

AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS OF UKRAINE IN THE CONDITIONS OF WAR AND ONE-SIDED SANCTIONS IMPOSED BY NEIGHBOURING EU COUNTRIES

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Abstract. The article outlines the main problems of agricultural exports in the context of the blockade of seaports, the breakdown of existing supply chains, and a significant increase in logistics costs due to the shutdown of road checkpoints. It also identifies the main trends in foreign trade in agricultural products, in particularly grain crops. The author examines legislative changes that have affected the procedure for export-import operations involving domestic business entities. In chronological order, the institutional and measures taken by the European Union and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine aimed at improving the efficiency of international road transport of agricultural products are described. In order to assess the effectiveness of the existing road checkpoints, it is first necessary to consider both the planned and actual throughput capacity in the context of martial law conditions. In this respect, an analysis of the requirements set by Poland, Slovakia and Hungary reveals a certain inconsistency with the legislative directives of the European Parliament on exports from Ukraine. It may therefore be concluded that these requirements are primarily intended to prevent the entry of Ukrainian agricultural products into their territory, rather than as a genuine condition for their export. It also suggests that it might be beneficial to consider ways of strengthening internal veterinary and phytosanitary control measures. This is particularly relevant in light of the fact that in 2022 the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine decided to cancel state supervision measures under martial law, including those relating to agricultural products. This decision was taken against the background of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation, which caused significant losses to agricultural enterprises. It is therefore important to ensure that food security is maintained not only in Ukraine but also in countries exporting domestic agricultural products. The paper suggests that it might be beneficial to consider introducing a European system of rapid response to reports of direct or indirect risks to human health posed by food or animal feed. Such a system could potentially protect consumers from substandard products, while also enabling authorities to remove spoiled products from the market in a short time frame.

Keywords: state regulation; state support; agricultural exports; Ukraine; neighboring countries, wartime; one-sided sanctions; foreign trade; customs policy.

JEL Classification: F14, F36, Q17

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Introduction. Our country's economy is suffering massive losses as a result of the ongoing war that Russia instigated. Properly at this point it remains extremely impossible to accurately measure the damage since the aggression is still ongoing and there are no accurate forecasts regarding its end. Until February 24, 2022, Ukraine was one of the major corn and grain exporters. However, at this stage, the domestic food market is in a state of crisis. The government is attempting to respond promptly to the aforementioned obstacles by implementing suitable procedures such as streamlining certain export activities while restricting the export of a number of commodities beyond Ukraine or imposing restrictions. Despite the European Union (EU) having expressed its commitment to support Ukraine during times of crisis, certain nations whose borders were initially crucial transportation hubs for Ukrainian agricultural products and played an essential part in maintaining relative economic stability in 2022, have been actively obstructing customs checkpoints with our country since mid-2023.

These actions are attributed to the inability of local manufacturers to compete with Ukrainian crops. While the demands put forward by Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary regarding Ukraine are mainly populist in nature, a certain inconsistency of legislation between Ukraine and the European Union in the field of food control creates a loophole that allows each country to demand additional veterinary and phytosanitary control at its own discretion. Which significantly delays the transportation of domestic agricultural products to the EU and costs Ukraine a lot of money, which could be used to support the army and social needs.

Whereas Ukraine has made considerable progress in adopting European standards to regulate the quality of agricultural products, the extensive invasion by Russia and the subsequent environmental catastrophes highlight the urgency to enhance the domestic system by implementing a rapid notification model for potential risks within the food market, similar to that used by all EU member states. Such developments will bring our country one step closer to complete integration into the European Union and will also diminish the significance of appeals made by representatives of Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary regarding the necessity to restrict the import of Ukrainian agricultural products due to their alleged hazards.

Literature Review. The disruption caused by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has substantially impacted the national and international trade flows, especially concerning the agricultural sector. According to the European Business Association (2022), the agreement on the "transport visa-free regime" was a significant step toward integrating Ukraine into the EU's economic infrastructure by eliminating the need for bilateral permits and simplifying cross-border logistics for Ukrainian carriers. Similarly, the European Council (2024) emphasized the effectiveness of the "Solidarity Lanes" initiative, which enabled the export of over 58 million tons of Ukrainian agricultural products and facilitated new infrastructure investments.

The regulatory framework for customs and trade cooperation was further strengthened through Ukraine's accession to the Convention on Common Transit Procedures. Regulation (EU) 2022/870, adopted by the European Parliament and the

Council, allowed Ukraine to align with EU standards for customs declarations and data sharing, enabling more transparent and efficient border procedures.

Moreover, empirical data highlight how agro-industrial exports have overtaken metallurgy in generating foreign currency inflows, with countries like Turkey and China becoming key trading partners (Forbes Ukraine, 2023; Gvozdyova & Kornilyuk, 2023). Taran (2023) noted the crucial role of Eastern European neighbors such as Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia in facilitating Ukrainian exports, while also observing growing tensions due to internal political and economic pressures in those countries.

According to the State Customs Service of Ukraine (2024), import bans and blockades by Eastern European farmers caused financial losses exceeding €1.5 million per month, reflecting the economic cost of non-tariff barriers and delays at customs checkpoints. The online reservation system “eQueue” (2024) illustrated the magnitude of these obstructions, with some customs points handling traffic far below their designed capacities.

Calls for the reinstatement of phytosanitary controls, permit-based systems, and dedicated lanes for empty trucks indicate how technical barriers are being used as informal trade restrictions. Politico (2023) reports that Polish and Hungarian farmers sought to protect their markets by demanding more stringent control measures at the borders. Such developments underline the fragile nature of EU-Ukraine trade dynamics, particularly in times of geopolitical upheaval.

Ukraine’s need to harmonize its food safety systems with those of the EU has become urgent. Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 and Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 lay the foundation for EU food safety practices, emphasizing end-to-end responsibility and the role of rapid alert systems such as RASFF. These mechanisms are essential for early detection of contamination risks and for ensuring consumer protection across all EU member states (European Parliament & Council, 2002, 2004).

Finally, Ukraine’s strategic efforts to adopt these frameworks—especially through Order No. 303 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (2022)—show progress toward full regulatory compliance, which is key for successful EU accession and ensuring stable agri-food trade.

Aims. This study aims to analyze the impact of Russia's full-scale invasion on Ukraine's agricultural exports, focusing on the disruption of trade flows to the European Union and the effectiveness of regulatory harmonization in overcoming these challenges. Intermediate objectives include: (1) identifying the impact of import restrictions imposed by Eastern European countries, (2) assessing the role of EU-Ukraine bilateral agreements and transit liberalization mechanisms, and (3) evaluating the potential of aligning Ukraine’s food safety system with EU standards to ensure uninterrupted agricultural trade.

Methodology. The research employs a qualitative-descriptive approach, incorporating comparative legal analysis and economic content analysis. Empirical data are drawn from open statistical sources such as the State Customs Service of Ukraine and the eQueue platform, alongside official documents and press releases from EU institutions. The study also involves document analysis of EU regulations (e.g.,

Regulation (EC) No 852/2004, Regulation (EU) 2022/870) and policy review methods to trace the evolution of EU-Ukraine trade and customs relations under wartime conditions. The theoretical framework includes the concept of regulatory convergence in trade integration, the theory of non-tariff barriers in international trade, and the food chain hygiene model as embedded in EU law. The study references previous academic and institutional work addressing the RASFF system (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed) as a means of ensuring sanitary and phytosanitary compatibility across member states. Commonly known statistical procedures are employed to summarize and visualize trade flows and border delays.

Empirical results. The COVID-19 outbreak posed an extraordinary challenge to domestic and foreign economic activity just a few years ago, but the most severe disruption to the financial system was Russia's full-scale invasion. Devastating examinations of the national economy can be indicated in two distinct aspects: as a result of hostilities, infrastructure, production, and even the entire sphere of economy is destroyed, and the end of the rapid reduction of business activity, foreign investments, the stability of the restoration of profitability, and the impossibility of socioeconomic development. It is crucial to underscore that the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has acquired an international dimension, with significant repercussions for the dynamics and profitability of global commerce. The Russian invasion in Ukraine broke established supply chains and logistical connections, triggering an extreme crisis in agricultural and other commodity exports; at the same time, imports are also in obstacles, as seen by the seasonal gasoline issue. As a consequence of the Russian port blockade, Ukrainian exports of crops by sea were not possible until 1 August.

In response to the challenging circumstances presented by the conflict in Ukraine, the European Union has taken a series of decisions aimed at unblocking and expanding the volume of transportation of Ukrainian products within the international trade framework, with a particular focus on rail, road, and inland waterway routes:

1. Agreement on the liberalization of transport from Ukraine, the so-called "transport visa-free regime". According to the inked agreement, Ukrainian carriers obtained an array of benefits that facilitate the crossing of borders with EU nations, including (European Business Association, Press release as of 30/06/2022):

- permits for bilateral and transit shipping to European Union countries have been canceled.
- suspension of the export of Ukrainian products through the customs checkpoints of trucks is excluded.
- driver's licenses issued by Ukraine are exempt from the requirement to have an international driving permit.

2. "Paths of Solidarity" is a program that provides for the implementation of initiatives that enhance transport connections between European Union countries and Ukraine, including the possibility of extending the trans-European transport network along with constructing the Euro railways. The announced plan made it feasible to export 58 million tons of agricultural goods from Ukraine between March 2022 and January 2024 (European Council of European Union, 2024.).

3. The Convention on the Joint Transit method, also referred to as the "customs

visa-free" approach, enables for worldwide transportation of products with other participating countries utilizing one transit document. The procedure for carrying stuff from the location of loading to the point of discharging was as straightforward as possible, and the process was described as "1 transport - 1 declaration - 1 guarantee". Ukrainian customs authorities have gained access to an entire database of customs statistics from the New Computerized Transit System of the countries participating in the Convention (origin of the goods, its characteristics and price, details of the sender and recipient). Membership in the Agreement enhances the functioning of Ukrainian customs by preventing corruption and decreasing risks (Regulation (EU) 2022/870 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 2022). Additionally, the following restrictions were temporarily suspended: manufacturing duties; a system of input prices for vegetables and fruits; tariff quotas for agricultural products; anti-dumping duties on imports of goods originating in Ukraine.

Surge in agro-industrial exports transforms Ukraine's trade landscape amid geopolitical shifts. At the present time, the export volume of commodities from the agro-industrial complex surpasses that of the metallurgical sector by a factor of five (Figure 1).

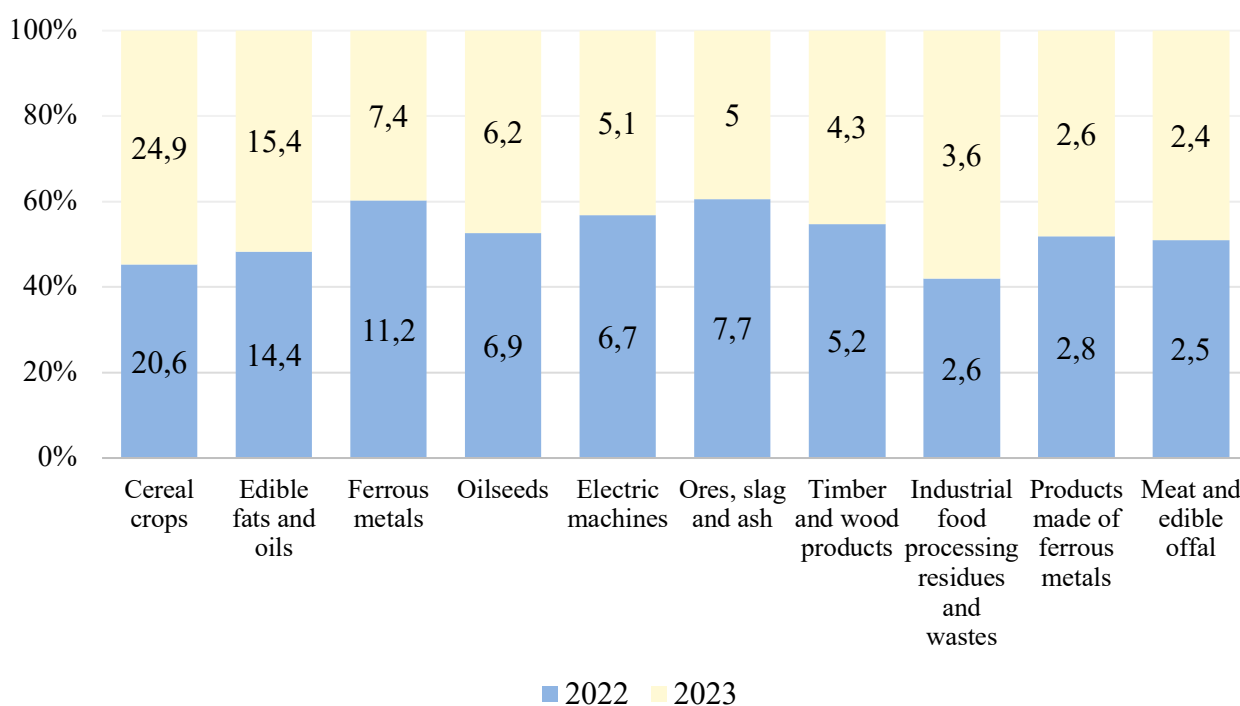


Figure 1. Export volumes of Ukraine for the period 2022 - 2023, %

Source: systemized by the authors

However, for several decades, these industries provided Ukraine with an equivalent amount of foreign exchange earnings. The comparable demand for domestic products of the agro-industrial complex can be attributed to its price and quality advantage over rivals (Forbes Ukraine, 2023).

The composition of the key nations that purchase Ukrainian commodities has undergone changes in 2022, with Russia and Belarus losing their important positions. This shift is occurring due to geopolitical rebalancing and the implementation of

sanctions against countries that support terrorism. Out of all the nations, Turkey and China ranked as the primary purchasers of Ukrainian agro-products. Figure 2 displays the top 10 nations that Ukrainian agricultural goods shipped to (Gvozdyova, O., Kornilyuk, R., 2023).

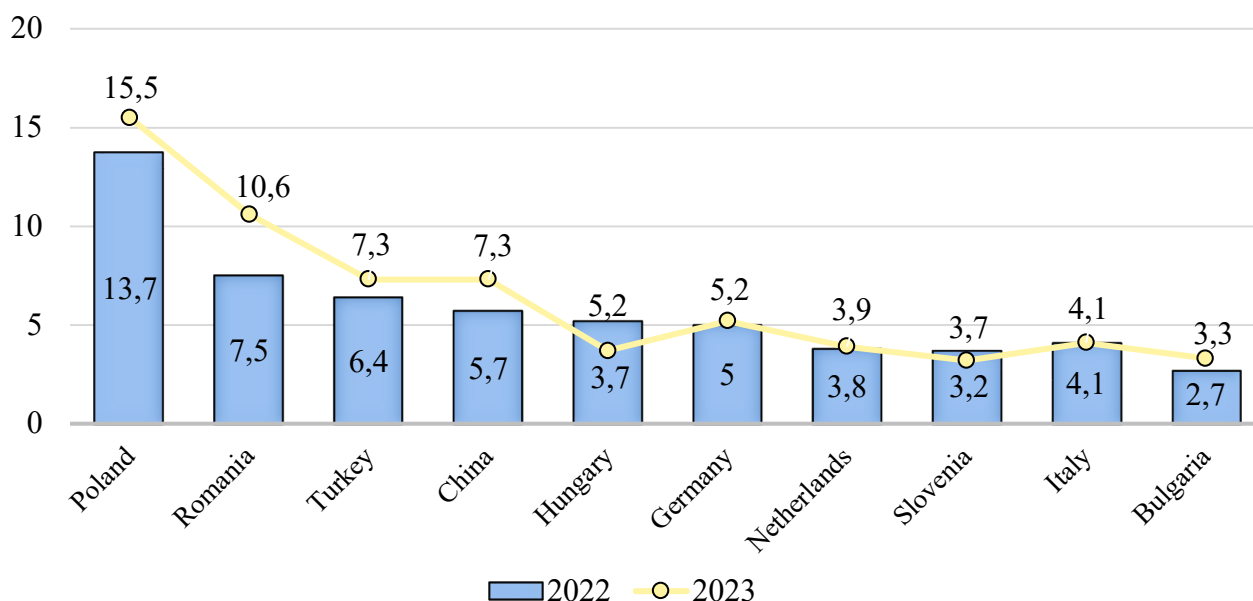


Figure 2. The largest exporters of Ukrainian agricultural products in 2022 - 2023, %

Source: systemized by the authors

Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Bulgaria, five adjacent Eastern European nations, have paved the way in the "roads of solidarity" initiative. The nations have emerged as the primary customers for Ukrainian commodities exported to the European Union (Fig. 2). Their combined portion in Ukrainian exports of goods to the EU rose from 32% in 2021 to 56% in 2022, but slightly decreased to 48% in 2023. Ukrainian exports of goods to these nations reached 15.7 billion US dollars in 2022 and 14.4 billion US dollars in 2023, with a notable surge in agricultural products. In 2023, the shipment value of agricultural items to the five bordering countries had a significant increase of 5,2 times, reaching an all-time high of 7.2 billion US dollars. Out of this total, 2.4 billion US dollars were generated from grains, while 1.9 billion US dollars came from oil crops. In 2022 and 2023, five Eastern European nations accounted for over 30% of Ukraine's agricultural produce exports to the EU. These exports primarily consisted of wheat, corn, rapeseed, and sunflower seeds. In contrast, in 2021, these countries only took 1% of Ukraine's agricultural commodities exports (Taran, S., 2023).

Eastern European import bans deepen Ukraine's economic crisis. Similar trends did not go unnoticed by farmers from these countries. As a result of May 2023, large-scale protests began with a call to the European Commission to ban the import of agricultural products from Ukraine to Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Romania, which were partially and temporarily satisfied. With legislative limitations that increase the availability of agricultural goods to the European Union, local

inhabitants possess the ability to impede customs inspections without causing any disruption. This is a substantial setback to Ukraine's economy, which is currently debilitated as a result of full-blown military conflict with Russia.

Financial losses per truck, according to the customs service, estimated around 1.5 million euros per month (State Customs Service of Ukraine, 2024). The calculation of losses comprised gasoline expenses, depreciation, remuneration for the driver, and penalties for tardiness in delivering to clients. Prior to the implementation of import restrictions, the customs at the border states handled an average of 80 trucks per day. However, following the temporary closure of checkpoints by farmers from Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania in the summer of 2023, this number decreased to 150 trucks per day (Online reservation system for a place in the queue for crossing the border for international cargo carriers «eQueue», 2024). This is significantly below the anticipated bandwidth of the customs checkpoints (Table 1).

Table 1. Capacity and loading capacity at cargo customs checkpoints with EC countries

Check point	Customs	Bandwidth	Vehicle Queue
Republic of Poland			
Yagodin – Dorogusk	Volyn Customs Office	1000	6431
Ustilug – Zosyn (empty trucks)	Volyn Customs Office	500	480
Rava Ruska – Khrebenne	Lviv Customs Office	250	516
Krakovets – Korczowa	Lviv Customs Office	500	918
Medyka – Sheginie	Lviv Customs Office	300	180
Nižankovychy – Malhovice	Lviv Customs Office	150	225
Slovak Republic			
Uzhgorod – Vyshnye Nemetske	Transcarpathian Customs Office	500	2329
Republic of Hungary			
Chop (Tysa) – Zahon	Transcarpathian Customs Office	500	4134
Republic of Romania			
Dyakovo – Halmeu	Transcarpathian Customs Office	300	1309
Porubne – Siret	Chernivtsi Customs Office	1000	3059
Orlivka – Isakcha	Odesa Customs Office	500	1520

Source: systemized by the authors

Although the embargo on importing agricultural products was revoked on September 16, 2023, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary persisted in their blockade. As a result, long queues stretching for kilometers formed at the checkpoints with this group of nations. While Romania currently doesn't hinder its borders with Ukraine, the

closure of inspection points with other countries forces carriers to undergo control at its border connections, further prolonging existing drawn-out lines. On June 01, 2024, the eQueue interactive map data showed the presence of record-breaking anti-indicators: “Yagodin – Dorogusk” - 6431, “Chop (Tysa) – Zahon” - 4134, “Porubne – Siret” - 3059, “Uzhgorod - Vyshnye Nemetske” - 2329, “Krakowec – Korchova” - 918, Rava “Ruska – Khrebenne” - 516 trucks are waiting for their turn (Fig. 3).

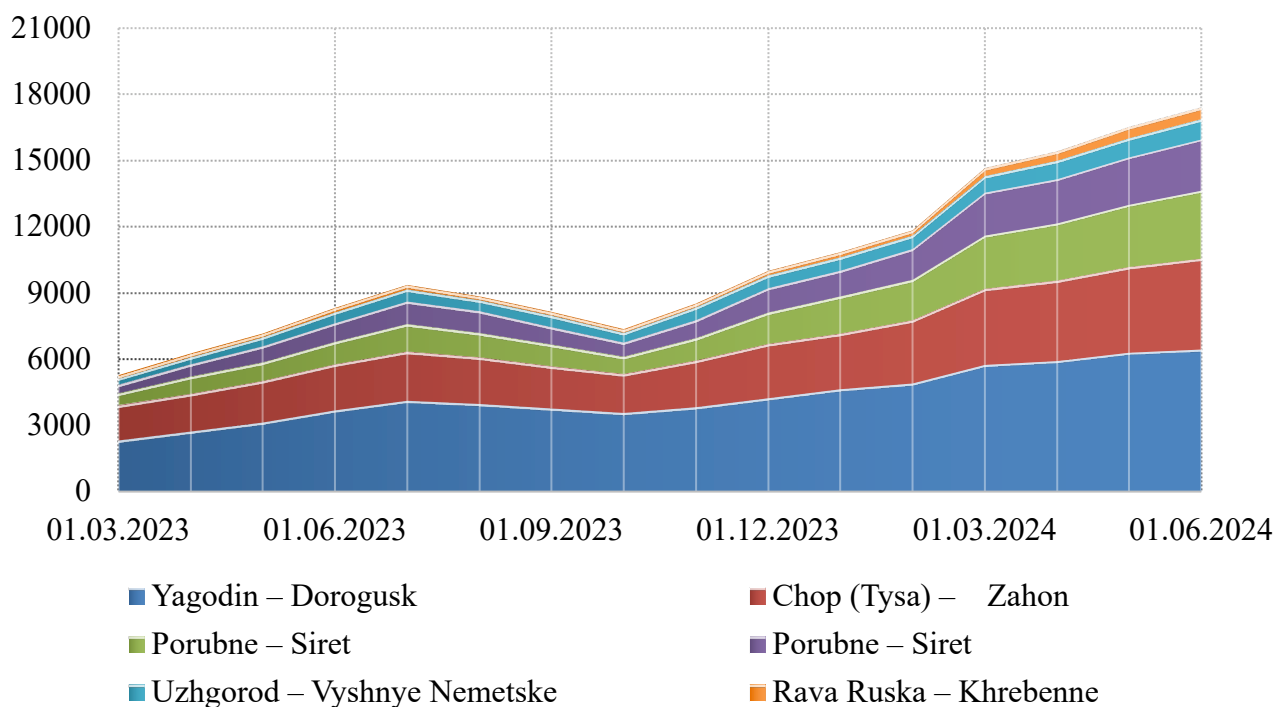


Figure 3. Quantity of trucks waiting in line for customs inspection

Source: systemized by the authors

Protests over Ukrainian goods prompt demands for transport restrictions and strain EU trade relations. In order to address the issue of obstructing the movement of Ukrainian vehicles conveying goods that are being used as a tool of unfair or inadequate competition against domestic enterprises, it is imperative to carefully analyze the concerns raised by the demonstrators, particularly individuals from Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary. The current main requirements include (Politico, Press release as of 16/09/2023):

1. Reinstating permit documents for Ukrainian carriers, specifically revoking the "transport visa-free" agreement for Ukraine.
2. Allowing empty trucks from Ukraine to return in a separate lane without waiting in line.
3. Ensuring round-the-clock phytosanitary and veterinary control.

As for the first requirement, it cannot be canceled unilaterally, since the decision was made collegially by all EU members. The protestors' second request for the establishment of a dedicated lane for empty truck returns was initially met on a temporary basis. Nevertheless, the situation subsequently worsened due to the dissatisfaction expressed by drivers of commercial cargo trucks in the regular queue.

This occurred since humanitarian aid trucks underwent a quicker inspection process compared to commercial cargo at the entrance to Ukraine. Furthermore, a distinct lane was allocated for these vehicles in the return journey, enabling them to undertake multiple journeys. Concurrently, Ukrainian containers conveying agricultural commodities for export were compelled to queue.

Ukrainian operators generally concur with the third demand of the European protesters, as the implementation of the "transport visa-free" agreement has resulted in a noticeable deceleration in the operations of the Polish phytosanitary and veterinary services. As the export of agricultural products, specifically grain, from Ukraine through neighboring countries by roadway started to rise, the prices for purchasing crops from local producers began to decline and elevators became overwhelmed with grain in Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary. The price of rapeseed has seen a significant decline, with a reduction of over 150%. It is worth noting that a considerable proportion of the agricultural products that undergo phytosanitary checks are rapeseed being transported from Ukraine to other nations for biofuel generation.

The Polish phytosanitary and veterinary services, along with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, were the pioneers among our neighboring countries in recognizing the advantages of reducing the efficiency of customs checkpoints. Poland failed to enforce legal limitations on Ukraine due to the European Union's removal of all trade restrictions. However, delays for agricultural imports at the border benefited Polish farmers by shielding them from competition with Ukrainian producers. Due to these factors, Polish farmers subsequently and repeatedly obstructed automobile checks. Additionally, it is important to mention that the Polish side is not adhering to one of the terms in the agreement regarding "visa-free transportation," which nullifies the suspension of exporting Ukrainian agricultural products through customs checkpoints. Subsequently, upon recognizing their exemption from punishment, individuals from Hungary and Slovakia actively participated in these demonstrations, thereby contributing to comparable issues.

Harmonization of the Ukraine-EU Agricultural Regulations to Addressing Wartime Challenges and lower a tension with Eastern Europe. Establishing a harmonized regulatory framework for the agricultural sector in Ukraine and the EU has the potential to streamline sanitary, phytosanitary, and veterinary laws. These changes could lead to simplified inspections and faster customs clearance procedures. Especially since, as a consequence of the Russian Federation's armed aggression, 2,653 agricultural entities experienced severe damages: cropping land decreased by 1.9 million hectares, perennial plantations by 9,000 hectares, and up to 1 million hectares of territory must be examined for the presence of explosive objects. In such circumstances, the main emphasis is on ensuring the most optimal utilization of industrial capacity and agrarian resource potential in order minimize wartime losses and prevent the collapse of the current system of product safety. Furthermore, since March 2022 stipulates the prospect of performing only unscheduled monitoring procedures if it detects a threat that has significant adverse effects on an individual's freedoms, legitimate interests, life and health, protection of the natural environment

and ensuring the security of the state in order to fulfill Ukraine's international obligations (Order No 303 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2022).

The food and feed safeguarding system, which has been operating in EU nations for an extended period of time, is recognized as one of the strongest in the world, and as a result, European consumers are best protected against poor-quality and hazardous products. The primary necessity for attaining such an outcome is unconditional conformity with the requirements of harmonized product safety and quality standards, or, in the absence of such standards, national regulatory documents or international or European ones. In this regard, we will consider such a concept known as food chain sanitation, which in the most general sense, applies to the entire system, including the initial manufacturing process. These regulations served as the foundation for the formation of the current legislative framework for assuring efficient oversight in the processing of food items and livestock feed, leading to a uniform and transparent food security framework across the food chain.

On April 29, 2004, the European Parliament and the Council adopted EU Regulation No 853/2004, which provides general food hygiene requirements for food sector firms (Regulation (EC) No 853, 2004). More specifically, Art. 1 defines its application and establishes that this Regulation defines general rules regarding measures taken by food-related enterprises in the field of food hygiene, subject to the following rules: responsibility for the safety of food products rests with the manufacturer; safety must be ensured throughout the entire chain of food production, beginning with the stage of primary production, and so on. The defined Directive applies to all stages of food production, processing, distribution, and export.

In the conditions of increased man-made load on the environment, increased emissions of toxic substances and even deliberate pollution, the occurrence of local epidemics and diseases of animals and plants, as well as their transfer to other territories, has become more frequent. A particularly powerful blow was delivered to the population living in the area of influence of the Kakhovskaya HPP and the surrounding natural environment, connected with the destruction of the dam and the release of a huge mass of fresh water into the Black Sea. This has greatly expanded the range of sources of danger for local residents, the environment, food raw materials and food products, and therefore requires an assessment of the scale of risk and the depth of their impact on people, animals, plants and the natural environment. Under such circumstances, it is essential to significantly increase the protection of consumer rights and strengthen their confidence in the security of the food supply, including honest trade in items, while also protecting livestock welfare, plant health, and the environment. It is evident that the capacity to oversee any issues pertaining to food security hinges on the receipt of notifications transmitted via the rapid alert system.

Regulation 178/2002 establishes a network (Article 50) of EU member states, the European Commission, and the European Food Safety Authority to provide a quick response mechanism for notifications of direct or indirect risks to human health posed by food items or animal feed. Rapid Alert Systems are notification systems that allow national authorities to warn one another of unsafe items so that they can take immediate action at the national level. If required, the European Commission can develop

measures for the European level in order to remove dangerous products from the market. The main warning procedures are RAPEX (Rapid Alert System for non-food products posing a serious risk) and RASFF (the European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed) - European system of rapid notification of food and feed contamination (food and animal feed) (Regulation (EC) No 178, 2002).

It should be emphasized that RASFF was designed as a network to facilitate the swift exchange of information regarding potential threats within the context of the EU food market. This network comprises 27 European Community member states, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway, as well as the European Commission and the European Food Safety Authority. The general operating premise of RASFF is as follows: when information regarding potential risks to human well-being stemming from the consumption of food or agricultural products becomes available, the European Commission is quickly alerted through the Rapid Alert System. The Commission has to promptly transmit the data to other participants in the network. Additionally, there is also an input provision, which requires the state that received the information to inform the board of any measures it has taken (Regulation (EC) No 178, 2002).

Discussion. The findings of this study confirm that the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has led to a structural transformation in Ukraine's foreign trade, especially in the agro-industrial sector. The prioritization of grain and oilseed exports over traditional metallurgical goods is consistent with earlier analyses by national and international research bodies, such as the Ukrainian Agribusiness Club and the OECD, which highlighted the shift in Ukraine's export composition following 2022. The evidence presented in this study regarding the surge of agricultural exports through EU solidarity routes (rail, road, inland waterways) aligns with the EU's own assessments of the Solidarity Lanes program (European Council, 2024). This finding is further supported by the work of Gvozdyova and Kornilyuk (2023), who confirmed the growing role of Eastern European countries—particularly Poland and Romania—as key entry points for Ukrainian agro-exports to the EU.

However, the study reveals that political and economic populism in countries such as Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary has led to non-tariff barriers in the form of unilateral import bans and customs blockades, despite formal EU liberalization commitments. These actions contradict the principles of the EU Single Market and have been critically assessed by other researchers (e.g., Taran, 2023) as a manifestation of internal fragmentation within the EU in response to external shocks.

A particularly important contribution of this study is the identification of gaps in regulatory alignment between Ukraine and the EU in terms of food safety and phytosanitary control. Although Ukraine has taken important steps to harmonize with EU legislation (e.g., via accession to the Common Transit Convention and partial alignment with Regulation (EC) No 852/2004), practical implementation remains limited. Previous comparative research in Eastern Partnership countries (e.g., Moldova and Georgia) shows that full alignment with EU food safety systems such as RASFF significantly reduces trade frictions, a conclusion that this study supports in the Ukrainian context.

Moreover, while the European Commission has emphasized the strategic necessity of integrating Ukraine into EU food systems, the practical effectiveness of such integration is undermined by domestic implementation capacity and continued administrative obstacles at the border. The inconsistency between declared liberalization and actual border practices (e.g., the use of phytosanitary inspections as de facto barriers) highlights a tension that future EU-Ukraine relations must resolve. This study also advances earlier discourse on trade resilience under geopolitical stress. By combining legal, policy, and empirical economic analysis, the paper contributes to understanding how harmonized regulatory frameworks—not merely trade facilitation agreements—are essential for mitigating wartime disruptions and preserving stable export channels.

Conclusions. The ongoing conflict with the Russian Federation causes continuous devastation of Ukraine's transportation and energy infrastructure, as well as the barring of marine connection, necessitating the methodical implementation of measures aimed at mitigating the adverse repercussions. The European Union's decision to lift all taxes, quotas, and fees on Ukrainian exports was critical in preserving the country's economy. This helped to increase Ukrainian agricultural exports to EU nations, particularly grain crops. Simultaneously, the demand for Ukrainian agricultural goods and the incapacity of certain European farmers to compete in terms of price and quality resulted in the closure of borders with Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary. This was done under the pretense of non-adherence to European Union safety regulations, with the objective of prohibiting the entry of trucks carrying Ukrainian agricultural products into European territory.

A full-fledged adaptation by Ukraine of the food safety control standards of the European Union, in particular the system of rapid notification of food and feed contamination, which directly informs the authorized state institutions of all 27 participating countries about the safety of products exported from a certain country, can be a solution to the problem of agricultural product leakage. It is well-known that Ukraine became a candidate for EU admission in June 2022 and is currently carrying out the required preliminary operations in order to create circumstances for our nation to become a full member of the EU. As a result, the country's chances of joining the European network in the future increase, but only if it actively participates in the development of an effective system for ensuring the quality and safety of agricultural products at all levels of state administration and directly at agribusiness enterprises in order to comply with the European Commonwealth's requirements and standards.

Author contributions. The authors contributed equally.

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