"In the first quarter of 2024, imports from Ukraine were lower than in the same quarter of 2023 while exports to the Ukraine were higher."

"Between the second quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024, compared with one year earlier, the shares for imports from Ukraine of sunflower oil, maize, soya bean oil, iron and steel, and rape or colza seeds increased while the share for wood decreased."

This article shows how the trade between the European Union (EU) and Ukraine was disrupted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. More general information on trade with Ukraine is available in this excel file. This article is part of an online publication providing recent statistics on international trade in goods, covering information on the EU's main partners, main goods traded, specific characteristics of trade as well as background information.

**Latest developments**

In the first quarter of 2024, imports from Ukraine (€ 6.0 billion) were lower than in the same quarter in 2023 (€ 6.5 billion) while exports increased slightly from € 9.6 billion to € 9.7 billion (Figure 1) in this period. Imports peaked in the second quarter of 2022, while exports peaked in the fourth quarter of 2023. This caused the EU trade surplus with Ukraine to peak in the fourth quarter of 2023 at € 4.7 billion.
When looking at the changes in Ukraine's shares in extra-EU trade, there was little variation (Figure 2). Import shares fluctuated between 0.8 % and 1.1 % while export shares fluctuated between 1.1 % and 1.3 %.
Key product groups imported by the EU from Ukraine

This section focuses on six products that were selected because of their share in total extra-EU imports or their absolute value. Because several of these products have a strong seasonal component, they can only be analysed meaningfully over 12-month periods.

The EU has adopted a regulation allowing for temporary full trade liberalisation and the suspension of trade defence measures on 4 June 2022, resulting in a sharp increase in EU imports from Ukraine for several agricultural products. This caused distortions in markets for these products in countries neighbouring Ukraine, leading to the imposition of temporary restrictive measures on a series of Ukrainian foodstuff exports on 2 May 2023. These measures ended on 15 September 2023 while at the same time Ukraine was to put in place effective measures to control the export of these products\(^1\). It is important to keep these measures in mind when reading this article.

Figure 3 illustrates the share of six selected products in three consecutive 12-month periods. Between the second quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024, compared with one year earlier, the shares for imports from Ukraine of sunflower oil, maize, soya bean oil, iron and steel, and rape or colza seeds increased while the share for wood decreased.

![Ukraine's share in EU imports for selected products](https://example.com/figure3.png)

**Figure 3: Ukraine’s share in EU imports for selected products (%) Source: Eurostat (ds-045409)**

In the following sections, the evolution of EU imports for all six products is presented in terms of value, volume and unit value. In addition, the shares in imports by partner are shown for three consecutive 12-month periods.

EU imports of sunflower oil

In the first quarter of 2024, EU imports of sunflower oil from Ukraine, measured in volume, were 121 percentage points (pp) above the level of the first quarter of 2021. Since unit prices had dropped their value increased by 91 pp. EU imports of sunflower oil follow the same monthly pattern, in terms of trade value and volume, which is strongly connected to their production period (Figure 4). However, Russia’s invasion led to a sharp increase in unit values in the second quarter of 2022. In the following quarters, unit values went down progressively.

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\(^1\) Measures to avoid surge in imports of grain to the EU
Between the second quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024, compared with the same period two years earlier, Ukraine’s share in the extra-EU imports of sunflower oil increased from 83 % to 91 %.

EU imports of maize

In the first quarter of 2024, EU imports of maize from Ukraine, measured in volume, were 57 pp below the level of the first quarter of 2021 (Figure 6). Since unit prices had increased by 12 pp their value increased by 76 pp. Similarly to sunflower oil, the infra-annual developments of EU imports of maize are visible in the value and volume index, with imports peaking in the first quarter of 2023. The unit values of maize peaked in the fourth quarter of 2022. Since then unit values gradually decreased.
Between the second quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024, compared with the same period two years earlier, Ukraine’s share in the extra-EU imports of maize increased from 54% to 63% (Figure 7). Throughout this period, Brazil was the second largest partner for maize imports.

![Main partners for extra-EU imports of maize](image)

Figure 7: Main partners for extra-EU imports of maize (%) Source: Eurostat (ds-045409)

EU imports of rape/colza seeds

In the first quarter of 2024, EU imports of rape or colza seeds from Ukraine, measured in value and volume, were much higher than in the first quarter of 2021 (Figure 8). Unit prices had dropped by 8 pp in this period. EU imports of rape/colza seeds from the Ukraine have a strong seasonal component.

![EU imports of rape or colza seeds from Ukraine](image)

Figure 8: EU imports of rape or colza seeds from Ukraine, January 2021 to December 2023 value, indexed at 100 in January 2021 Source: Eurostat (ds-045409)

Between the second quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024, compared with the same period two years earlier, Ukraine’s share in the extra-EU imports of rape or colza seeds increased from 36% to 47% (Figure 9). This meant that it became the largest import partner, overtaking Australia, whose share decreased from 45% to 39%.
EU imports of wood

In the first quarter of 2024, EU imports of wood from Ukraine, measured in volume, decreased by 26 pp compared with the level of the first quarter of 2021. Since unit prices increased by 52 pp their value only dropped by 3 pp (Figure 12). The unit price for the EU's imports of wood peaked in the second quarter of 2022.

Figure 10: EU imports of wood from Ukraine, January 2021 to December 2023 value, indexed at 100 in January 2021 Source: (ds-045409)

Between the second quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024, compared with the same period two years earlier, Ukraine's share in the extra-EU imports of wood increased from 10 % to 12 % (Figure 11). This made it the second largest supplier of wood to the EU behind China whose share had increased from 17 % to 22 % in this period.
In the first quarter of 2024, EU imports of iron and steel from Ukraine, measured in volume, decreased by 33 pp compared with the level of the first quarter of 2021. Since unit prices increased by 4 pp their value dropped by 31 pp (Figure 12). Both volume and value of the EU's imports of iron and steel from Ukraine increased strongly in the beginning of 2021 as demand and unit values increased following the economies' gradual recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Imports declined in late 2021, and did not return to pre-Russian invasion levels.

Between the second quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024, compared with the same period two years earlier, Ukraine’s share in the extra-EU imports of iron and steel decreased from 10 % to 4 % (Figure 11). By contrast, the share of China increased by +4 pp making it the second largest partner just behind India. The share of Russia dropped from 15 % to 7 %, as a consequence of EU sanctions.
EU imports of soya bean oil

In the first quarter of 2024, EU imports of soya bean oil from Ukraine, measured in volume, were 77 pp above the level of the first quarter of 2021. Since unit prices had dropped by 15 pp their value increased by 50 pp (Figure 14). The volume and value of extra-EU imports of soya bean oil from Ukraine fluctuated strongly in this period. The unit price for the EU's imports of soya bean oil peaked in the second quarter of 2022 but dropped considerably in the following quarters.

Between the second quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024, compared with the same period two years earlier, Ukraine's share in the extra-EU imports of soya bean oil decreased from 35 % to 33 % (Figure 11). In the same period, the share of Argentina increased from 23 % to 33 %. This was just above the share of Ukraine, making Argentina the largest partner for EU imports of soya bean oil.
Main product groups in EU exports to Ukraine

Ukraine was an important partner for EU exports of a number of products. Figure 16 shows the product groups with the highest share for Ukraine in EU exports in 2022. In the first quarter of 2024 compared with the first quarter of 2022, the shares for all products increased. The largest increase was observed for arms and ammunition.

In absolute terms in value, the largest product groups exported to Ukraine in the 2022 were fuels, electrical machinery, vehicles, machinery and pharmaceutical products - see Table 1. Between the first quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2024 exports of four of these five products increased, with the exception of machinery. The largest increases were for fuels (+€ 1.1 billion, 345 %), vehicles (+€ 0.3 billion, 42 %) and electrical machinery (+€ 0.2 billion, 28 %) increased. The volume of these exports is shown in Table 2.
Table 1: Exports of main product groups to Ukraine, Q1 2021 to Q1 2024 (€ million, quarterly data) Source: Eurostat (ds-045409)

Table 2: Exports of main product groups to Ukraine, Q1 2021 to Q1 2024 (1 000 tonnes, quarterly data) Source: Eurostat (ds-045409)

Source data for tables and graphs

- Graphs and tables

Data sources

EU data is taken from Eurostat’s COMEXT database. COMEXT is the reference database for international trade in goods. It provides access not only to both recent and historical data from the EU Member States but also to statistics of a significant number of non-EU countries. International trade aggregated and detailed statistics disseminated via the Eurostat website are compiled from COMEXT data according to a monthly process.

Data are collected by the competent national authorities of the EU Member States and compiled according to a harmonised methodology established by EU regulations before transmission to Eurostat. For extra-EU trade, the statistical information is mainly provided by the traders on the basis of customs declarations.

EU data are compiled according to EU guidelines and may, therefore, differ from national data published by the Member States. Statistics on extra-EU trade are calculated as the sum of trade of each of the 27 EU Member States with countries outside the EU. In other words, the EU is considered as a single trading entity and trade flows are measured into and out of the area, but not within it.

Methodology

According to EU concepts and definitions, extra-EU trade statistics (trade between EU Member States and non-EU countries) do not record exchanges involving goods in transit, placed in a customs warehouse or given temporary admission (for trade fairs, temporary exhibitions, tests, etc.). This is known as ‘special trade’. The partner is the country of final destination of the goods for exports and the country of origin for imports.

Product classification

Information on commodities exported and imported is presented according to the Harmonised System for product classification. A full description is available from Eurostat's classification server [1].

Unit of measure

Trade values are expressed in millions or billions (109) of euros. They correspond to the statistical value, i.e. to the amount which would be invoiced in case of sale or purchase at the national border of the reporting country. It is called a FOB value (free on board) for exports and a CIF value (cost, insurance, freight) for imports.
Context

Trade is an important indicator of Europe’s prosperity and place in the world. The bloc is deeply integrated into global markets both for the products it sources and the exports it sells. The EU trade policy is one of the main pillars of the EU’s relations with the rest of the world.

Because the 27 EU Member States share a single market and a single external border, they also have a single trade policy. EU Member States speak and negotiate collectively, both in the World Trade Organisation, where the rules of international trade are agreed and enforced, and with individual trading partners. This common policy enables them to speak with one voice in trade negotiations, maximising their impact in such negotiations. This is even more important in a globalised world in which economies tend to cluster together in regional groups.

The openness of the EU’s trade regime has meant that the EU is the biggest player on the global trading scene and remains a good region to do business with. Thanks to the ease of modern transport and communications, it is now easier to produce, buy and sell goods around the world which gives European companies of every size the potential to trade outside Europe.

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