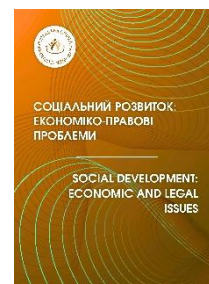




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# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: Economic and Legal Issues

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## Ukraine's Export Potential: New Markets and Barriers

Tetiana Zhovkovska <sup>1\*</sup> ● Volodymyr Pugachov <sup>2</sup> ● Mykola Matiukha <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chortkiv Professional College of Economics and Entrepreneurship of Western Ukrainian National University (Ukraine). Director, Doctor of Science in Economics, Associate Professor.

<sup>2</sup> National Scientific Center "Institute of Agrarian Economics" (Ukraine). Senior Researcher at the Food Department, Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor.

<sup>3</sup> Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design (Ukraine). Associate Professor at the Department of Economics, Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor.

\* **Corresponding Author**, e-mail: [t.zhovkovska@wunu.edu.ua](mailto:t.zhovkovska@wunu.edu.ua)

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### ABSTRACT

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The relevance of the topic is due to the strengthening of imbalances in Ukraine's foreign trade and the growth of barriers that hinder the realization of its export potential in the context of global economic and security challenges. The purpose of the article is to assess the current state of Ukraine's export activity, identify key barriers to entering new markets, and substantiate directions for increasing the competitiveness of Ukrainian exporters. The research methodology is based on the use of statistical analysis of foreign trade indicators for 2016–2025, comparative analysis of the commodity and geographical structure of exports, structural and logical classification of barriers, content analysis of international analytical reports, as well as economic and analytical methods to assess the impact of global trends on Ukrainian exports. The study found that Ukraine faces significant logistical, energy, institutional, technical, and financial constraints that have deepened as a result of the war, the destruction of infrastructure, and changes in the global economy. A sharp drop in physical export volumes, an aggravation of the negative trade balance, a decrease in supplies of agricultural and mineral products were identified, while segments with growth potential were identified – mechanical engineering, metallurgy, livestock and grain products. The unique result is a comprehensive classification of barriers to entry into foreign markets, covering both internal and external factors, and an integrated analysis of export development prospects in the post-war period. The practical significance of the study lies in the possibility of using the results obtained to form state export policy, develop enterprise support programs, determine priority areas of investment, improve logistics and regulatory infrastructure, and prepare strategies for Ukrainian businesses to enter new markets.



### KEYWORDS

economic development, inflation, investments, foreign trade, economic and security challenges, foreign economic activity.



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# СОЦІАЛЬНИЙ РОЗВИТОК: економіко-правові проблеми

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## Експортний потенціал України: нові ринки та бар'єри

Тетяна Т. Жовковська <sup>1\*</sup> ● Володимир М. Пугачов <sup>2</sup> ●

Микола М. Матюха <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Відокремлений структурний підрозділ «Чортківський фаховий коледж економіки та підприємництва» Західноукраїнського національного університету (Україна). Директор, д-р екон. наук, доцент.

<sup>2</sup> Національний науковий центр «Інститут аграрної економіки» (Україна). Старший науковий співробітник відділу продовольства, канд. екон. наук, доцент.

<sup>3</sup> Київський національний університет технологій та дизайну (Україна). Доцент кафедри економіки, канд. екон. наук, доцент.

\* Автор-кореспондент, e-mail: [t.zhovkovska@wunu.edu.ua](mailto:t.zhovkovska@wunu.edu.ua)

### СТАТТЯ

### АНОТАЦІЯ

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Актуальність цієї теми пояснюється тим, що в українській зовнішній торгівлі останніми роками дедалі помітнішими стають дисбаланси. До того ж з'являється все більше бар'єрів, які ускладнюють використання наявного експортного потенціалу, особливо в умовах глобальної нестабільності та безпекових викликів. Мета статті полягає в тому, щоб охарактеризувати теперішній стан українського експорту, окреслити основні перепони для освоєння нових ринків і визначити, які кроки можуть посилити конкурентні позиції українських компаній за кордоном. У дослідженні використано статистику зовнішньої торгівлі за 2016–2025 роки, проведено порівняння товарної та географічної структури експорту, здійснено класифікацію бар'єрів за їх природою та походженням, а також проаналізовано міжнародні аналітичні звіти. Особливу увагу приділено оцінці впливу глобальних економічних тенденцій на український експортний сектор. Під час аналізу з'ясувалося, що на розвиток експорту нині тисне ціла низка факторів: логістичні труднощі, проблеми в енергетичній сфері, інституційні обмеження, технічні бар'єри та нестача фінансових ресурсів. Значна частина цих проблем загострилася через повномасштабну війну, руйнування інфраструктури та зміни на світових ринках. Зафіксовано помітне скорочення фізичних обсягів поставок, погіршення торговельного балансу, зменшення експорту аграрної та мінеральної продукції. Водночас є й сегменти, здатні продемонструвати зростання – зокрема машинобудування, металургія, тваринництво та зерновий сектор. Особливістю роботи є розширена класифікація бар'єрів виходу на зовнішні ринки, яка охоплює і внутрішні, і зовнішні чинники, а також комплексний аналіз можливостей розвитку українського експорту у післявоєнний період. Практичне значення отриманих результатів полягає в тому, що вони можуть стати основою для вдосконалення державної експортної політики, розроблення програм підтримки бізнесу, визначення інвестиційних пріоритетів, модернізації логістичної та регуляторної інфраструктури й підготовки стратегій виходу українських компаній на нові ринки.



### КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА

економічний розвиток, інфляція, інвестиції, зовнішня торгівля, економічні та безпекові виклики, зовнішньоекономічна діяльність.

## **1. Introduction**

In the current conditions of global economic turbulence, the issue of developing Ukraine's export potential is becoming relevant. Deepening integration into the world market, growing competition in the international arena and transformation of global trade chains are creating new challenges for the national economy. The military aggression of the Russian Federation, the destruction of production and logistics infrastructure, the restriction of access to traditional markets and the change in geo-economic priorities force Ukrainian business to look for alternative opportunities for foreign economic activity. The problem is that, despite its significant resources, industrial and innovation potential, Ukraine faces a number of barriers that hinder the effective use of existing opportunities. We are talking not only about physical and logistical restrictions during the war, but also about non-tariff barriers, technical regulations, insufficient awareness of enterprises about the requirements of new markets, limited access to financing, and a low level of export diversification. As a result, domestic companies cannot fully realize their potential in the international arena. The need for the study is due to the need to form a holistic understanding of how Ukrainian exporters can successfully adapt to the new operating conditions, which markets are the most promising in the short and medium term, and what institutional, regulatory and infrastructural barriers hinder the expansion of export activities.

## **2. Literature Review**

The issue of Ukraine's export potential occupies an important place in the scientific discourse, but the results of previous studies show that despite the expansion of the analytical base, significant gaps remain, especially in terms of a comprehensive assessment of barriers to entry into new markets in the context of war and the transformation of global supply chains. In the works of R. Y. Savluk [17] and I. B. Oleksiv and M. D. Mirzoeva [13], it is emphasized that the export potential is not only the basis of foreign exchange earnings, but also a catalyst for the structural modernization of the economy. The author establishes that the long-term dominance of the raw material model hinders the development of processing industries, and the lack of investment in technological renewal makes the national economy vulnerable to global shocks. The emphasis on the need to switch to the export of products with higher added value points to a strategic vector, but the work does not fully cover the barriers that emerged after the Russian invasion, as well as the specifics of access to new markets in Asia and the Middle East. A. Stavytska and A. Kovalenko [19] focus on the insufficient use of Ukraine's opportunities in the world market, determining that non-compliance with standards and limited diversification of export of products are key factors in the loss of competitive positions. The authors show that the expansion of exports is possible with more active participation in international programs, infrastructure development, and increased state support for exporters. At the same time, their study mainly records pre-war trends and does not take into account the new risks associated with the destruction of logistics and a sharp change in geo-economic priorities.

In the work of M. V. Savchenko [16] and V. Chemerys [3], it is determined that Ukraine's cooperation with the EU countries opens up broad prospects for integration into the internal market of the European Union, but the uneven trade flows and high dependence on raw materials leave Ukraine vulnerable to restrictive measures from partners. The author emphasizes that Ukrainian exports do not realize the potential of participation in the EU value chains, and this, in turn, slows down consolidation in priority market segments. Despite the valuable findings, the study does not reveal the impact of military factors on the transformation of trade cooperation and does not provide an answer to practical adaptation steps. A special place in the scientific field is occupied by studies devoted to sectoral aspects of export potential. Thus, O. Kovbasa [12] demonstrates that the price competitiveness of livestock products in Ukraine is a significant advantage in the European market, since the difference in cost in certain categories reached a two- or three-fold level in favor of Ukrainian producers. At the same time, the author notes that this advantage is easily offset by the growth of logistics costs, certification requirements, currency fluctuations and EU quota restrictions. The study outlines the prospects of the segment, but does not systematize the complex of barriers that form the ultimate competitiveness of the industry.

In the works of T. O. Ostashko [8] and I. M. Mushyn, & I. O. Tarlopov [11], the analysis of grain exports during the war showed that Ukraine retained its status as one of the key food suppliers, despite the blockade of ports and a sharp reduction in maritime logistics. The author establishes that the reorientation to land routes, the launch of “solidarity lanes” and EU support have created a new infrastructure basis for post-war recovery. However, the study pays less attention to the impact of tariff and non-tariff barriers that shape the conditions for access to markets in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Similar in terms of problems are the conclusions of O. V. Sheremetynska [18] and T. Melnyk [9], who consider Ukraine as a strategic player in the global grain market. The author emphasizes that the challenges of the war have caused not only temporary logistical difficulties but also structural shifts in global supply chains, as Ukraine’s role has become decisive for the stability of food balances in many countries. The study shows that even a partial reduction in security risks can automatically activate the demand for Ukrainian grain. However, the work is concentrated mainly on the agricultural sector without a wider coverage of industrial goods and high-tech export segments. In general, the analysis of sources shows that the available studies thoroughly describe certain aspects of export potential – raw material dependence, opportunities for integration with the EU, price advantages of the agricultural sector, or logistical transformations. However, a comprehensive systematic approach to studying the interaction of all groups of barriers (institutional, technical, logistics, tariff, energy and financial) in the context of wartime and the search for new markets is currently lacking. The transition to the production of products with high added value, the potential of Ukraine’s participation in global production chains, and practical mechanisms for reducing barriers for exporters have also not been sufficiently studied. It is these gaps that form the scientific niche that this study fills, offering an integral analysis of the state of exports, classification of barriers and outlining the prospects for Ukraine’s entry into new international markets.

### **3. Problem Statement**

The article is aimed at a comprehensive identification of the factors that determine the opportunities and limitations of the development of Ukrainian exports in the context of the transformation of world markets. To achieve this goal, the article envisages the following tasks: to analyze the current state and structure of Ukraine’s exports, to classify the main barriers that prevent Ukrainian enterprises from entering new markets, and to offer practical recommendations for improving the efficiency of export activities and expanding Ukraine’s presence in global markets.

### **4. Methods and Materials**

The study of Ukraine’s export potential and barriers to entering new markets was carried out on the basis of a systematic analysis of statistical, analytical and regulatory materials reflecting the dynamics of foreign trade, structural changes in production and features of the global market environment. The materials of the study were official data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, international organizations (European Commission, World Bank), as well as analytical reviews and scientific publications contained in the sources [8; 12; 14–18]. All numerical data used in the text are given in accordance with the information from these sources and summarized in the form of tables and comparative characteristics.

The methodological basis of the study combines a set of analytical approaches. The statistical method was used to assess the dynamics of exports, imports, trade balances, physical volumes of supplies and changes in the commodity and geographical structure of trade, including an in-depth analysis of indicators for 2021–2025. The comparative analysis was used to establish differences between pre-war and war trends, identify key shifts, and compare Ukrainian production and price indicators with European markets (in particular, in the livestock and grain industries). The method of structural and logical generalization made it possible to identify the main barriers to exports – logistics, tariffs, non-tariffs, energy, production and institutional – and to determine their impact on Ukraine’s opportunities to enter new markets.

## 5. Results and Discussion

Ukraine's export potential is formed under the influence of deep integration processes in the world economy. The country's participation in global markets opens up new opportunities – but also exposes the weaknesses of the national economy. GDP dynamics, inflation, unemployment, public debt and the state of foreign trade demonstrate that domestic demand remains a key driver of growth. At the same time, it is net exports that ensure the inflow of currency and strengthen economic stability. However, the structure of exports and imports in recent years indicates a deterioration in the trade balance, especially after the pandemic and the outbreak of war. Imports grew faster than exports, and the negative balance has been hitting new records since 2023. This trend poses threats to the future: pressure on the foreign exchange market, reduced reserves, and increased external borrowing. Without changes in the structure of trade, Ukrainian goods risk losing competitiveness in new and traditional markets [17]. The reasons for the decline in export opportunities are well known: war, destruction of logistics, insufficient state support, weak positions of investment reliability, low level of standardization and certification of goods, dominance of raw material exports, inflationary pressures and insufficient diversification of markets. All this together almost paralyzes the expansion of foreign markets and slows down access to new sales areas.

For example, Ukraine's export potential in 2016–2019 showed steady growth, but the COVID-19 pandemic sharply reduced trade volumes. In 2021, there was a partial recovery: exports increased to USD 68.1 billion. USD, which amounted to 138.4% of 2020, while imports reached USD 72.8 billion. (134%). Despite the positive dynamics, the country ended the year with a negative trade balance of -USD 4.73 billion, which is only slightly better than -USD 5.14 billion. in 2020. The export-import coverage ratio rose from 0.91 to 0.94, but remained below the level necessary for macroeconomic sustainability. In 2021, Ukraine cooperated with 235 countries around the world, which emphasizes the wide geography of its trade ties. The most powerful markets were China, with exports of \$8.0 billion. (an increase of 12.7%), Poland from USD 5.23 billion. (+59.7%) and Turkey with USD 4.14 billion. (+70%). The structure of exports remained mainly raw materials: ferrous metals brought USD 13.95 billion. (+81.4%), cereals – USD 12.34 billion. (+31.2%), fats and oils – USD 7.04 billion. (+22.5%). In the commodity structure of 2021, the share of base metals was 23.5%, plant products – 22.8%, mineral products – 12.4%, fats and oils – 10.3%, while other products formed 31%. Exports traditionally provide 35–40% of Ukraine's GDP, and according to the Ministry of Economy, the growth potential reaches 50%. However, currently 75% of exports are raw materials, which form dependence on global prices and limit the opportunities to enter new markets. The strategic goal of the state is to change the proportion to the opposite and reach 75% of exports of finished products and only 25% of raw materials [19].

To restore its export potential and gain a foothold in the promising markets of Asia, the EU, and the Middle East, Ukraine needs profound structural changes. The priority is the transition from the export of raw materials to products with high added value. Public investment should support high-tech industries, the agro-industrial complex, infrastructure and export-oriented small and medium-sized businesses. It is equally important to integrate into global production chains – it is there that sustainable sales markets and capital flows are formed [16, p. 95]. As a result, the transformation of the trade structure is not only an economic task, but also a matter of long-term stability.

Compared to the same period in 2024, in the first half of 2025, Ukraine's foreign trade demonstrates contradictory dynamics (Table 1): trade turnover increased by 7.6% and reached USD 58.3 million. However, the export itself decreased to USD 20 million. (–4%), while imports, on the contrary, increased by 14.8% to USD 38.3 million. USA. This led to a sharp expansion of the negative balance to USD 18.3 million. The United States is one of the largest in modern history. Russia's energy attacks have increased its dependence on imports of gas, coal and electricity, which has sharply increased external purchases and deepened structural deficits. Against the backdrop of these challenges, export results show unevenness: agricultural products decreased by 9.5%, mineral resources by 17.8%, and physical exports as a whole fell by 25.3%. The drop in the supply of energy products (–75.3%) and crops (–37.1%) was especially significant, due to a decrease in the production of corn, wheat, sunflower, and rapeseed. Iron ore exports fell to 16.14 million tons (–11.9%), and prices on world markets decreased by almost 17%. Positive developments were observed in mechanical engineering (+12.8%) and metallurgy (+5.7%), which indicates the potential for the development of exports of products with higher added value. However, technological pressure from the United States in the form of 25% duties

on certain metal products has already begun to affect the dynamics of supplies. The structure of imports also changed: machinery, equipment and vehicles became the largest category (38.8%), which is associated with an increase in defense and infrastructure needs. Gas imports increased by 3.6 times, coal by 2.3 times, and electricity by 1.5 times, while purchases of petroleum products decreased by 16.6%. Geographically, the EU remains the main partner, although its share in trade has decreased from 59.5% to 50.8%. Exports to the European Union fell to USD 11.5 million. (-6.1%), especially due to a decrease in purchases of food and industrial materials. China has almost halved imports of Ukrainian goods (-47%), while increasing supplies to Ukraine by 26.8%. Turkey and the United States demonstrate more stable indicators, but they are also accompanied by significant structural imbalances [12, p. 1–5].

**Table 1. Key indicators of Ukraine's foreign trade in the first half of 2025, in the context of export potential and barriers to entering new markets**

| Indicator   | Volume/value<br>(1 half of 2025)   | Dynamics until<br>2024              | Significance for Ukraine's export potential   |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Trade turnover, million dollars USA               | 58.3 million   | +7,6%                               | Overall trade growth, but at the expense of imports – the risk of deepening imbalances                      |
| Export of goods, million dollars. USA             | 20 million   | -4%                                 | Falling exports narrow opportunities to enter new markets and reduce foreign exchange earnings              |
| Imports of goods, million dollars. USA            | 38.3 million   | +14,8%                              | Increased dependence on imports (energy, machinery, chemicals) reduces the competitiveness of production    |
| Trade balance                                     | -USD 18.3 million  | Deterioration (2024 – 12.5 million) | The largest deficit since independence is a critical obstacle to exports                                    |
| Physical trading volumes                          | -18,1%   | -                                   | Indicates a systemic drop in production and logistical barriers   |
| Physical Exports                                  | -25,3%   | -                                   | The deepest drop among the war years: yields ↓ (corn, wheat, rapeseed, sunflower), destruction of logistics |
| Export of food and the agro-industrial complex    | 56.1% of the structure   | -3.4%                               | Slow diversification; Harvest decline is a threat to export stability                                       |
| Export of mineral products                        | -17,8%   | -                                   | Fall in world prices for iron ore (-16.6%) and a decrease in supplies to China (-1.9%)                      |
| Export of mechanical engineering                  | +12,8%   | +                                   | The only fast-growing “non-commodity” export wing – the potential for new EU/Asian markets                  |
| Export of metals                                  | +5,7%  | +                                   | Despite the growth, the United States imposed a 25% tariff, and the threat of market loss                   |
| Physical export of ER (fuel and energy resources) | -75,3%   | -                                   | Inability to export due to internal shortage and attacks on the energy system                               |
| Import of energy resources                        | Gas ×3.6; Coal ×2.3; E/energy ×1.5                                       | +14.6% overall                      | Critical energy dependence constrains domestic production and exports                                       |
| Import of mechanical engineering                  | +30.1% (value), +14.8% physically  | +                                   | The growth in demand of the defense industry is the strengthening of the technology sector.                 |
| The EU's share of trade                           | 50.8% (exports – 57.5%, imports – 47.3%)                                 | ↓ from 59.5%                        | A decrease in the volume of trade with the EU despite autonomous trade preferences.                         |
| Exports to the EU                                 | USD 11.5 million.  | -6,1%                               | A drop in food (-15.7%) and industrial materials (-4.1%) means a smaller presence in the key market.        |
| Imports from the EU                               | USD 18.1 million.  | -9,3%                               | The negative balance with the EU decreased to -USD 6.6 million. (due to a drop in imports).                 |
| Trade with China                                  | Turnover 9 million dollars; exports – 847 million; imports – 8.1 million | Exports – 47%; imports +26.8%       | Negative balance – 7.3 million; China ceases to be a growing market.  |
| Trade with Turkey                                 | Turnover 7.3% of total   | -                                   | Exports 859 million (corn), imports 2.5 million; Turkey is strengthening its position as a supplier.        |
| Trade with the United States                      | Imports 2.3 million; exports 0.5 million                                 | Exports +33%                        | II quarter – a drop in exports due to a 25% duty on metals; sensitive direction.                            |

Source: Compiled based on [3; 7; 9; 11-13].

The data presented in Table 1 show that Ukraine's export potential faces serious barriers – from energy and logistical instability to trade restrictions of key partners and lower prices on global markets (Table 2). At the same time, there are also points of growth: expansion of supplies of machine-building products, development of exports of metals and gradual diversification of the commodity structure. It is these segments that can become the basis for entering new markets and reducing dependence on raw material exports. The decline in exports most affected agricultural products, mineral raw materials and light industry goods, while imports grew rapidly in food groups, chemical products, metallurgy and mechanical engineering.

**Table 2. Classification of the main barriers to Ukraine's entry into new markets**

| The essence of the barrier   | Events   | Export implications   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Institutional</b>   |  |   |
| Insufficient consistency of legislation with EU standards; slowness of procedures; weak support mechanisms | Lack of full industrial visa-free travel; undeveloped systems of state support for exporters; non-compliance of sanitary and phytosanitary standards with international requirements | Difficult access to EU and OECD markets; growth in transaction costs; delay in certification and registration of products |
| <b>Technical</b>   |  |   |
| Non-compliance of some Ukrainian goods with international technical regulations and standards              | The need for modernization of production, the insufficiency of laboratories for certification, and the high cost of transition to EU standards                                       | Limited access to high-tech markets; loss of competitiveness; reduction in exports of finished products                   |
| <b>Logistics</b>   |  |   |
| Destruction of transport infrastructure, rising logistics costs, unstable routes                           | Port blocking, high cost of rail and road transportation, and limited capacity of borders with the EU  | Increase in the final price of goods; loss of contracts; decrease in physical export volumes                              |
| <b>Financial</b>   |  |   |
| Limited access of businesses to lending and investments, currency risks                                    | High interest rates on loans, shortage of working capital, fluctuations in exchange rates  | Non-fulfillment of export contracts; high cost of production; loss of share in competitive markets                        |

Source: Based on [1; 2; 4-6].

The export of animal products from Ukraine has significant potential. The main competitive advantage of Ukrainian manufacturers is lower cost, which leads to lower final prices. For example, in December 2024, the price of bulls in Ukraine was EUR 1.45/kg, while in the EU countries it was EUR 4.34/kg, that is, 3 times more expensive. Similarly, heifers cost EUR 1.35/kg against EUR 3.37/kg in the EU (a difference of 2.5 times). Class R pork – EUR 1.95/kg in Ukraine versus EUR 2.69/kg in the EU. Even milk, one of the least profitable in Ukraine, shows a significant difference: 0.23 euros/l versus 0.55 euros/l in the EU. The price advantage, however, is significantly offset by a number of barriers. Producers are facing rising costs for feed, energy, and logistics, which can account for up to 30–40% of the final export price. Additional costs are created by the need to transition to European quality and safety standards, which require investments in modernization and certification. Currency fluctuations also affect contract stability and margins. An important deterrent is the EU customs quotas, which limit the supply of meat and dairy products from Ukraine. At the same time, the European market is also creating new opportunities. In 2024, there was a steady increase in prices for livestock products in the EU: bulls by +1.00 euros/kg, heifers by +0.60 euros/kg, pork by +0.16 euros/kg, milk by +0.08 euros/l. A separate perspective is the European segment of organic and environmentally friendly products, where prices are higher by 20–40%, which opens the way for premium positioning [8, p. 25]. Thus, Ukrainian livestock products retain a strong export potential due to price competitiveness, but investments in standardization, logistics, digital traceability systems and in-depth processing are needed to truly expand their presence in EU markets. It is these tools that will turn a price advantage into sustainable competitiveness and expand access to European markets despite existing barriers.

The launch of the EU's "solidarity lanes" in May 2022 was a turning point, which not only made it possible to export 18.5 million tons of Ukrainian agricultural products but also created a long-term infrastructure base for a new format of cooperation between Ukraine and the EU countries. The European Commission's investment of EUR 250 million, as well as an additional mobilization plan of EUR 50 million, indicates that these routes will be maintained after the war. The ports of Gdansk, Gdynia and Klaipeda have already shown the ability to work with large batches of Ukrainian grain, and Romanian Constanta has actually turned into a parallel Black Sea hub. Such multi-vector logistics



reduces dependence on the Black Sea and forms the basis for sustainable and predictable exports in the future. The results of the Black Sea Grain Initiative have proven that global demand for grain from Ukraine remains extremely high. In nine months, 925 ships left the humanitarian corridor, delivering 29.2 million tons of food, of which 14.8 million tons were corn, 8 million tons of wheat and 1.1 million tons of barley. China purchased 4.9 million tons of Ukrainian corn, Spain – 2.7 million tons, and the countries of Africa and Asia received 65 % of wheat volumes [14, p.33-35]. These are not random indicators, but confirmation that Ukrainian grain is integrated into the food balances of dozens of countries and remains an uncontested resource for the stability of their markets. As soon as the logistical risks are reduced, these channels will automatically resume the full volume of purchases.

A change in the structure of transport flows is another factor that shapes the prospects for the recovery of exports. If before the war, 99.1% of grain was transported by sea, then in 2022–2023, the share of sea transportation decreased to 76%, while rail increased to 19%, and road transportation increased to 5%. This diversification has become a forced decision, but in the long run, it turns into a competitive advantage: Ukraine is integrated into the European transport space, and regional hubs in the Baltic States and Central Europe become part of the long-term export architecture. The global economy is also creating favorable conditions for the further growth of Ukrainian exports. Before the war, Ukraine provided 15% of the world's exports of corn and barley and 10% of wheat. When Ukrainian volumes fell sharply, the price of wheat increased by 33.5% and corn by 14.7%. This shows that the global market cannot maintain stable prices without Ukrainian volumes. Even a partial resumption of supplies has led to price stabilization and a decrease in food tensions. Therefore, in the medium term (5–10 years), Ukrainian grain will remain a key element of global food systems. Even in the most difficult conditions, Ukrainian agricultural producers managed to maintain significant export volumes: 25.2 million tons of corn and 11.2 million tons of wheat in 2022. After the war, it is predicted that yields will increase by 15–25%, restore sown areas by 1.5-2 million hectares, modernize logistics facilities with the participation of the EU, EBRD and the World Bank, which will bring annual exports to 60-70 million tons and return Ukraine to the status of one of the three largest grain exporters in the world [15; 18].

The prospects for expanding Ukraine's export potential directly depend on the transition from a raw material model to deep integration into European value chains. It is about the production of more complex products in cooperation with EU companies, gaining access to modern management systems, technologies and standards. Important steps towards removing barriers are industrial visa-free travel, mutual recognition of sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, simplification of transit and customs procedures, and the opening of public procurement markets. The liberalization of transport – road, rail and water – can also significantly expand the access of Ukrainian goods to EU markets. Even though the EU's share in Ukrainian exports and imports has increased significantly after the reorientation from the markets of Russia and the CIS, this process is also accompanied by negative effects: competition of European manufacturers is tougher, and requirements for standards are higher. In such conditions, the key task of Ukraine is to move from the role of a supplier of raw materials to a full-fledged participant in the EU technological chains, which will not only reduce barriers but also significantly strengthen its own export potential in new markets.

## **6. Conclusions**

An analysis of the current state and structure of Ukrainian exports showed that imbalances in foreign trade are deepening. In 2024–2025, exports develop unevenly: physical volumes of sales abroad are decreasing, while imports are growing rapidly, resulting in a historically large trade deficit. Despite some positive trends in mechanical engineering and metallurgy, the export structure is still mainly based on raw materials, which makes the country vulnerable to changes in world prices. The largest reduction is observed in the agricultural sector, mineral and energy products, which indicates the high dependence of the economy on logistics, climatic and security factors. The classification of barriers to entry into new markets has shown that obstacles are complex. The most significant are institutional, technical, logistical, financial and energy constraints, which are complemented by tariff and non-tariff requirements from other countries. The war, the destruction of infrastructure, the instability of legislation, the high cost of production and difficulties in accessing the regulatory systems of foreign countries create a set of systemic challenges for exporters. At the same time, areas with potential for development have been identified: mechanical engineering, processing industries, production of



products with high added value, as well as livestock and grain, where demand on world markets remains stable. The identified obstacles confirm the need for a deep renewal of the structure of the economy and the export model of Ukraine. Focus on raw materials reduces the country's competitive position and limits its presence in high-margin segments of the global market. Significant logistical and energy challenges require long-term investments in infrastructure reconstruction, diversification of export routes and strengthening energy independence. At the same time, it is important to accelerate the harmonization of technical standards and expand the tools of state support for exporters, especially in innovative and processing industries. In general, the results of the study prove that with the comprehensive elimination of barriers, modernization of the economy and reorientation to products with high added value, Ukraine can significantly strengthen its position in new markets and ensure sustainable long-term economic growth.

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