



Evolution of the EU28 agricultural and food trade from 2010 to 2016

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On 24 February 2017 DG Agri published an analysis of the EU28 agri-food trade for 2016, boasting that EU28 exports reached a new high in 2016 at 130.7 billion euros (€bn) and a trade surplus of €18.8bn compared to €15.3bn in 2015¹. It is true that the EU28 is coming back from a long time as its agricultural balance has been negative up to 2009 when it was still -€7.381bn.

But DG Agri has always used the concept of agri-food trade to refer only to agricultural trade within the meaning of Annex 1 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), which does not take into account fish and preparations, although these are very important food products whose deficit continues to widen, from €10 bn in 2004 to €19.4 bn in 2016 (Table 1). So that the agricultural + fish trade balance remained negative of €2.2 bn in 2016 although this deficit has been much reduced since 2010 when it was at €13.3 bn. We have added rubber to agricultural trade in table 1 although it is not included in the AoA list but it is taken into account by the United States (US), which reduces the agricultural surplus by €1.522 bn in 2016 and increases the deficit of agricultural + fish trade to € 4.388 bn.

However the food balance is broader when based on the SITC nomenclature, which excludes non-food agricultural products.

Table 1 – Balance of the EU28 agricultural and food trade from 2010 to 2016

Euros million	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Moyenne
Balance of agricultural trade (Harmonised System nomenclature)								
Agricultural (AoA)	784,7	1114	9458,9	16426,8	15705,2	13311,6	17155,5	10565,2
Agricultural + rubber	-2051,7	-3425,5	6461,9	14030,5	13862	11611,8	15633,3	8017,5
Food	-15836,9	-15803,6	-8411,4	-2868,3	-3749,8	-8569,9	-6413,6	8807,6
Fish + preparations	-14111,6	-15112,9	-14576,9	-15244,2	-16400,2	-17659,6	-19387,2	-16070,4
Agricultural + fish	-13326,9	-13998,9	-5118	1182,6	-694,9	-4348	-2231,7	-5505,1
Agr + fish + rubber	-16163,	-18538,4	-8115	-1213,7	-2538,2	-6047,8	-3753,9	-8052,9
Balance of food trade (SITC nomenclature)								
Extra EU28	-15518,8	-15803,6	-8411,4	-2868,3	-3749,8	-8569,9	-6413,6	-8762,2
Developed countries	14514,1	15716,4	19077,6	18661,6	16352,4	14166,4	16235,2	16389,1
Developing countries	-30032,9	-31520,1	-27489,3	-21529,9	-20102,2	-22736,3	-22648,8	-25151,4
ACP countries	-5132,8	-5186,1	-3678	-3125,4	-3552,7	-5298,1	-6731,8	-4672,1
West Africa	-1973,2	-2256,4	-1182,6	-692,5	-1306,4	-2479,2	-3622,9	-1930,4
Austral Africa (SADC EPA)	-1583,7	-1240,7	-1106,8	-1495,6	-1310,8	-1485,1	-1515,4	-1391,2
Eastern Africa (EAC EPA)	-984,4	-1114,5	-991,5	-862	-790,4	-929,9	-891,4	-937,7
Central Africa (CEMAC EPA)	-37	156,4	390,8	460,3	360	320,9	166,8	259,7
East Africa (COMESA EPA)	-623,3	-905,2	-1000,8	-982,2	-1028,8	-829,4	-791,1	-881,4

Source: Eurostat. SITC codes 01, 11, 22, 4

In any case the EU Commission suggests that the EU is more than ever destined to feed the world, echoing the recurring discourse of COPA-COGECA and FNSEA in France. To the point that the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, declared on December 6, 2016, in his opening speech at the conference on the agricultural prospects of the EU: *"We must remember – but who remembers? – that until 1964 Europe was not yet self-sufficient in terms of food... A country, a continent which cannot feed itself, from a geostrategic point of view, is a country, even a continent, in perdition because it depends on the will of others. I do not want*

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/trade-analysis/monitoring-agri-food-trade/2016-12_en.pdf

*a Europe that depends on the will of others... With the entry into force of the common agricultural policy in 1962, Europe has given itself the means to acquire its autonomy in terms of food production. And we can actually be proud of the journey made since"*².

No, we cannot be proud that, if the EU has a large food surplus with developed countries (DC) – assimilated to the 9 Western OECD countries (Australia, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Norway, New Zealand, Switzerland) plus Russia – its deficit with developing countries (DCs) is even higher, even though it has fallen from €30 bn in 2010 to €22.6 bn in 2016. Indeed it is the EU that receives a structural food aid from developing countries. This is true of the ACP countries, particularly of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), to which the EU imposes the signature of EPAs (Economic Partnership Agreements), including those already applied by SADC and Cameroon (in the CEMAC) since the second semester of 2016. The food deficit of these 5 EPAs (in which some SSA countries are not participating) with the EU was €6.654 bn in 2016.

This reminds us the speech of the Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan at the World Fair in Milan on 4 June 2015: *"I know you are all very familiar with the key data on present and future challenges, with some 795 million people worldwide still suffering from chronic hunger. And with global population growth continuing rapidly, the world will have to produce 60% more food by 2050... Today I wish to deliver the clear and decisive message that the European Union recognises its global responsibilities and is ready to act"*³. Although he did not speak explicitly about the EU's desire to export more to DCs but rather to share its production and research model, he stressed that the EU was *"the biggest importer of produce from developing countries"*. The roadmap defined in Addis Ababa on 4-5 April 2015 on the EU-Africa High-Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation was more explicit: *"While Africa-Europe agricultural trade is highly asymmetric, a shift is anticipated as African agricultural growth is further enhanced. Europe represents a major growth market for African agriculture while the demand of Africa's growing middle class provides a growing market for European agricultural and food products. Furthermore, Europe's experience of developing intra-regional trade may offer useful lessons for intra-African trade"*⁴.

Table 2 – EU28 total and agricultural exports with groups of countries in 2016

Millions €	ExtraEU28	10 DC	DCs	LDCs	7 EPA	West Africa	ECOWAS	CEMAC	EAC	SADC	Comesa
All products	1745479	780757	964722	24917	74747	24914	24266	4347	3865	24433	5953
Agricultural products	131411	53627	77784	4040	9309	3521	3350	911	438	1818	901
Fish + preparations	4497	1918	2579	56	553	337	333	29	12	14	123
Agri products + fish & prepa	135908	55545	80363	4096	9862	3858	3683	940	450	1832	1024
Cereals + preparations	29350	9835	19515	1670	3298	1228	1152	381	273	470	469
Dairy products	9795	2632	7163	466	864	367	332	73	10	94	58
Meats + preparations	11023	3149	7874	339	975	315	313	134	4	277	31
Pig meat+preparations	8004	2457	5547	74	286	42	42	54	4	58	10
Poultry+eggs+preparations	1948	288	1660	255	577	211	209	62	5	217	24
Bovine meat+preparations	2617	657	1960	47	187	85	84	25	1	7	7
Coffee-cocoa-tea+spices:CCTS	7158	3917	3241	39	189	30	29	7	6	10	19
Beverages	27914	18960	8954	423	1359	425	423	198	57	324	65
Sugar+preparations	2407	1192	1215	66	146	45	44	22	5	31	18
Agri products - beverages	103497	36767	66730	3617	7950	3096	2927	713	381	1494	836
Agri prod+fish-beverages	107994	36585	71409	3673	8503	3433	3260	742	393	1508	959
Agri products-CCTS	124253	49710	74543	4001	9120	3491	3321	904	432	1808	882
Agri products-fish-bever-CCTS	100836	32668	68168	3634	8314	3403	3231	735	387	1498	940

DC: developed countries, DCs: developing countries; CCTS: coffee+cocoa+tea+spices.

Tables 2 to 4 show the total exports, imports and balances of total and agricultural trade for the main products between the EU28 and the main groups of countries in 2016, in particular SSA ACPs. Table 4 shows that the largest EU28 surplus with all countries is beverages, which are

² http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-4285_fr.htm

³ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/commissioner-speeches/pdf/hogan-expo-milan-04-06-2015_en.pdf

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/pdf/policy/eu-africa_roadmap_2016.pdf

not basic staples. Without beverages, the EU28 food deficit with all countries would have been of €24.2 bn, of which €28.1 bn with DCs, and the slight agricultural surplus with LDCs (€264 M) would be a deficit of €149 M.

Table 3 – EU28 total and agricultural imports with groups of countries in 2016

Millions €	ExtraEU28	10 DC	DCs	LDCs	7 EPA	West Africa	ECOWAS	CEMAC	EAC	SADC	Comesa
All products	1707748	679054	1028694	32253	69473	20409	19982	5387	2438	27798	4138
Agricultural products	114256	26124	88132	3776	16352	6404	6345	775	2174	3099	2211
Fish + preparations	23884	9751	14133	1032	2382	810	590	0,3	153	555	622
Agri products + fish & prepa	138140	35875	102265	4808	18734	7214	6935	775,3	2327	3654	2833
Cereals + preparations	7424	2860	4564	253	133	11	11	3	2	12	110
Dairy products	724	669	55	0,1	0,7	0,7	0,7	0	0	0	0
Meats + preparations	5443	1648	3795	0	103	0,07	0,07	0,03	0	101	1
Pig meat+preparations	59	47	12	0	0,07	0	0	0	0	0,07	0
Poultry+eggs+preparations	1575	26	1549	0	0,5	0	0	0,03	0	0,04	0
Bovine meat+preparations	3848	1023	2825	0	159	0,02	0,02	0	0	159	0
Coffee-cocoa-tea+spices:CCTS	18389	2214	16175	1287	7517	5386	5386	495	750	19	569
Beverages	5913	3169	2744	10	561	7	7	0,7	0,4	396	14
Sugar+preparations	2230	307	1923	135	637	0,06	0,06	0	0	153	0
Agri products - beverages	108343	22955	85388	3766	15791	6397	6338	774	2174	2946	2197
Agri prod+fish-beverages	132227	32706	99521	4798	18173	7207	6928	774,6	2326,6	3258	2819
Agri products-CCTS	95867	23910	71957	2489	8835	1018	959	280	1424	3080	1642
Agri products-fish-bever-CCTS	113838	30492	83346	3511	10656	1821	1542	279,6	1576,6	3239	2250

Table 4 – EU28 total and agricultural trade balances with groups of countries in 2016

€ million	ExtraEU28	10 DC	DCs	LDCs	7 EPA	West Africa	ECOWAS	CEMAC	EAC	SADC	Comesa
All products	37731	101703	-63972	-7336	5274	4505	4284	-1040	1427	-3365	1815
Agricultural products	17155	27503	-10348	264	-7043	-2883	-2995	136	-1736	-1281	-1310
Fish + preparations	-19387	-7833	-11554	-976	-1829	-473	-257	28,7	-141	-541	-499
Agri products + fish & prepa	-2232	19670	-21902	-712	-8872	-3356	-3252	164,7	-1877	-1822	-1809
Cereals + preparations	21926	6975	14951	1417	3165	1217	1141	378	271	458	359
Dairy products	9071	1963	7108	465,9	863,3	366,3	331,3	73	10	94	58
Meats + preparations	5580	1501	4079	339	872	314,93	312,93	133,97	4	176	30
Pig meat+preparations	7945	2410	5535	74	285,93	42	42	54	4	57,93	10
Poultry+eggs+preparations	373	262	111	255	576,5	211	209	61,97	5	216,96	24
Bovine meat+preparations	-1231	-366	-865	47	28	84,98	83,98	25	1	-152	7
Coffee-cocoa-tea+spices:CCTS	-11231	1703	-12934	-1248	-7328	-5356	-5357	-488	-744	-9	-550
Beverages	22001	15791	6210	413	798	418	416	197,3	56,6	-72	51
Sugar+preparations	177	885	-708	-69	-491	44,94	43,94	22	5	-122	18
Agri products - beverages	-4846	13812	-18658	-149	-7841	-3301	-3411	-61	-1793	-1452	-1361
Agri prod+fish-beverages	-24233	3879	-28112	-1125	-9670	-3774	-3668	-32,6	-1933,6	-1750	-1860
Agri products-CCTS	28386	25800	2586	1512	285	2473	2362	624	-992	-1272	-760
Agri products-fish-bever-CCTS	-13002	2176	-15178	123	-2342	1582	1689	455,4	-1189,6	-1741	-1310