



EUROPEAN HAKE (*MERLUCCIOUS MERLUCCIOUS*)



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BIOLOGY AND HABITAT

- **Species description** ([Read more](#))

The European hake is a slim bodied fish of the genus *Merluccius*, with a large head and large jaws on which are set a number of large curved teeth.

- **Geographical distribution and habitat** ([Read more](#))

The European hake lives in the North-East Atlantic, Eastern-Central Atlantic, and can also be found in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

RESOURCE, EXPLOITATION AND MANAGEMENT

- **Stock and resource status/conservation measures** ([Read more](#))

Minimum conservation reference size is set at 30 cm in Skagerrak and Kattegat, 20 cm in the Mediterranean Sea, and 27 cm in all the other fishing areas.

- **Production methods and fishing gears** ([Read more](#))

The main fishing gears used are gillnets and similar nets, hooks and lines, and trawls.

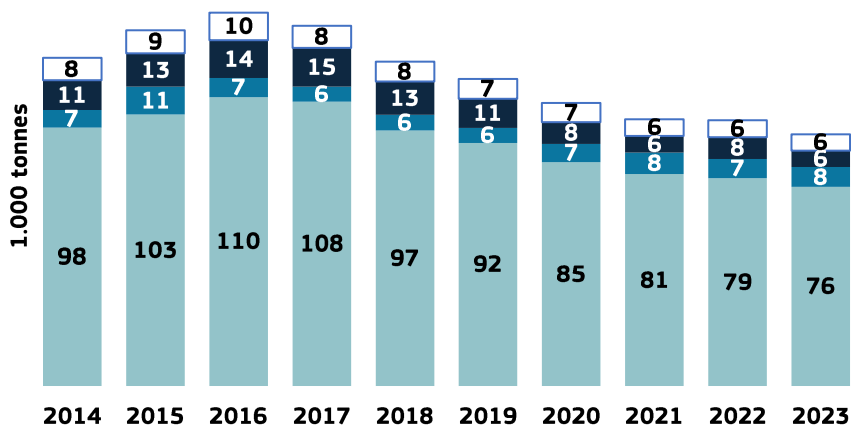


CATCHES

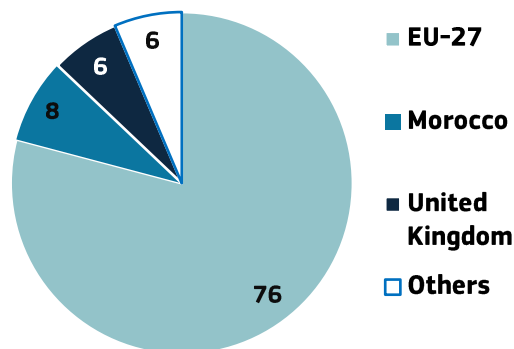
Evolution of world catches

- Global catches of European hake reached over 95.000 tonnes, i.e. **0,1%** of the total global catches in 2023.
- During the last decade (2014 to 2023), catches have increased to reach a peak in 2016 (142.000 tonnes) before decreasing by 33% between 2016 and 2023. In 2023, Spain and France were the main producers. Together, they produced 58% of the global catches of hake.

Others United Kingdom Morocco EU-27



Catches (2023, 1.000 tonnes)

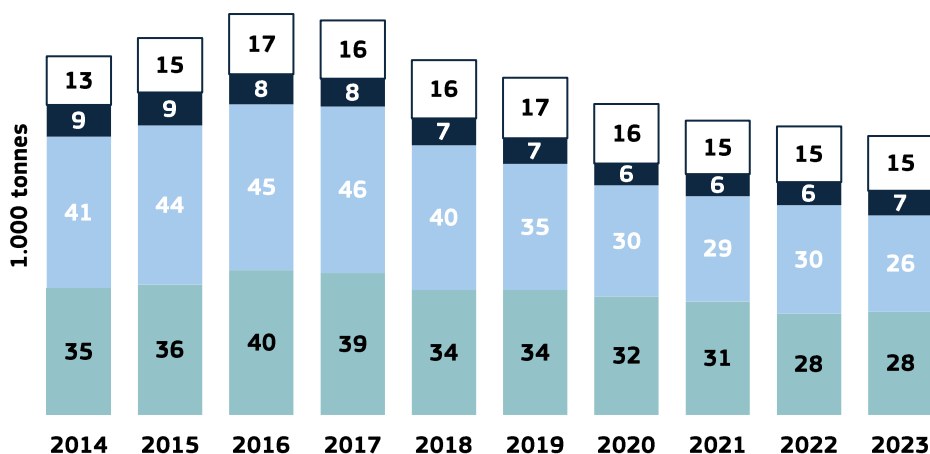


Source: FAO

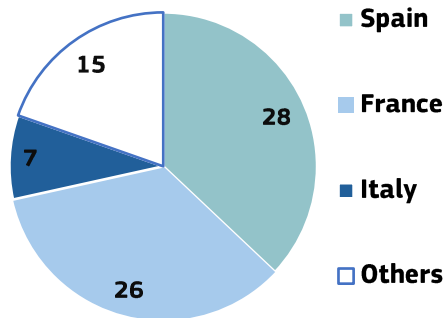
Evolution of EU catches

- In 2023, the EU provided 79% of the global European hake catches (76.000 tonnes).

Others Italy France Spain



Catches (2023, 1.000 tonnes)



Source: FAO



AQUACULTURE PRODUCTION

- There is no aquaculture production of hake in the EU.

PROCESSING

- There is no significant processing activity of hake in the EU. The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries indicates the existence of frozen industry in Portugal and filleting activity in Slovenia (Source: [The Economic Performance of the EU fish Processing Industry, STECF, 2023](#)).



TRADE

- Combined nomenclature ([Read more](#))

EU trade of European hake products (tonnes - 2024)

There are no specific trade codes related to the European hake. Data provided in the table below refer to fish categories that include other species of hake.

CN code	Product	EU imports	EU exports
03 02 54 11	Fresh or chilled Cape hake " <i>Merluccius capensis</i> " and deepwater hake " <i>Merluccius paradoxus</i> "	3.704	20
03 02 54 15	Fresh or chilled southern hake " <i>Merluccius australis</i> "	3.430	0
03 02 54 19	Fresh or chilled hake " <i>Merluccius spp.</i> " (excl. cape hake, deepwater hake and southern hake)	4.705	272
03 02 54 90	Fresh or chilled hake " <i>Urophycis spp.</i> "	40	4
03 03 66 11	Frozen Cape hake " <i>Merluccius capensis</i> " and deepwater hake " <i>Merluccius paradoxus</i> "	14.538	403
03 03 66 12	Frozen Argentine hake " <i>Merluccius hubbsi</i> "	9.782	33.815
03 03 66 13	Frozen southern hake " <i>Merluccius australis</i> "	6.182	48
03 03 66 19	Frozen hake " <i>Merluccius spp.</i> " (excl. cape hake, deepwater hake, Argentine hake and southern hake)	3.422	4.574
03 03 66 90	Frozen hake " <i>Urophycis spp.</i> "	17	400
03 04 74 11	Frozen fillets of Cape hake " <i>Merluccius capensis</i> " and deepwater hake " <i>Merluccius paradoxus</i> "	60.761	346
03 04 74 15	Frozen fillets of Argentine hake " <i>Merluccius hubbsi</i> "	30.104	523
03 04 74 19	Frozen fillets of hake " <i>Merluccius spp.</i> " (excl. cape hake, deepwater hake and Argentine hake)	22.436	116
03 04 74 90	Frozen fillets of hake " <i>Urophycis spp.</i> "	0	2
03 04 95 50	Frozen meat, whether or not minced, of hake " <i>Merluccius spp.</i> " (excl. fillets and surimi)	18.552	117
16 04 19 94	prepared or preserved hake " <i>Merluccius spp.</i> , <i>Urophycis spp.</i> ", whole or in pieces	486	261
Total		178.158	40.901

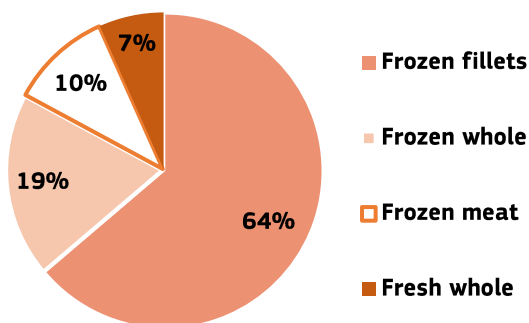
Source: EUROSTAT-COMEXT



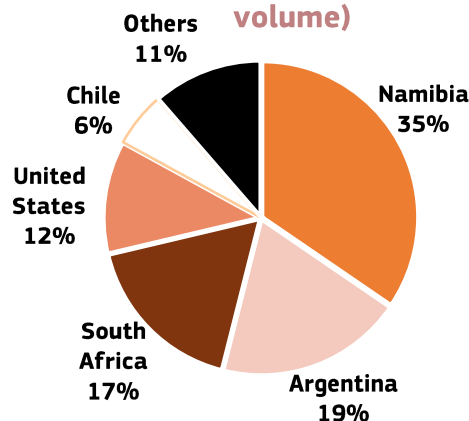
TRADE

Extra-EU imports reached over 178.000 tonnes in 2024. These concerned mainly frozen hake in fillets (64% of extra-EU imports), frozen whole hake (19%), frozen meat (10%) and to lesser extent fresh whole (7%). Spain was responsible of more than half of the extra-EU imports of hake in 2024 (58% of the EU imports). Other importers included Italy (12%), France and Portugal (6% each). Main EU suppliers were Namibia (61.830 tonnes), Argentina (34.714 tonnes), and South Africa (31.095 tonnes). EU trade with South Africa and Namibia is facilitated by the Trade, Development and Co-operation agreement between the EU and Southern African Development Community.

Imports by product type (2024, % in volume)

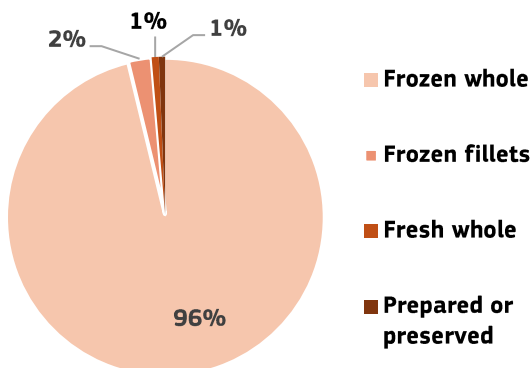


Main EU suppliers (2024, % in volume)

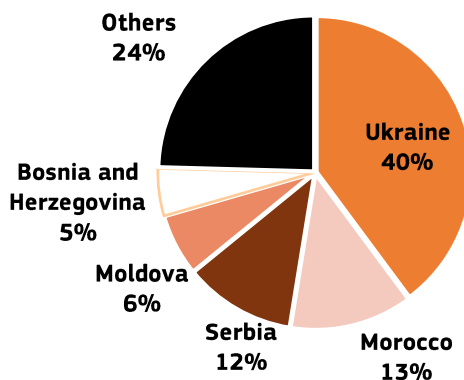


Extra-EU exports were around 40.900 tonnes in 2024. EU-exports were dominated by frozen whole hake (96% of extra-EU exports). Ukraine was the major destination (40% of the volume; 16.314 tonnes) and Spain was by far the main EU exporter. In 2024, Spain was responsible of 88% of extra-EU exports of hake.

Exports by product type (2024, % in volume)



Main destinations (2024, % in volume)



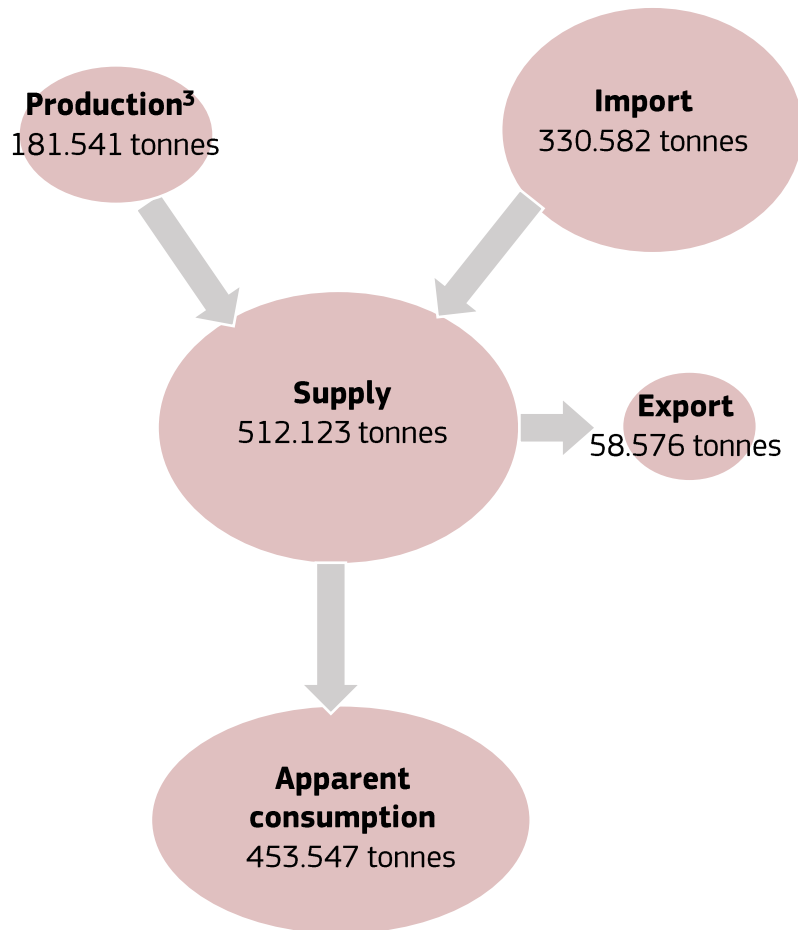
Source: EUROSTAT-COMEXT



Supply balance

EU supply balance (2023¹) – Tonnes of live weight equivalent² - Hake:

Production data cover all hake species targeted by the EU fleet to be in line with trade data that cover other hake species. The European hake represents 41% of the EU catches of hake. This supply balance concerns Hake (all species).



Source: FAO/ EUROSTAT-COMEXT

¹ Supply balance is provided for the year 2023 (trade data for 2023 were taken into account). Detailed trade data provided in the slides 4 and 5 concern the year 2024.

² The [conversion factors](#) were used to convert net weight of imports and exports of fishery and aquaculture products into live weight equivalents.

³ Production figure considered in this supply balance sheet is different from the production figure for the EU provided in the slide 2 on catches as this supply balance concerns all hake species targeted by the EU fleet, not only European hake.



PRICES ALONG THE SUPPLY CHAIN (EUR/kg)

First-sale (fresh)

First-sale prices are provided for Spain and France which are the main EU producers of European hake.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
Spain	5,89	6,24	5,69	6,11	6,55	6,87	6,40	6,63	6,98	7,33	EUMOFA
France	3,36	2,94	3,03	3,33	3,05	3,50	3,72	3,77	4,33	4,30	EUMOFA

(*) From January to September 2025

Wholesale (fresh)

Wholesale prices are provided for the main wholesale markets in France (Rungis, Paris) and Spain (Mercamadrid, Madrid).

Average price (FR) / Most frequent price (ES)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
France , whole 2-3 kg, Origin France	5,06	4,57	6,08	6,81	6,21	7,36	7,79	8,12	7,26	7,46	Rungis
Spain	7,58	7,6	8,01	9,94	10,2	11,82	12,57	15,39	15,57	15,85	Mercamadrid

(*) From January to October 2025

Retail/consumption

Retail prices are provided for France and Spain, major EU consumers of hake.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*	Source
France, whole fresh	10,3	10,6	10,3	10,8	11,6	12,5	12,5	13,5	14,3	FranceAgriMer
Spain - fresh	7,26	7,54	7,77	7,9	8,45	9,25	9,71	10,43	10,83	MAPA
Spain - frozen	6,84	7,04	7,07	7,22	7,26	7,41	7,78	8,44	9,04	MAPA

(*) Latest available year



PRICES ALONG THE SUPPLY CHAIN (EUR/kg)

Data concern all specie of hake

Extra-EU import (frozen fillets)

Extra-EU imports concern mainly frozen fillets. In 2024, main importers were Spain, Italy and France.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
Spain	3,5	3,63	3,74	3,79	3,71	3,52	4,09	4,75	4,62	4,86	EUMOFA
Italy	4,05	4,14	3,98	4,18	4,68	4,23	4,67	4,91	4,89	5,36	EUMOFA
France	3,95	4,25	4,27	4,17	5,08	4,73	5,11	5,53	5,55	6,73	EUMOFA

(*) From January to September 2025

Extra-EU export (frozen whole)

Extra-EU exports concern mainly frozen whole hake and Spain is by far the main EU exporter of hake to third countries.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025*	Source
Spain	1,36	1,44	1,48	1,38	2,14	2,35	3,77	4,29	3,42	3,22	EUMOFA

(*) From January to September 2025



MARKETING

- National lists of commercial designations ([Read more](#))
- Information system on commercial designations and scientific names in all EU languages ([Read more](#))
- Applicable marketing standards ([Read more](#))

CONSUMPTION

- Hake (all species included) is the 7th most consumed fish in the EU (source: [The EU Fish Market – 2025 edition](#), EUMOFA)
- Apparent consumption per capita of hake (all species) in 2023: **1,01 kg** live weight equivalent (source: [Supply balance - 2023](#), EUMOFA)
- Nutrition values (European hake, Atlantic, cut from whole fish, values per 100 g – source : [USDA](#))

Nutritional value	Hake
Energie (kcal)	78
Energie (kJ)	326
Protein (g)	17,5
Total lipid (g)	0,88
Carbohydrates (g)	0
Calcium (mg)	44
Iron (mg)	0,95
Sodium (mg)	100
Cholesterol (mg)	20