

10.3% decrease in EU15 fishing vessels between 2000 and 2004

Statistics in focus

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Southern Member States dominate EU25 fleet.

In 2004 the EU25 fishing fleet comprised 92,422 registered fishing vessels (see Table 1). The eight southern Member States with marine fisheries dominate the EU25 fishing fleet with 75% of the total.

Greece, with 18,730 vessels, had the most vessels (20% of the total for EU25) followed by Italy (14,935, 16%), Spain (14,052, 15%) and Portugal (10,098, 11%). In fact these 4 countries together with France and the United Kingdom accounted for 79% of the EU25 fishing vessels.

In terms of the total tonnage of the EU25 fleet Spain with 491 thousand tons made by far the major contribution to the total (23%) followed by the UK (223 thousand tons, 12%), Italy (216 thousand tons, 10%), France (214 thousand tons, 10%) and the Netherlands (195 thousand tons, 9%). The southern Member States contribution to the total tonnage was only 55% (compared with 75% in numbers) indicating a greater proportion of smaller vessels in these countries.

The 7 new Member States having marine fisheries only accounted for 7% by number, 11% by tonnage and 7% by engine power of the EU25 totals. 53% by number, 85% by tonnage and 66% by engine power of the vessels of the new Member States were from countries bordering the Baltic Sea.

The EEA countries, Iceland and Norway, contribute another 10 thousand vessels to the total: this is 9% by number, 22% by tonnage and 20% by engine power of the combined EU25/EEA fishing fleet.

Significant decrease in the EU15 fleet since 2000

The number of vessels in the EU15 fishing fleet has decreased from 96 thousand in 2000 to 86 thousand in 2004 (-10.3%). The decreases were noted in all Member States with the largest being recorded for the Netherlands (-21.7%) followed by Sweden (-20.7%), Denmark (-17.4%) and Spain (-15.7%).

In terms of the tonnage of the EU15 fleet there was a general decrease of 6.9% overall between 2000 and 2004 with 5 Member States (the UK, Sweden, Finland, Greece and Denmark) recording decreases of over 10%. However one Member State, Ireland, recorded an increase of 27.2%. This was principally due to the addition of one very large vessel to the relatively small Irish fleet which contributes only 1.5% in number to the total EU25 fleet.

In terms of the total engine power there was a decrease of 9.0% for the EU15 fleet with 6 Member States (Denmark, Spain, Netherlands, Sweden, Greece and Italy) recording decreases in excess of 10%.

There was a very sharp decrease in the size of the Norwegian fleet in the period 2000 to 2004: 37.1% by number and 45.6% by engine power. By contrast the fleet of the other EEA country, Iceland, changed relatively little over the same period.



Small vessels dominate the EU25 fishing fleet.

81% of EU25 fishing vessels are under 12 meters in length (see Table 2). With the exception of Belgium and the Netherlands, whose fleets are dominated by larger vessels, all the Member States fleets have relatively

similar structures. Finland, Greece, Portugal, Cyprus and Malta have over 90% of their vessels under 12 meters in length – indicating the importance of coastal fisheries in those countries.

Country	Total number		Total tonnage (t)		Total power (kW)		% change 2000-2004		
	2000	2004	2000	2004	2000	2004	Number	Tonnage	Power
BE	127	123	23,054	23,289	63,502	66,670	-3.1	1.0	5.0
DK	4,139	3,417	107,555	96,440	393,373	337,565	-17.4	-10.3	-14.2
DE	2,315	2,163	71,162	66,307	167,744	162,125	-6.6	-6.8	-3.3
EL	19,962	18,730	107,314	95,654	623,184	555,888	-6.2	-10.9	-10.8
ES	16,678	14,052	521,532	490,946	1,332,831	1,150,720	-15.7	-5.9	-13.7
FR	8,181	7,883	223,902	214,124	1,108,229	1,064,802	-3.6	-4.4	-3.9
IE	1,615	1,428	68,248	86,801	211,882	213,056	-11.6	27.2	0.6
IT	17,369	14,935	232,455	215,741	1,394,347	1,245,335	-14.0	-7.2	-10.7
NL	1,101	862	212,466	195,307	522,306	463,315	-21.7	-8.1	-11.3
PT	10,692	10,089	117,418	112,978	397,598	391,006	-5.6	-3.8	-1.7
FI	3,663	3,394	20,646	18,058	197,634	179,385	-7.3	-12.5	-9.2
SE	2,016	1,598	51,446	44,412	244,696	217,023	-20.7	-13.7	-11.3
UK	7,643	7,035	265,046	222,957	974,895	899,806	-8.0	-15.9	-7.7
EU15	95,501	85,709	2,022,244	1,883,014	7,632,221	6,946,696	-10.3	-6.9	-9.0
EE	:	1,042	:	24,951	:	62,760	:	:	:
CY	:	897	:	12,021	:	52,272	:	:	:
LV	:	304	:	75,377	:	77,887	:	:	:
LT	:	942	:	42,101	:	72,535	:	:	:
MT	:	2,133	:	19,924	:	121,434	:	:	:
PL	:	1,247	:	45,480	:	146,785	:	:	:
SI	:	148	:	859	:	8,739	:	:	:
EU25	:	92,422	:	2,103,727	:	7,489,108	:	:	:
IS	1,876	1,828	180,203	191,267	528,711	545,190	-2.6	6.1	3.1
NO	13,014	8,183	392,281	394,846	2,443,145	1,328,945	-37.1	0.7	-45.6
EU25/EEA	:	102,433	:	2,689,840	:	9,363,243	:	:	:

Table 1: EU25/EEA fishing fleet: 2000 and 2004

The same picture emerges if the fleet is grouped into tonnage classes (see Table 3). In all countries except Belgium and the Netherlands vessels of less than 25 tons gross tonnage predominate: for the EU25 countries an average of 87.7% are in this category with

several countries having well over 90% of such vessels. As noted above, Belgium and the Netherlands differed in having only 2.4% and 34.9% of their vessels of less than 25 tons gross tonnage.

Country	Length classes (meters)											% less than 12 m
	Not known	0 5.99	-6 11.99	-12 17.99	-18 23.99	-24 29.99	-30 35.99	-36 44.99	-45 59.99	60 and over	Total	
BE	-	-	1	10	40	13	28	31	-	-	123	0.8
DK	-	1,163	1,429	485	165	44	54	53	17	7	3,417	75.9
DE	-	912	840	245	87	38	14	15	2	10	2,163	81.0
EL	-	7,077	10,482	638	300	184	37	6	6	-	18,730	93.7
ES	479	5,329	4,582	1,547	1,031	536	293	148	60	47	14,052	73.0
FR	-	1,113	5,141	847	490	175	52	24	15	26	7,883	79.3
IE	-	263	774	122	133	67	40	16	9	4	1,428	72.6
IT	-	3,204	6,963	3,066	1,106	455	93	35	11	2	14,935	68.1
NL	-	120	134	52	187	86	63	190	15	15	862	29.5
PT	-	5,358	3,821	459	191	153	68	10	11	18	10,089	91.0
FI	-	1,610	1,621	107	32	11	10	3	-	-	3,394	95.2
SE	-	198	1,062	191	64	23	27	27	6	-	1,598	78.8
UK	-	1,754	4,076	559	299	166	61	78	18	24	7,035	82.9
EU15	479	28,101	40,926	8,328	4,125	1,951	840	636	170	153	85,709	81
EE	-	446	436	63	3	78	4	2	5	5	1,042	85
CY	-	98	723	36	24	11	2	1	1	1	897	92
LV	-	122	86	12	4	52	5	3	4	16	304	68
LT	-	491	253	44	9	124	8	1	5	7	942	79
MT	-	1,299	722	71	26	10	1	1	-	3	2,133	95
PL	-	70	705	235	62	163	6	1	1	4	1,247	62
SI	-	68	59	19	-	2	-	-	-	-	148	86
EU25	479	30,695	43,910	8,808	4,253	2,391	866	645	186	189	92,422	81
IS	17	6	1,344	130	65	59	48	45	70	44	1,828	75
NO	-	1,018	5,508	962	295	132	41	66	80	81	8,183	80
EU25/EEA	496	31,719	50,762	9,900	4,613	2,582	955	756	336	314	102,433	81

Table 2: Number of EU25/EEA fishing vessels in 2004 by length classes.

Country	Tonnage classes (tons)												% under 25 tons
	Not known	0 - 24.99	25 - 49.99	50 - 99.99	100 - 149.99	150 - 249.99	250 - 499.99	500 - 999.99	1000 - 1999.99	2000 - 3999.99	4000 and over	Total	
BE	-	3	10	34	18	13	45	-	-	-	-	123	2.4
DK	-	2,863	198	149	42	64	75	18	7	1	-	3,417	83.8
DE	-	1,850	175	54	21	32	20	-	5	4	2	2,163	85.5
EL	-	18,104	253	205	103	45	15	5	-	-	-	18,730	96.7
ES	-	11,479	748	779	254	352	297	85	36	17	5	14,052	81.7
FR	-	6,614	331	391	266	189	48	16	18	10	-	7,883	83.9
IE	-	1,072	68	84	69	73	36	15	10	-	1	1,428	75.1
IT	-	12,827	914	751	244	166	26	6	-	1	-	14,935	85.9
NL	-	301	96	142	51	101	126	28	2	4	11	862	34.9
PT	-	9,525	184	129	53	129	46	8	13	2	-	10,089	94.4
FI	-	3,290	54	25	12	6	7	-	-	-	-	3,394	96.9
SE	-	1,350	78	60	33	30	36	11	-	-	-	1,598	84.5
UK	1	5,980	308	228	158	171	136	21	22	10	-	7,035	85.0
EU15	1	75,258	3,417	3,031	1,324	1,371	913	213	113	49	19	85,709	87.8
EE	-	936	10	39	39	5	2	5	6	-	-	1,042	89.8
CY	-	851	10	15	15	3	1	-	1	1	-	897	94.9
LV	-	217	3	24	32	5	2	3	2	12	4	304	71.4
LT	-	754	35	63	69	6	2	4	6	2	1	942	80.0
MT	-	2,077	29	15	3	5	1	-	-	3	-	2,133	97.4
PL	5	822	211	109	68	24	3	2	1	2	-	1,247	66.2
SI	-	144	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	148	97.3
EU25	6	81,059	3,717	3,296	1,550	1,421	924	227	129	69	24	92,422	87.7
NO	2,238	5,098	229	143	72	97	103	85	87	30	1	8,183	85.8
IS	5	1,448	65	52	21	49	77	49	52	9	1	1,828	79.4
EU25/EEA	2,249	87,605	4,011	3,491	1,643	1,567	1,104	361	268	108	26	102,433	87.4

Table 3: Number of EU25/EEA fishing vessels in 2004 by tonnage classes.

6% of EU25 fishing vessels more than 50 years old.

The median age of EU25 fishing vessels is 22.8 years (see Table 4) with, overall, the youngest fleets being found in two new Member States, Estonia and Malta (median ages 15.6 and 15.2 years respectively). 69% of the EU25 vessels are under 30 years of age but 6.5% of vessels are over 50 years old. Indeed 45 EU25 vessels, all but one from the EU15 countries, are more than 100 years old. Belgium is the only Member States with no vessels of more than 50 years old.

On average the fleet of the new Member States is appreciably younger than the fleet of the EU15 countries (18.5 years against 23.1 years median age). Then, of the new Member States the vessels from the

Baltic States are older than those from the Mediterranean countries (19.7 years against 17.3 years).

For the EU25 countries there is a difference in the age structure between those from the northern countries and those from the southern countries. The fleets from the north have a median age of 21.6 years while those from the south have a median age of 23.2 years.

The age structure of the fleets in the EEA countries, Iceland and Norway: a median age of 23.2 years, 74% of the vessels of less than 30 years old and 4% of more than 50 years of age.

Country	Age classes												Total	Median age (years)
	Not known	0 - 4.9	5 - 9.9	10 - 14.9	15 - 19.9	20 - 24.9	25 - 29.9	30 - 34.9	35 - 39.9	40 - 44.9	45 - 49.9	50 & over.		
BE	-	12	14	14	36	15	2	9	9	10	2	-	123	18.1
DK	-	152	115	308	437	488	668	466	242	200	131	210	3,417	26.8
DE	1,326	75	57	75	109	129	103	97	67	43	26	56	2,163	24.2
EL	-	1,222	1,923	1,810	2,837	3,595	2,454	1,629	1,283	709	545	723	18,730	22.1
ES	-	1,365	1,430	961	1,536	1,604	871	1,597	1,121	870	729	1,968	14,052	25.4
FR	-	922	901	985	1,640	1,251	828	628	345	150	104	129	7,883	18.3
IE	7	64	41	35	218	362	259	190	112	56	28	56	1,428	24.9
IT	3,107	494	909	924	1,687	1,689	1,439	1,169	1,330	843	469	875	14,935	25.6
NL	-	79	100	124	155	111	43	27	22	54	25	122	862	18.7
PT	-	1,141	1,150	478	636	1,404	1,983	637	700	588	472	900	10,089	25.7
FI	-	176	199	697	809	612	382	213	96	85	48	77	3,394	19.3
SE	5	56	67	110	241	309	319	118	81	89	51	152	1,598	25.2
UK	87	728	703	850	1,302	1,019	803	649	354	223	114	203	7,035	19.4
EU-15	4,532	6,486	7,609	7,371	11,643	12,588	10,154	7,429	5,762	3,920	2,744	5,471	85,709	23.1
EE	-	104	130	252	233	154	65	56	34	8	3	3	1,042	15.6
CY	-	73	131	133	149	96	154	76	38	28	13	6	897	18.8
LV	1	17	21	29	49	50	63	40	27	2	3	2	304	23.5
LT	-	37	81	236	166	145	102	115	50	6	3	1	942	18.7
MT	-	311	352	391	272	152	105	120	128	102	40	160	2,133	15.2
PL	-	58	86	175	165	131	148	145	98	82	86	73	1,247	25.2
SI	-	7	3	7	22	26	18	18	12	8	10	17	148	27.3
EU-25	4,533	7,093	8,413	8,594	12,699	13,342	10,809	7,999	6,149	4,156	2,902	5,733	92,422	22.8
IS	-	172	143	174	486	308	221	135	58	64	44	23	1,828	19.2
NO	27	521	470	423	1,269	1,702	1,520	858	456	344	210	383	8,183	24.1
EU/EEA	4,560	7,786	9,026	9,191	14,454	15,352	12,550	8,992	6,663	4,564	3,156	6,139	102,433	22.9

Table 4: Number of EU25/EEA fishing vessels in 2004 by age classes.

➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Eurostat maintains a Statistical Register of fishing vessels which, for the vessels of EU Member States, is up-dated annually using extracts from the file of registered EU fishing vessels maintained by the Directorate-General for Fisheries under the terms of Commission Regulation (EC) no 26/2004.

Records for the vessels of the Icelandic and Norwegian fishing fleets are obtained under bilateral agreements between Eurostat and the national authorities.

The data relate to the situation on 31 December of the reference year.

The length of the vessel is the length overall, the tonnage is the Gross Tonnage and the power is the power of the main engine as defined in Council Regulation (EEC) no. 2930/86.

The unit for measuring the tonnage of vessels has changed in recent years from the Gross Registered Tonnage (Oslo Convention) to the Gross Tonnage (London Convention). This change, involving the re-measuring of all the vessels, has been time consuming and although the process was largely complete in the period covered by this report (2000 – 2004), some care has to be taken in comparing the data between countries and within a country over time.

The codes for the countries used in the tabulations are as follows:

BE	Belgium
CY	Cyprus
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
IE	Ireland

IS	Iceland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
UK	United Kingdom

The EU15 countries are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

The EU25 Member States are the EU15 countries plus Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

The EEA countries are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway

For the purposes of this report

- the northern EU-25 countries are: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The southern countries are: Cyprus, Greece, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain.
- the Baltic countries of the new Member States are: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The Mediterranean countries are: Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia.

Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Slovak Republic have no marine fishing fleets.

For France, the data include vessels from the French Overseas Departments.

Further information:

Reference publications

Title [Pocketbook of Fishery Statistics: 2004 edition \(Data 1990-2003\)](#)
Catalogue No KS-DW-04-001-EN-C
Price EUR 10

Databases

[EUROSTAT Website/Agriculture, forestry and fisheries/Fisheries/Fishing fleet](#)

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