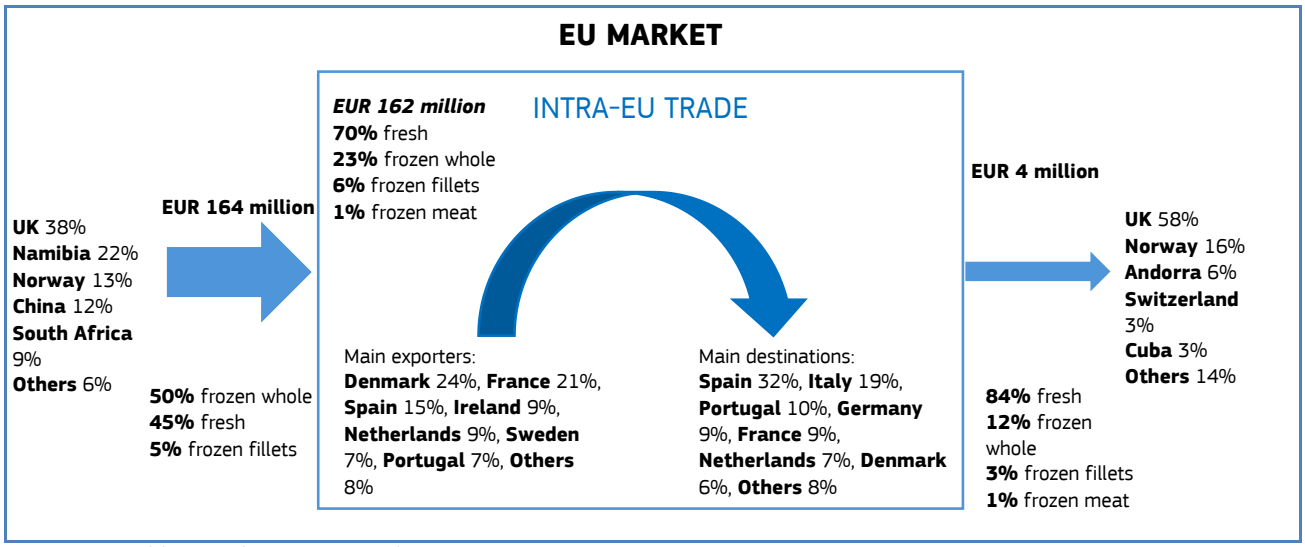
Between 2020 and 2025, intra-EU trade expanded significantly, with export volumes increasing by 51% and export values by 92%, resulting in a 27% increase in average nominal export prices, reaching 8,15 EUR/kg in 2025: that is 10,54 EUR/kg for fresh exports, 5,30 EUR/kg for frozen whole exports, 5,24 EUR/kg for exports of frozen fillets, and 6,63 EUR/kg for frozen meat exports.

Table 7. **INTRA-EU EXPORTS OF MONK (tonnes net weight, 1.000 EUR, EUR/kg)**

	Nominal value (1.000 EUR)	Volume (tonnes)	Nominal price (EUR/kg)	% val. 2025
Fresh whole	113.201	10.743	10,54	70%
Frozen whole	36.815	6.942	5,30	23%
Frozen fillets	9.725	1.854	5,24	6%
Frozen meat	2.292	346	6,63	1%
Total	**162.032**	**19.885**	**8,15**	**100%**

Source: EUMOFA elaboration of Eurostat-COMEXT data.

Figure 4. **MONK TRADE MARKET IN 2025, IN VALUE**



Source: EUMOFA elaboration of Eurostat-COMEXT data.

1.5. Apparent consumption and self-sufficiency

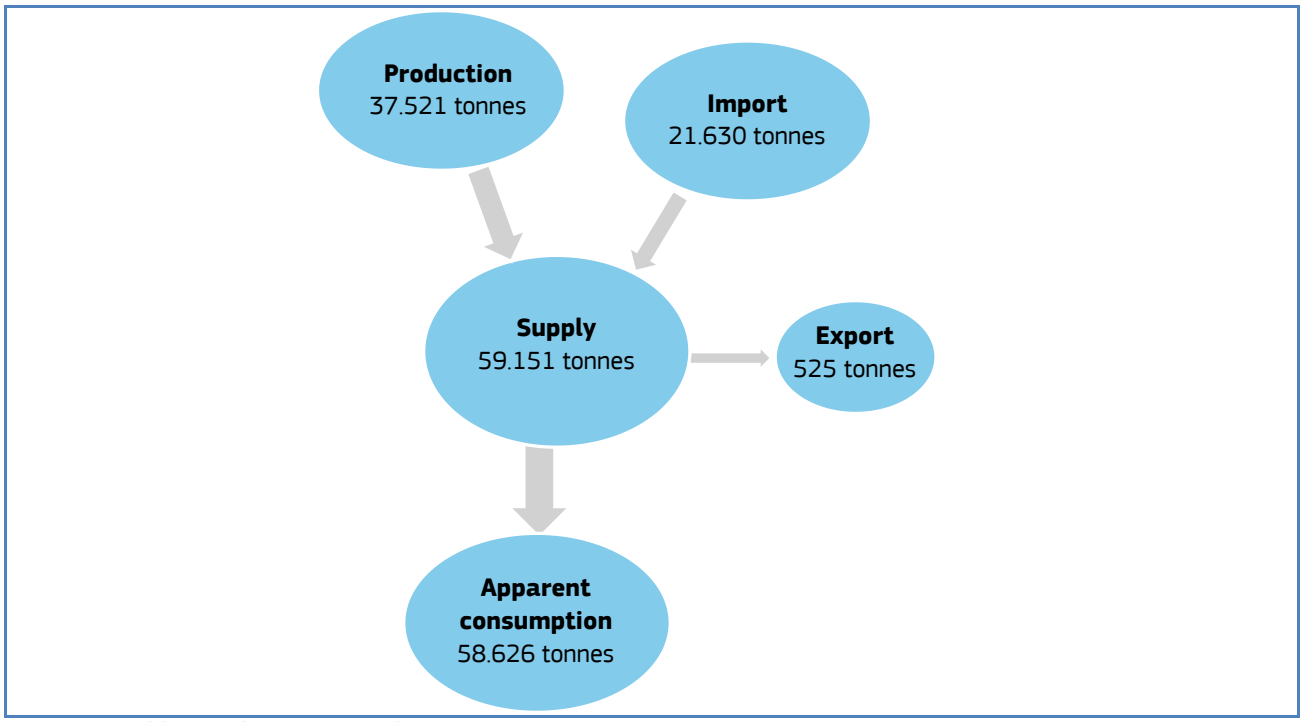
In 2023 apparent consumption of monk at EU level was estimated at 58.626 tonnes LWE (-10%% compared to 2020), equivalent to a per capita consumption of 0,13 kg. Supply reached 59.151 tonnes LWE, originating significantly more from fisheries (63% of the volume) than from imports (37% of the volume). Exports represented only 2% of the overall supply. Apparent consumption thus accounted for 98% of the supply. In 2023, the level of self-sufficiency[16] was estimated at 63%.

At MS level, the main consumption markets of monk were Spain with a consumption estimated at 35.382 tonnes in 2023 LWE, equivalent to 0,736 kg per capita, followed by France (24.239 tonnes LWE; 0,355 kg per capita), and Italy (11.321 tonnes LWE; 0,192 kg per capita). While the Spanish and Italian markets rely mainly on imports (82% and 93% respectively of the national supply) and on national catches to a lesser extent (respectively 18% and 7%), the French supply of monk originates from fisheries for 68% of the supply. Therefore, the self-sufficiency level of the French market for monk was estimated at 78% in 2023, while it was estimated at 22% for the Spanish market and at 8% for the Italian market.

[16] Self-sufficiency, defined as the capacity of EU Member States to meet demand through their own production, can be estimated by calculating the ratio of domestic production to domestic apparent consumption.

Monk species are highly appreciated for their firm flesh and absence of bones. Monk tail and cheek are particularly popular and considered premium products, often served in restaurants. Transformation yield is relatively low (around 50% [17]) due to the large size of the head compared to the body.

Figure 5. **EU APPARENT CONSUMPTION OF MONK IN 2023 (tonnes, LWE)**



Source: EUMOFA elaboration of Eurostat-COMEXT data.

[17] https://www.ouest-france.fr/premium/?article_id=c1e3c1bb-ed0d-4501-aab2-3c1c8f2035b9

EUMOFA

European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products

VISIT US

fishery-aquaculture-market-observatory.ec.europa.eu

Publications Office of the European Union