

STUDY ON ROMANIA'S MEAT IMPORT FLOWS FROM 2014 TO 2023

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Abstract

This paper aimed to analyse the evolution of the Romanian's meat imports within the last decade and to identify the main flows and trade partners who supplied from abroad Romanian meat market. The research method is based on a quantitative approach, based on international time data series related with meat imports in Romania. We quantified the Romanian imports by year and by large geographical areas, and determined the trends and growth rates for Romanian imports. The results indicated that Romania remained a huge meat importer and most part of the import flows with meat in Romania are from Europe, especially from the EU countries.

Key words: trade, meat, import, Romania

INTRODUCTION

Imports are important in a country economy as they could "have a significant positive effect on productivity growth but exports do not. Also, import liberalization could have a positive and significant contribution to growth and development" as affirmed [9].

They key determinants of import demand are "income and relative import price, but their impact differs from a country to another" as sustained [12].

As any other commodity, meat worth more money in a country with deficit than in a country with surplus and if the traders can gain a profit margin [3] from selling abroad, some enterprises will manage to make the trade happen.

The world meat trade has an essential role for balancing the meat sectors of individual countries, such as Romania. Each year there are changes in international supply chains and trade flows that can significantly impact domestic markets, necessitating a careful evaluation, to both production and imports. Romania's meat sector follows these global influences, as the country depends heavily on imported meat products to meet its consumption demand. Tracking into the past, one important moment was related with Romanian integration in EU, when the meat imports started to be predominant from this

market. [5]. Romania is recognized as a net importer for meat, and particularly for pork and chicken [1]. The low competitiveness of the Romanian meat sector was related by some authors with the overall meat trade negative balance [4]. Popescu [7] mentioned that after Romania joined the EU, its dependence on imports increased, at the beginning for live pigs and then for pork carcasses and meat and also emphasizes the critical role of meat trade in Romania, detailing import and export dynamics [8]. Stanciu et al. [10] also assess the competitiveness of the Romanian meat processing industry, stressing the dependency on meat imports. A special attention to the evolution of livestock, to the main suppliers for the meat market can be also considered by authorities, who have to find solution in reducing the meat imports [6]. Recent studies indicated that meat consumption in Romania increased while domestic production can't support enough the internal market, so the imports became crucial [11].

In this context, the aim of this study is to analyse the dynamics of the Romania's meat imports within the last decade 2014-2023 and to identify the main flows and trade partners who supplied the internal meat market.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For this paper the statistic and trade indicators were used. The evolution of imports in Romania during the period 2014-2023 was studied by country and large geographical areas of origin, determining the trends and yearly growth. The data regarding trade imports, in terms of value were collected from International Trade Centre – ITC through its official web site [2].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The total meat imports in Romania have significantly changed in the studied interval, increasing from 545,575 thousand euro in 2014 to 1,534,539 thousand euro in 2023. A significant part of this growth can be observed from countries that belongs to Europe, which has recorded a constant and significant increase by approximately 181% from 2014 to 2023.

Starting from 2023, there is a distinguishable presence of meat imports in Romania from North America, amounting to 1,337 thousand euro, which is approximately 0.087% of the total imports for that year (Table 1).

Table 1. Evolution of Romania's meat imports between 2014 and 2023 (thousand euro)

Year	World	Europe	North America	Oceania	South America
2014	545,575	514,143	0	64	3,981
2015	568,661	537,506	0	135	1,767
2016	643,710	605,740	0	190	1,185
2017	766,528	730,168	0	0	1,286
2018	817,588	766,787	0	108	322
2019	940,316	883,670	0	172	286
2020	912,484	861,626	0	228	96
2021	973,613	925,012	0	312	342
2022	1,300,729	1,230,623	0	308	420
2023	1,534,539	1,445,295	1,337	940	1,935

Source: ITC [2].

Oceania and South America are the other geographical areas from which meat imports in Romania are coming from.

Australia has consistently been the largest exporter of meat to Romania from Oceania, dominating the market in all years with values ranging from 64 thousand euro to 701 thousand euro.

Imports from New Zealand have been minimal or non-existent in most years, with some

increase in recent years, indicating a limited but growing trade relationship in meat imports (Figure 1).

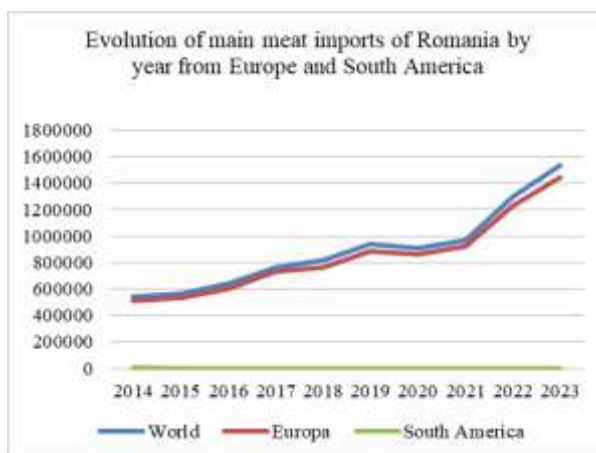


Fig.1. Evolution of the main meat imports of Romania by year from Europe and South America (thousand euro) Source: ITC [2].

Germany was the main exporter of meat to Romania in 2014 with 145,503 thousand euro (26.7% of total imports), followed by Hungary with 114,615 thousand euro (21%), and the Netherlands with 70,737 thousand euro (13%). Imports from Spain were 50,103 thousand euro (9.2%) and Poland were 121,551 thousand euro (22.3%) (Figure 2).

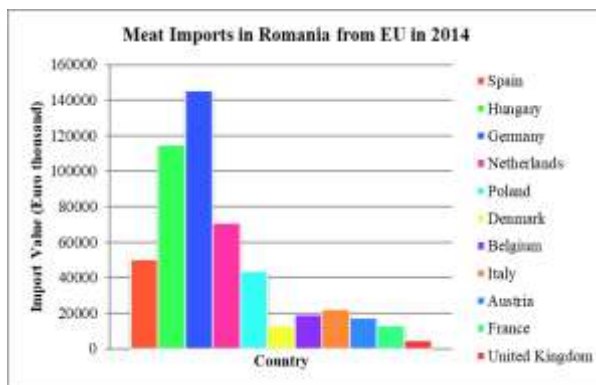


Fig. 2. The meat imports in Romania from EU in 2014 (thousand euro) Source: ITC [2].

Germany maintained its leading position with 158,091 thousand euro in 2015 (27.8% increase from 2014) (Figure 3).

Imports from Spain increased to 60,989 thousand euro in 2015 (21.7% increase from 2014), surpassing Poland and the Netherlands. Hungary remained in second place in 2015 with 113,819 thousand euro (a slight decrease of 0.7% from 2014) (Figure 3).

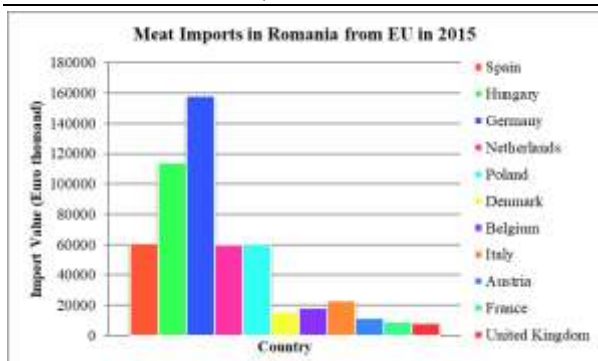


Fig. 3. The meat imports in Romania from EU in 2015 (thousand euro)
 Source: ITC [2].

Also in 2016, Germany maintained its leading position in the meat exports to Romania with 151,817 thousand euro (4% decrease from 2015), followed by Hungary and Spain with 126,791 thousand euro (11.3% increase from 2015) and 101,231 thousand euro (65.9% increase from 2015) respectively. Imports from the Netherlands continued to decline to 58,847 thousand euro (11.2% decrease from 2015), and Poland's exports valued 129,179 thousand euro (5.9% increase from 2015) (Figure 4).

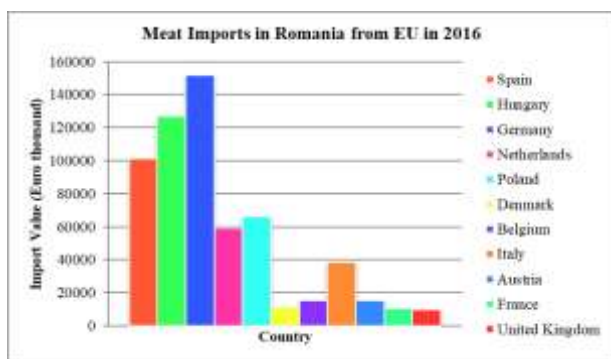


Fig. 4. The meat imports in Romania from EU in 2016 (thousand euro)
 Source: ITC [2].

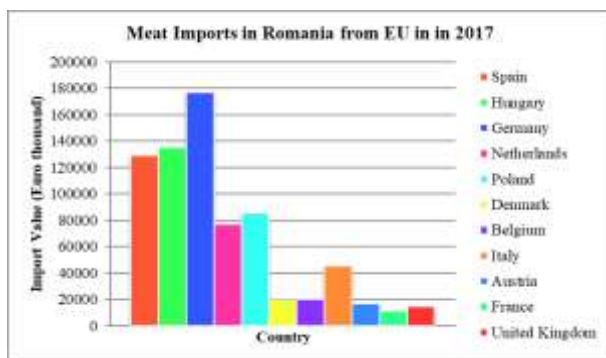


Fig. 5. The meat imports in Romania from EU in 2017 (thousand euro)
 Source: ITC [2].

Germany continued to be the leader in 2017 of meat exports in Romania with 176,706 thousand euro (16.4% increase from 2016) (Figure 5).

Hungary came on the 2nd position with 135,071 thousand euro (6.5% increase from 2016) and Spain with 129,000 thousand euro (27.5% increase from 2016). Imports from Poland and the Netherlands were 129,179 thousand euro and 77,131 thousand euro (31.1% increase from 2016) (Figure 5).

In 2018, Germany maintained its top position with 174,225 thousand euro in the meat export to Romania (1.4% decrease from 2017), followed by Spain with 164,720 thousand euro (27.7% increase from 2017) and Hungary with 149,656 thousand euro (10.8% increase from 2017). Imports from Poland and the Netherlands were 129,179 thousand euro and 73,228 thousand euro (5% decrease from 2017) (Figure 6).

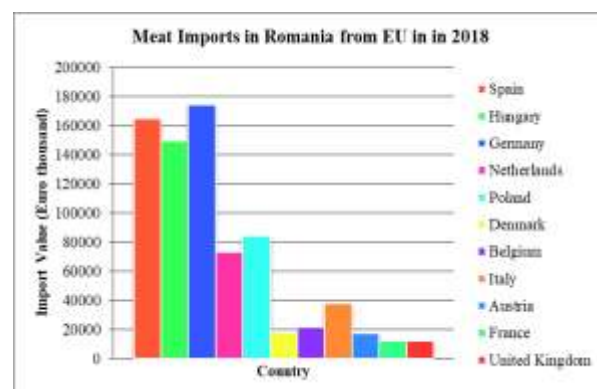


Fig. 6. The meat imports in Romania from EU in 2018 (thousand euro)
 Source: ITC [2].

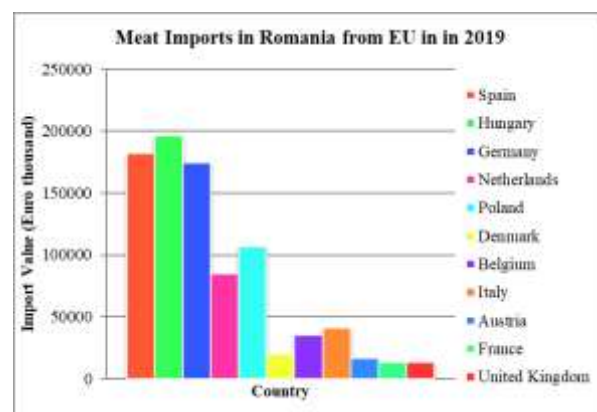


Fig. 7. The meat imports in Romania from EU in 2019 (thousand euro)
 Source: ITC [2].

Hungary surpassed Germany, becoming the main exporter of meat to Romania with 196,535 thousand euro in 2019 (31.3% increase from 2018) (Figure 7).

Spain was in second place with 182,017 thousand euro (10.5% increase from 2018), and Germany in third with 174,586 thousand euro (0.2% increase from 2018). Imports from Poland and the Netherlands were 129,179 thousand euro and 84,848 thousand euro (15.8% increase from 2018) (Figure 7).

Spain became the leader in meat imports to Romania with 176,176 thousand euro in 2020 (3.2% decrease from 2019), surpassing Germany with 174,943 thousand euro (0.4% decrease from 2019) and Hungary with 170,092 thousand euro (13.5% decrease from 2019). Imports from Poland and the Netherlands were 121,551 thousand euro (5.9% decrease from 2019) and 82,130 thousand euro (3.2% decrease from 2019) (Figure 8).

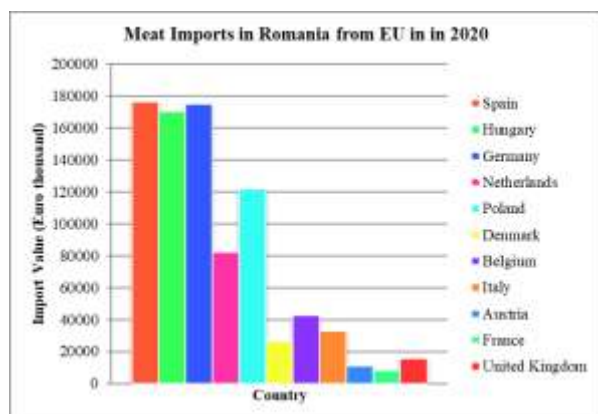


Fig. 8. The meat imports in Romania from EU in 2020 (thousand euro)
 Source: ITC [2].

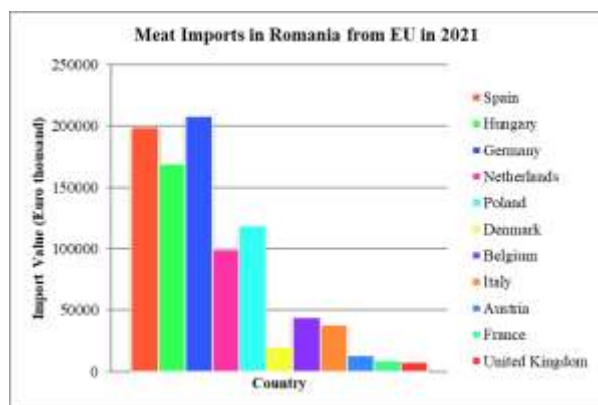


Fig. 9. The meat imports in Romania from EU in 2021 (thousand euro)
 Source: ITC [2].

Germany returned to the top position with 208,249 thousand euro in 2021 (19% increase from 2020) (Figure 9).

Spain came on the second position with 198,823 thousand euro (12.9% increase from 2020) and Hungary with 169,047 thousand euro (0.6% decrease from 2020). Imports from Poland and the Netherlands were 129,179 thousand euro (6.3% increase from 2020) and 99,112 thousand euro (20.7% increase from 2020) (Figure 9).

Spain shifted again and became leader in the meat exports to Romania in 2022 with 310,167 thousand euro (55.9% increase from 2021), followed by Germany with 257,933 thousand euro (23.8% increase from 2021) and Hungary with 220,503 thousand euro (30.4% increase from 2021). Imports from Poland and the Netherlands were 129,179 thousand euro (same as 2021) and 134,254 thousand euro (35.5% increase from 2021) (Figure 10).

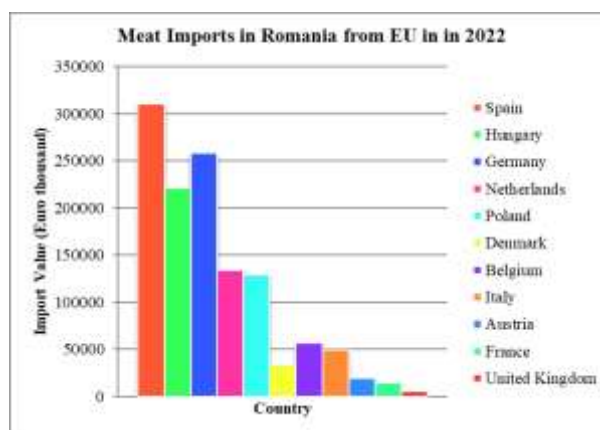


Fig.10. The meat imports in Romania from EU in 2022 (thousand euro)
 Source: ITC [2].

Spain maintained its leading position in 2023 with 424,144 thousand euro (36.8% increase from 2022), followed by Hungary with 270,367 thousand euro (22.6% increase from 2022) and Germany with 255,125 thousand euro (1.1% decrease from 2022).

Imports from Poland and the Netherlands were 138,923 thousand euro (7.5% increase from 2022) and 153,422 thousand euro (14.3% increase from 2022) (Figure 11).

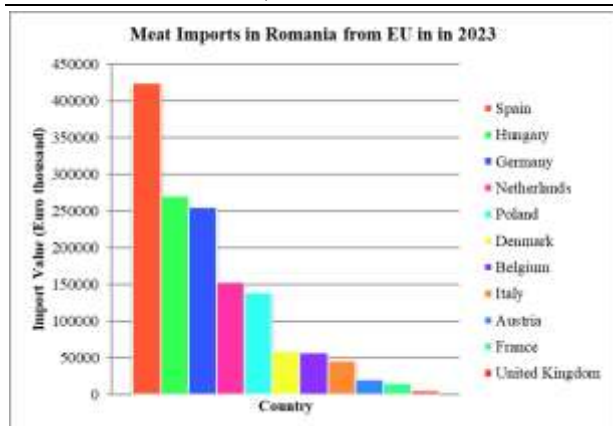


Fig.11. The meat imports in Romania from EU in 2023 (thousand euro)
 Source: ITC [2].

The chart that shows the annual growth rate of meat imports in Romania indicates that only the imports from Europe have a predictable trend (Figure 12).

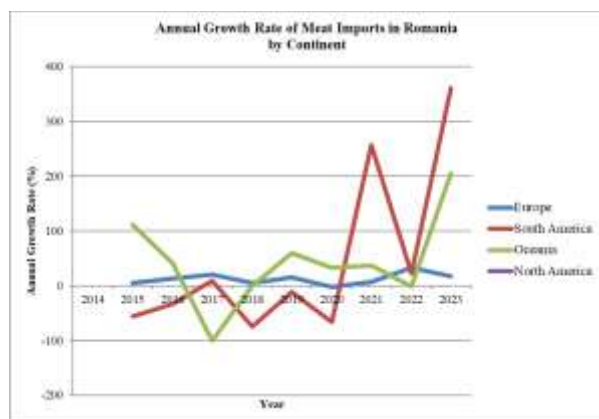


Fig.12. The Annual Growth Rate of Meat imports in Romania between 2014 and 2023
 Source: ITC [2].

CONCLUSIONS

Germany has consistently been one of the largest exporters of meat to Romania, dominating the market in most years with values ranging from 145,503 thousand euro to 208,249 thousand euro. Hungary and Spain have had significant impacts, alternating in the top three exporter positions, with values ranging from 114,615 thousand euro to 310,167 thousand euro. Imports from the Netherlands and Poland have been steady but significantly lower compared to Germany, Hungary, and Spain, with values ranging from 58,847 thousand euro to 153,422 thousand euro. The year 2020 marked a significant change, with Spain becoming the leader with

176,176 thousand euro, reflecting possible changes in trade relations or import preferences of Romania. In the long term, there is a trend of diversifying import sources, although Germany, Hungary, and Spain remain the main meat exporters. The overall trend shows Australia as the primary and significant supplier of meat from Oceania to Romania, with New Zealand starting to contribute more in recent years.

Canada and the United States of America have had minimal or no recorded meat exports to Romania in most years. The overall trend shows a very limited trade relationship in meat imports from North America to Romania, with a notable exception for Canada in 2023. Meat imports from South America in Romania had a variable evolution between 2014 and 2023. Although the figures are lower compared to Europe, there is an increasing trend in the recent years.

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