

# The Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector in **LITHUANIA**



Restored  
Lithuania



# Introduction



Lithuania has a relatively short coastline of 90 km, and its territorial waters and exclusive economic zone in the Baltic Sea amount to 7,000 sq. km. Lithuania has significant inland waters covering 2,621 sq. km, or 4% of the country's territory. There are 2,827 lakes with a surface greater than 0.5 ha (87,359 ha), 1,589 ponds (24,434 ha), and 731 rivers longer than 10 km (32,601 ha) including the largest rivers Nemunas and Neris.

The total value of the fisheries sector is less than 0.5% of the country's GDP. However, fisheries have a long tradition and play an important role in small communities in coastal areas. It employs 4,458 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers: 491 in fishing, 431 in aquaculture, and 3,536 in processing. About 70% of the employees are women who are traditionally occupied in the fish processing industry.



## Commercial fisheries in the Baltic Sea

This fishery has faced difficulties in recent years mainly due to fluctuations in the quotas for Baltic cod, and particularly eastern cod, a traditional target for commercial fishermen. The other main species are herring and sprat. Lithuania is allocated 1.4-5.1% of the European Union quotas for all these species.

### Quotas

Quotas for cod have decreased steadily from 4.1 thousand tonnes in 2014 to 1.8 thousand tonnes in 2017, a drop of 56%. The situation of Baltic pelagic species was better with the herring quota increasing 70% from 2014 to 5.6 thousand tonnes in 2017, while over the same period the sprat quota declined two years in a row before recovering to 13.1 thousand tonnes in 2017.

### Catches

Lithuanian companies caught 18,865 tonnes of fish in the Baltic Sea (including coastal fisheries) in 2017. Mainly sprat 12,480 tonnes, herring 4,036 tonnes, and cod 1,729 tonnes. The rest are other species, mainly from the coastal fisheries, such as flounder.

### Fleet

In 2017, 15 companies were fishing commercially in the open Baltic Sea. These companies own 31 fishing vessels. The coastal fisheries involved 54 companies with 104 fishing vessels (tonnage 240; power 2,717kW).

# Commercial fisheries in distant waters

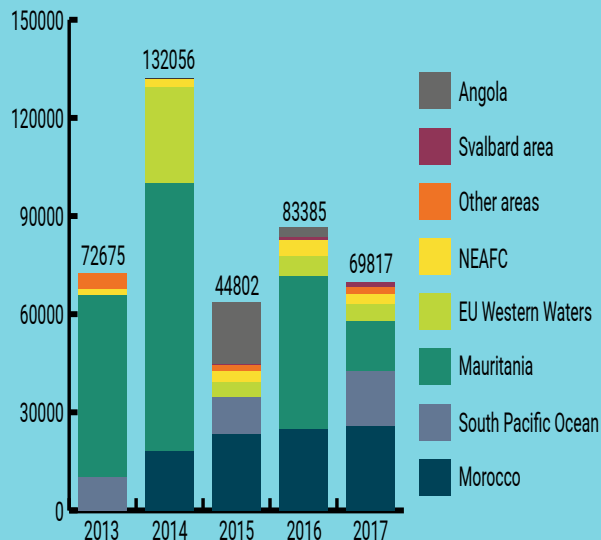
Lithuania is among the leading EU countries in terms of fishing activity in distant waters. Four fifths of all Lithuanian catches are caught by the distant water fleet, however all the catches from this type of fishery are landed in non-Lithuanian ports.

## Quotas

In 2017, the main areas fished by the distant water fleet were off Mauritania and Morocco. The Lithuanian fleet operates under EU fishery partnership agreements with third countries and quotas are set each year. The new agreement with Mauritania came into force at the very



Catches of the Lithuanian vessels in long distance fishing areas in 2013 – 2017 (in tonnes)



end of 2015 and each year almost 58 thousand tonnes of pelagic species were allocated to Lithuanian vessels. The agreement with Morocco is valid from mid-2014 and almost 21 thousand tonnes are allocated annually. In other fishing areas, the north east and north west parts of the Atlantic Ocean (NEAFC and NAFO), and the South Pacific Ocean (SPRFMO), 2,941 tonnes and 5,277 tonnes respectively of various fish species have been allocated.

## Catches

In 2017, 69,817 tonnes of various fish, mainly redfish, mackerel, blue ling, northern prawns, and other species, were caught by the nine fishing vessels of the distant water fleet.

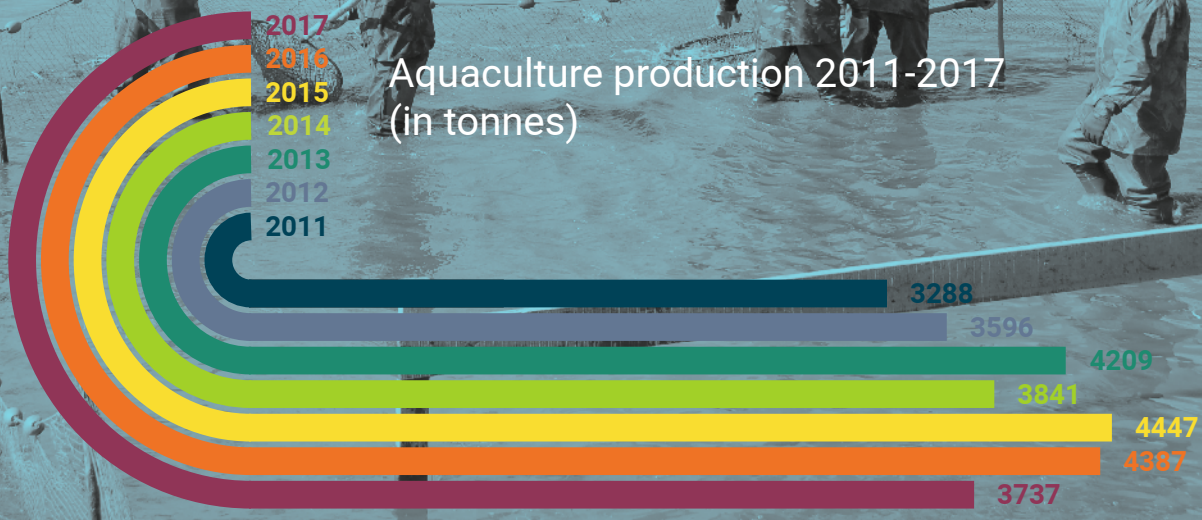
# Commercial fisheries in inland waters



The Curonian Lagoon is the main water body for inland commercial fishing. In 2017, 45 companies operating in the Curonian Lagoon caught 963 tonnes of fish, mainly bream, roach, pike perch and vimba. About 57 tonnes of European smelt were caught as the fish migrate between the Curonian Lagoon and the Nemunas river; in addition the fishery in polders and lakes resulted in about 100 tonnes of various species of fish.

## Aquaculture

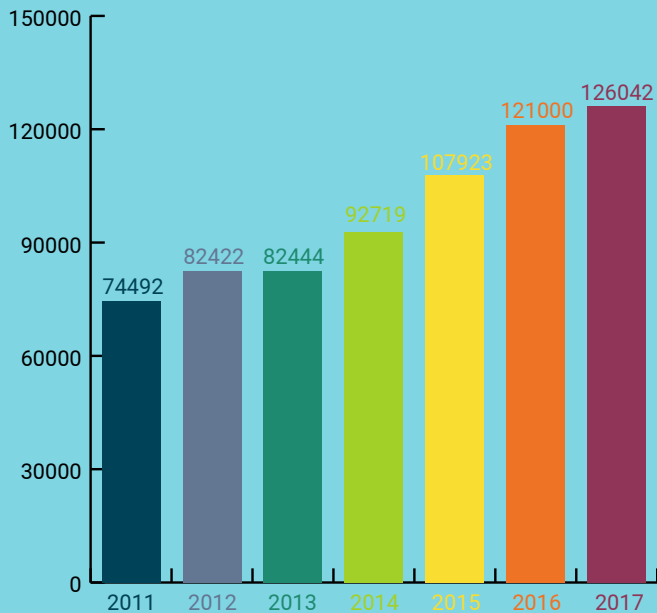
In 2017, Lithuanian companies produced and sold 3,737 tonnes (26% of this volume was organic) of various commercial fish valued at about 12 million euros. About 78% of the aquaculture production is carp farmed in ponds. Bighead carp and African catfish amount to 4% each, while sturgeon and rainbow trout amount to 3% each. The main trends in the aquaculture sector are the rapid development of recirculation aquaculture systems (RAS), and investments in fish processing by traditional pond farming companies.



# Processing

In 2017, 51 companies were processing fish and seafood mostly importing the raw material and exporting fish products. The capacities and volumes of the fish processing sector have been growing each year. In 2017, production was 126 thousand tonnes (a 4% increase over 2016) with a value of 626 million euros (a 12.7% increase compared with 2016). About 38% of the production is smoked or salted, 33.6% are preserved products and products from surimi, while 21% is frozen fish and fish fillets.

Production of Lithuanian fish processing industry  
2011 – 2017 (in tonnes)



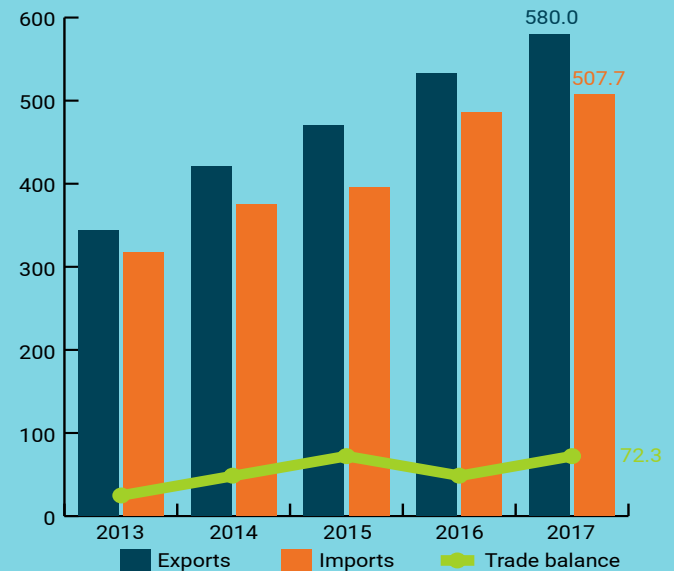
# Trade



More than two thirds of Lithuania's seafood production is either exported to other countries or landed in foreign ports. Exports amounted to 118 thousand tonnes of fish and seafood products valued at 580 million euros (an almost 9% increase compared to 2016), while imports reached 143.6 thousand tonnes valued at 508 million euros (4.6% more than in 2016). The main export destinations are Germany, Denmark, and the Baltic States. In 2017 the export-import balance at 72 million euro was 53% more than it was in 2016.

Domestic consumption is estimated at 20 kilos per person per year and, according to Eurobarometer, Lithuanians show a preference for wild as opposed to farmed seafood, which they purchase overwhelmingly in supermarkets rather than other sales channels.

Lithuania's foreign trade of fish and fisheries products 2013-2017 (in million euro)





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