



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on December 19, 2023

Poland Says Ukrainian EU Membership Threatens EU Farmers

Ukraine's membership in the EU could threaten the bloc's agricultural sector, Warsaw's deputy agriculture minister, Michal Kolodziejczak, told Polish broadcaster RMF FM on December 16. His remarks came after the European Council's move to open accession talks with the Kyiv regime.

Kolodziejczak asserted that Ukrainian farmers would create too much competition for the EU's established agricultural producers.

"The Ukrainian agriculture sector could destabilize food security in any EU country. If we want this, we should immediately open our doors [to Ukraine] and say, 'We are shutting down our agricultural enterprises because their work will no longer make sense,'" he said. The deputy agriculture minister added that Ukraine's farming sector was simply too large and would inundate the EU with its products at the expense of Polish and other European farmers.

"Ukrainian agriculture is dominated by about 95 farms. Those are holdings which control half of the country's farming lands.... Within the current political and economic framework, [Ukraine's admission] would work against Polish farmers and Polish entrepreneurs," he cautioned.

Kolodziejczak said that if Ukraine joins the EU, preventive measures should be in place to safeguard the interests of local farmers.

"We must respect our interests, as, for example, Germany did when Poland joined the EU. At the time, the labor market for Poles was frozen for eight years. Today, we could suggest that agricultural products from Ukraine — both fresh and processed — would be prohibited from entering Poland, for example, 20 years after Ukraine joins the EU."

For several months, Ukraine and Poland have been at loggerheads owing to a grain dispute between both countries. The conflict resulted from Poland's decision earlier this year to enforce an embargo on Ukrainian grain and only permit its transit through the country. This came amid a massive flood of cheap agricultural products from Ukraine over the past year after Brussels loosened import rules for Kyiv to help it export grain during the conflict with Moscow.

Relations worsened further after Polish truckers and farmers started blocking border crossings between



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Ukraine and Poland in early November to protest the EU's decision to exempt Ukrainian truckers from the need to obtain permits to enter the bloc. The protesters argue that measures enabling Ukraine's access to the EU market have led to unfair competition and have been pushing down prices of agricultural products in the alliance.

Such a move by the EU has exempted Ukrainian drivers from meeting EU standards, with Polish farmers unhappy with the influx of cheap Ukrainian grain lowering prices.

A recent blockade by Polish truckers on the Ukraine border was reestablished after police moved in overnight to clear away protesters. The long-delayed traffic resumed moving, but by evening on December 12, one Polish truck again blocked the crossing, based on statements from Ukraine's Border Guard service.

The mayor of Dorohusk, a Polish village on the border, had taken action to halt the month-long protest, allegedly fearing that it would undermine jobs in the area, local media reported. Road traffic then resumed in both directions at the Yahodyn-Dorohusk crossing, with Ukrainian Infrastructure Minister Aleksandr Kubrakov saying 15 Ukrainian trucks had made it through by early afternoon.

Nonetheless, by evening, videos circulating online depicted a truck diagonally blocking both lanes, with Polish police saying the vehicle had broken down.

Rafal Mekler, an organizer of the Polish truckers' protest, joked on X that the vehicle may have chosen to break down after it "reacted badly to the insults of the Ukrainian drivers" passing through the crossing. He later published a video which seemed to depict local police dispersing the truckers as they tried to halt traffic during the night.

Earlier, Mekler had posted his application for another protest, vowing that such protests and blockades were not over. "We are not giving up," the organizer wrote.

On December 11, Hungarian truckers likewise began obstructing the Zahony-Csop checkpoint at the Ukrainian border, limiting traffic to only two trucks per hour.

Earlier this month, Slovakia's truckers also blocked the country's main road crossing with Ukraine, leading to lines of more than a thousand vehicles.

On December 2, Ukraine's Economy Ministry announced that the country's exports through Poland have plummeted since Polish truckers and farmers blocked border crossings in protest against the EU's trade regulations with Kyiv.

The Ukrainian ministry claimed that some 282,000 tons of Ukrainian freight transport exports passed through the Polish border in November, a 40-percent drop from the previous month. The ministry pointed out that at several checkpoints, exports have almost stopped entirely or have been cut in half.

Earlier, Deputy Economy Minister Taras Kachka cautioned that Ukrainian imports have also been impacted by the blockades, noting that they have likely fallen by at least 20 percent last month.

December 11 also saw pro-EU politician Donald Tusk become Poland's new prime minister, after the country's parliament deposed PM Mateusz Morawiecki in a decisive no-confidence vote.

Tusk obtained a comfortable victory, with 248 MPs voting for him and 201 against. The politician had to secure at least 225 votes to become the new PM.

Morawiecki's downfall came after his Law and Justice (PiS) party suffered losses in Poland's general election in mid-October. Tusk's broad coalition of pro-EU parties, which now holds a majority in the



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parliament, won the general election.

The PiS has conceded defeat, with party president Jarosław Aleksander Kaczyński lauding Poland's "democracy," although he blamed the downfall of his government on a widespread smear campaign against the party. However, after Tusk's election, Kaczyński stormed the parliament's podium, slamming the new PM for being a "German agent."

Tusk served as Poland's prime minister between 2007 and 2014. Shortly after ending his tenure, he became the president of the European Council, leading the bloc's executive body until late 2019.

Meanwhile, the administration of US President Joe Biden warned on December 18 that it only had enough funding left to send one more military aid package to Kyiv, which will be announced by the end of this month.

"When that is done, we'll have no more replenishment authority available to us," White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby revealed to reporters in Washington. He added, "Ukraine still needs our help, and it's well past time for Congress to act and stand up for freedom and democracy and our own national security interests, which are very much at play."

Kirby made his remarks following Biden's insistence that lawmakers pass an additional \$60 billion in funding for Kyiv as part of an emergency spending bill that also entails aid for Israel, which politicians from both major parties widely support.



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