



INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDY
Grain Trade in the Black Sea Region

Indiana University Sponsoring Center: Robert F. Byrnes Russian and East European Institute (REEI)

Developed by:

Lindsey Grutchfield, REEI Associate Director and Outreach Coordinator

Learning Outcomes:

- A. To expand teachers' and students' knowledge about the grain trade in the Black Sea region.
- B. To identify multiple perspectives on the disputed issue.

What is the disputed issue?

International agricultural trade in the Black Sea region, in the context of war in Ukraine

In what world region and/or country is the disputed issue located?

Eastern Europe

What is the essential question that frames the disputed issue?

Which factors can impact how food gets to our tables, and to what extent does the international community have a responsibility to influence those factors?

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A. What visual resource might ignite the conversation and/or frame the disputed issue?

Figure 1. *Four Core Aspirations for the World's Food Systems*

Four Core Aspirations for the World's Food Systems



Williamson, A. (2017). *Four Core Aspirations for the World's Food Systems* [Illustration]. In World Economic Forum. *Shaping the Future of Global Food Systems: A Scenarios Analysis*. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/IP/2016/NVA/WEF_FSA_FutureofGlobalFoodSystems.pdf

Note: An illustration taken from a report published by the World Economic Forum, detailing four qualities of healthy global food systems: efficiency, sustainability, inclusivity, and nutrition and health.

B. What are the key vocabulary terms that students must know in order to understand the disputed issue?

Broker: To arrange or negotiate a settlement, deal, or plan; a person who buys and sells goods or assets for others.

Catalyst: A person or thing that causes an event

Danube Delta: The place where the Danube River flows into the Black Sea.

Humanitarian corridor: A temporary demilitarized zone created to allow humanitarian aid to pass through.

Humanitarian relief efforts: Assistance used to relieve suffering during emergency situations.

Implications: Something that is suggested or that happens indirectly.

Import duties: A tax that a country collects on imports and some exports.

Influx: The arrival or entry of many people or things.

Livelihood: A way of supporting one's existence, especially financially.

Mediate: To intervene between people in a dispute to bring about an agreement.

Negotiate: To obtain or bring about by discussion.

Plight: A dangerous, difficult, or otherwise unfortunate situation.

Solvent: The ability to pay one's debts.

Testament: Something that serves as a sign or evidence of a fact.

Territorial waters: Waters, especially parts of the sea, owned by a country.

C. What are the general descriptions and context of the disputed issue?

In modern life, food production is a global affair. At supermarkets in your hometown, you can find products from all over the world. Even a meal as simple as a peanut butter and jelly sandwich might include berries from Mexico, peanuts from China, and bread made with wheat from Kansas, Ukraine, or both. These global systems of production allow us to access an incredible variety of foods year-round, and we depend on them to cook our favorite dishes and simply to stay fed and healthy. What happens, then, when those systems of production are disrupted? What happens when farmers can't grow peanuts, or berries, or wheat; or when those products can't be transported to their next destination? This is the situation that is currently affecting Ukraine's agricultural sector.

Problems with global production and transportation systems are not unique to Eastern Europe. Many Americans may remember that during the initial months of COVID-19 quarantines some food and household products were difficult to find in stores, and often much more expensive than usual. While the **catalysts** for these problems were different from those impacting grain trade in the Black Sea region, they similarly show the importance of these food systems in our daily lives.

The war in Ukraine has seriously impacted many aspects of life in the country, but its effects on agriculture in Ukraine matter far beyond Ukraine's borders. Sometimes called "the breadbasket of Europe," Ukraine supplied about 10% of the world's grain before the war, and most of their agricultural exports traveled across the Black Sea to international ports before moving on to their next destinations. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 made it much more challenging to export grain by sea from Ukraine and reduced the amount of grain that Ukraine could export by about a third. What's more, Ukraine is not the only part of the region where agriculture is important, and farmers in many other countries have been impacted by both the new challenges of shipping grain by sea, and by international efforts to solve those challenges. All this means that agricultural trade in Eastern Europe is suddenly a challenging and contentious issue, and governments and farmers around the region have their own needs and priorities related to this topic that are in play whenever they engage in negotiations with each other.

D. What are the names of the unique multiple perspectives involved in the disputed issue?

Perspective One:	Eastern European Farmers
Perspective Two:	Government of the Republic of Türkiye
Perspective Three:	Government of Ukraine
Perspective Four:	Governments of Ukraine's Neighboring Countries (Romania, Poland, Moldova)

E. Why does the disputed issue matter?

Geographical Background

The Black Sea is bordered by six different countries: Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia. A thin strip of Ukraine prevents a seventh country, Moldova, from bordering the Black Sea, but Moldova does have a Black Sea port on the Danube River. The place where the Danube River meets the Black Sea, the Danube Delta, is an incredibly culturally and environmentally diverse wetland. It has also become an important location for trade during the war in Ukraine, as it is the place where the borders of three different allies (Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine) meet (see Figure 5). Although Poland does not border the Black Sea, it is an important country in relation to the Black Sea grain trade, as it borders and has a close relationship with Ukraine.

Historical Background

People have lived on the shores of the Black Sea since prehistoric times and, for almost as long, the Black Sea itself has been an important site for people conducting trade, expanding their territory, and battling each other. In fact, in ancient Greek mythology Jason and the Argonauts crossed the Black Sea on their quest for the golden fleece. It is fed by several large and similarly strategically and economically important rivers, including the Danube, Dnieper, Dniester, and Don. In more recent history, four of the countries bordering (or almost bordering) the Black Sea—Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova—spent most of the twentieth century as part of the Soviet Union, while two more—Romania and Bulgaria—were part of the broader Soviet Bloc. As a result, the countries around the Black Sea have a history of living, trading, and cooperating with one another. They also have long, complicated relationships with one another, which have resulted in conflict or even outright war. The most recent example of such conflict is Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which prompted Ukraine's neighboring countries of Romania, Moldova, and Poland to voice and exercise support for Ukraine against Russia.

Civic/Political Background

Currently, Romania and Bulgaria are both part of the European Union (EU), while Moldova is an EU candidate country. Russia and Ukraine are at war after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and Ukraine's neighboring countries of Romania, Moldova, and Poland have seen large-scale **influxes** of refugees. They have also opened land routes to enable Ukraine to export its grain during the war, and at the beginning of the war Türkiye, another Black Sea country, helped **broker** a deal to open a **humanitarian corridor** for grain to travel across the Black Sea.

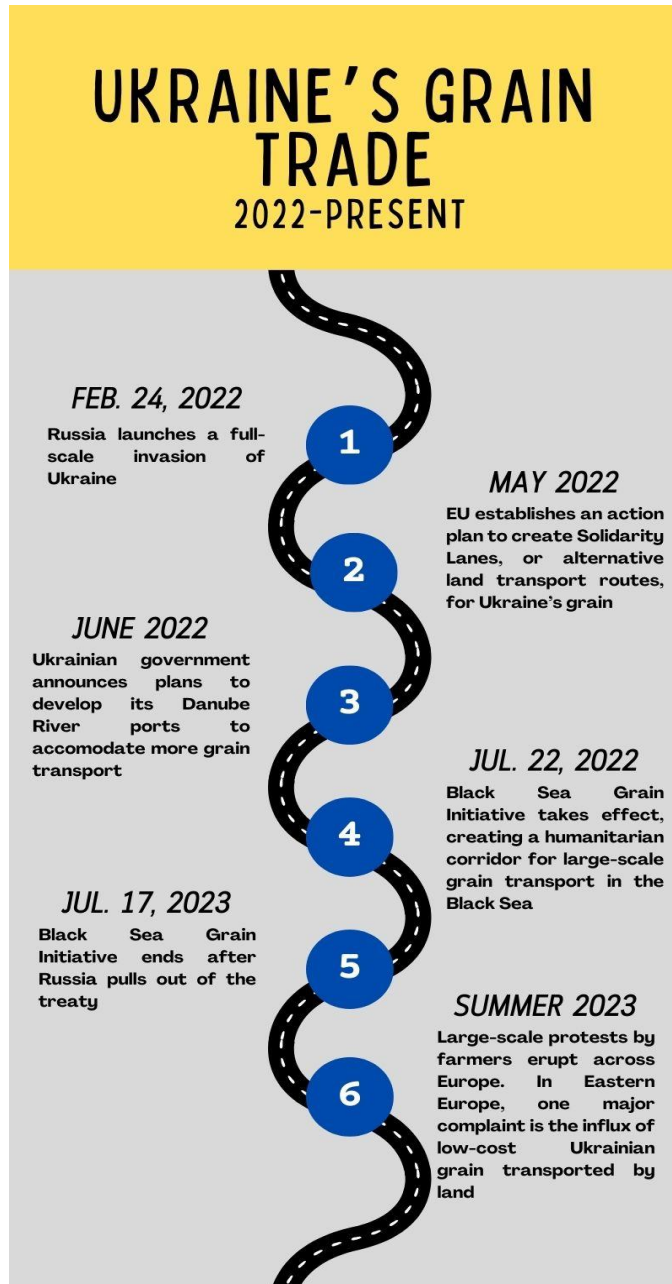
Economic Background

Before the full-scale invasion in 2022, Ukraine exported more than 60 million tons of grain a year, about 10% of the global grain market (source: Council on Foreign Relations.

<https://www.cfr.org/article/how-ukraine-overcame-russias-grain-blockade>). That number dropped by a third in 2022 and 2023 as a result of Russia's full-scale invasion. Most of Ukraine's grain is exported far beyond Europe, to lower income countries in Africa and the Middle East. At home, grain and agriculture in general are an important part of Ukraine's economy, and account for almost half of its export income. As such, grain export is critical not only to Ukraine's economy, but to food systems globally, especially for some of the world's most vulnerable people.

F. What is the timeline of significant events that are related to the disputed issue or that describe its stages?

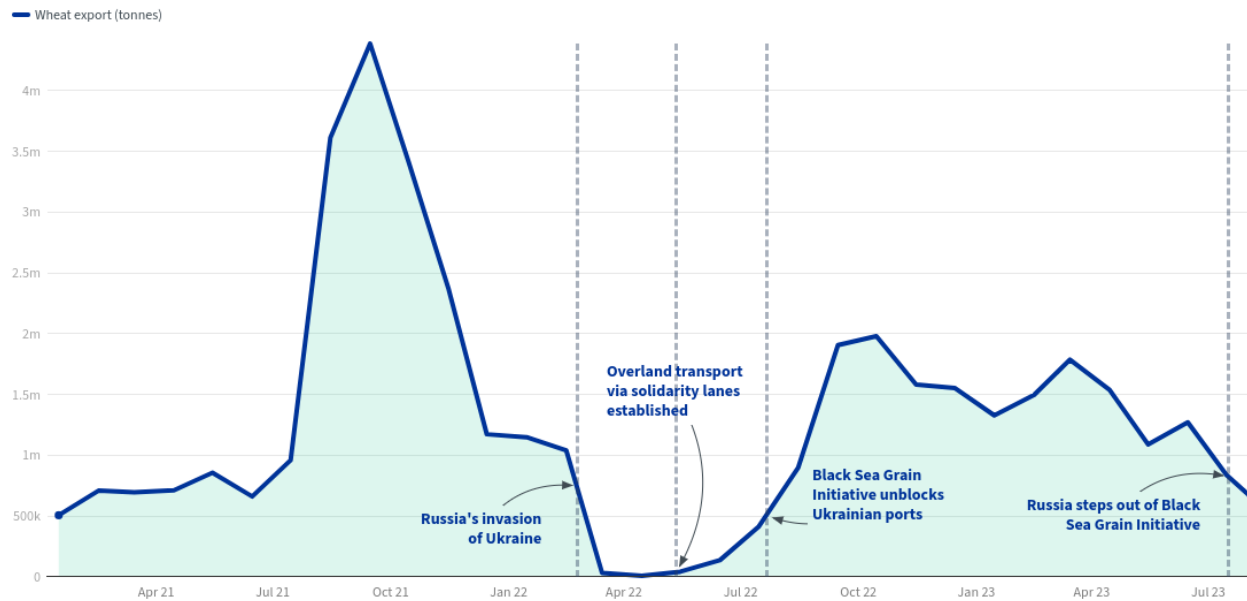
Figure 2. Ukraine's Grain Trade, 2022-Present



Grutchfield, L. (2024).

Note: This is a timeline detailing the major events covered in this case study.

Figure 3. Ukraine's wheat exports suffering from the war



Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine. (2024). In *How the Russian Invasion of Ukraine Has Further Aggravated the Global Food Crisis*. European Council, Council for the European Union. www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/how-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine-has-further-aggravated-the-global-food-crisis/

Note: This is an infographic featured in an online article by the European Council, showing tons of wheat exported by Ukraine over time since the beginning of the war.

G. What map(s) can help students understand this disputed issue better?

Figure 4. Detailed Map of the Black Sea Region



Note: This map shows the Black Sea and parts of the countries surrounding it. It also shows important cities and geographic features in those countries (legend added by author).

Figure 5. Grain Shipping Routes out of the Black Sea, During and After the Black Sea Grain Deal

Grain shipping routes out of the Black Sea



Source: United Nations

B B C

<p>Legend:</p> <p>ROMANIA – Country/Region Name</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Odesa—End point of route <p>Black Sea—Body of water</p>	<p>North ^ West < > East v South</p>
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Map Source: *How much grain Is Ukraine exporting and how is it leaving the country?* BBC News. (2024). www.bbc.com/news/world-61759692

Note: This map shows Ukraine's grain shipping routes to Istanbul and out of the Black Sea, contrasting the routes during and after the Black Sea Grain deal (legend added by author).

Figure 6. Ports in the Danube Delta used to export Ukraine's grain

Ports used to export Ukraine's grain



<p>Legend:</p> <p>ROMANIA – Country Name</p> <p>○ Constanta—port used by Ukraine</p> <p>Canal—body of water</p>	<p>North ^ West < > East v South</p>
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Map Source: *How much grain Is Ukraine exporting and how is it leaving the country?* BBC News. (2024). www.bbc.com/news/world-61759692

Note: This map shows the Danube River Delta and the ports in and around the Delta which Ukraine uses to export its grain (legend added by author).

H. What short (6-to-10-minute) video can provide an overall understanding of the disputed issue?



Video Title: [War on the Water: Who Controls the Black Sea?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKstz7lt8X0)
URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKstz7lt8X0>
Alternative Search: On YouTube, type in "DW News who controls the Black Sea"
Author: DW News
Year: 2023
Length: 15:58 (watch only 0:00-3:22)

Note: This video shows a brief overview of the ways that the Black Sea grain trade from Ukraine has been impacted by Russia's invasion (the part of the video that you will watch), before beginning an analysis of the geopolitics of the Black Sea today.

I. What additional deliberations questions complement the essential question?

1. Who is impacted when agricultural trade is disrupted, and how?
2. In addition to military conflict, what other factors can make it difficult for food products to get from farms to your local supermarket?
3. What kind of support or assistance, if any, should farmers get from their government?

J. What optional and supplementary resources might shape an understanding of the disputed issue?

Parallel US example of the disputed issue:

- Consumer product shortages during COVID-19

Novels, short stories, poetry, documentaries, videos, etc.:

- Caroline Eden, *Black Sea: Dispatches and Recipes, through Darkness and Light* (2018)
- *Ted The Black Sea* | #TEDAnimation. Darvideo Animation studio. (2021). YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_CcuHzVkqo

Websites that cover the issue, as a whole, with good reliability and validity:

- Analysis and expert opinion pieces on current events in the Black Sea Region: *Black Sea Program*. Middle East Institute. <https://www.mei.edu/programs/black-sea>
- Reliable news source for regional events in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Eurasianet. <https://eurasianet.org/>

K. What are some ways in which students might safely civically engage in response to this case study?

Find suggestions at:

- **Better World Info**—many different topics and ways to take action:
<https://www.betterworld.info>
- **DoSomething**—has campaigns to join and challenges to take action:
<https://www.dosomething.org/us>



- **Global Citizen**—offers petitions to sign on various global issues:
<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/take-action/>
- **The Global Goals**—suggests ways to take action on the 17 UN Sustainability Goals:
<https://www.globalgoals.org/take-action/>
- **United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**—"The Lazy Person's Guide to Saving the World": <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/>



MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES HANDOUTS FOLLOW ON NEXT PAGES*

HANDOUTS ARE ONLY FOR STUDENT SMALL GROUP PRESENTATIONS

***NOTE: These are not to be handed out to the whole class, but to small groups after the class has learned about the case content.**

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PERSPECTIVE ONE*:

Eastern European Farmers

***This perspective description is being handed out to your team only.**

NOTE: This description is written from the perspective of farmers living and working in Poland, Romania, and Moldova.

General Description: It is a difficult time to be a farmer in Eastern Europe. Climate change has made harvests unpredictable, the EU and national governments heavily regulate agricultural practices, and to make matters worse, these countries are absolutely flooded with cheap Ukrainian grain. Even exporting grain from their own countries is difficult, because border crossings are clogged by Ukrainian farmers. The EU has ended **import duties** on Ukrainian agricultural products, which means that they are prioritizing the needs of Ukrainian farmers over those in other East European countries. Farmers' own governments don't seem to care about their needs either, so farmers must constantly protest to make their voices heard.

Values: Self-reliance, Stability, Competition

Comments and Resources Supporting this Perspective:

- Farmers' own governments seem to ignore their needs, supporting Ukrainian farmers over their own farmers, being slow to pay subsidies, and making farmers pay high prices for fuel. Farmers around Europe have been protesting as a result.

Resource: *Europe's farmer protests are spreading. Here's where and why.* Politico. (2024). <https://www.politico.eu/article/farmer-protest-europe-map-france-siege-paris-germany-poland/>

- Not only are Moldovan farmers overwhelmed trying to compete with the cheap Ukrainian grain traveling through their country, but they can't even export their grain due to long lines at border crossings. Moldovan farmers understand that it isn't safe for Ukrainian drivers to wait on the Ukrainian side of the border, but it's also not reasonable for Moldovans to wait days just to leave their own country!

Resource: *Moldova's grain harvest is stuck in the global food bottleneck.* Euronews. (2023). <https://www.euronews.com/2023/11/19/moldovas-grain-harvest-is-stuck-in->



[the-global-food-bottleneck#:~:text=Because%20of%20Russian%20bombings%2C%20Ukrainians,Black%20Sea%20Region%20has%20seen](#)

- Even after farmers' protests, the EU has chosen to continue suspending import duties on Ukrainian agricultural products, with only a few exceptions named as protections for farmers.

Resource: *Deal to extend trade support for Ukraine with safeguards for EU farmers.*

European Parliament: News. (2024). <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20240318IPR19422/deal-to-extend-trade-support-for-ukraine-with-safeguards-for-eu-farmers>

Comments and Resources Opposing this Perspective:

- Governments have been very supportive and willing to **negotiate** with farmers—for example, the Romanian government ended a weeks-long protest by negotiating with farmers in early February.

Resource: *Romanian agreement with farmers, hauliers ends protests.* RadioFreeEurope. (2024). <https://www.rferl.org/a/romania-deal-protests-farmers-truckers/32803237.html>

- A major cause of Moldovan farmers' anger is the government's rejection of their demands for more support in the form of subsidies to counteract bad growing seasons caused by climate change. However, the government has already allocated large sums of money to supporting farmers, saving 3,000 farmers from insolvency.

Resource: *Spanish, Polish and Moldovan farmers continue to denounce EU policies.*

Euronews. (2024). <https://www.euronews.com/2024/02/13/spanish-polish-and-moldovan-farmers-continue-to-denounce-eu-policies>

- When the European Parliament decided to continue to suspend import duties for Ukrainian goods, they included provisions to protect European farmers.

Resource: *The EU's new import deal would support Ukraine while protecting the bloc's farmers.* AP News. (2024). <https://apnews.com/article/eu-urkaine-grain-imports-deal-farmers-f35b1b56c6daa4ff6bafa2ea159f5b03>

Primary Outcomes of Perspective: Farmers feel ignored by their governments and the EU, who are prioritizing the needs of Ukraine over the needs of their own people. If this continues, farmers will be unable to continue to make a living from farming. When farmers protest, it's not

because they are being unreasonable, but because it is impossible for them to live and feed their families without restrictions on Ukrainian grain imports.

Secondary Consequences: Governments have shown that they are willing to listen to their farmers and work with them, by granting subsidies and negotiating following protests. But farmers just keep pushing for more. Farmers need to understand that their governments have to balance their needs with the need for regional security and the global food trade.

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PERSPECTIVE TWO*:

Government of the Republic of Türkiye

***This perspective description is being handed out to your team only.**

NOTE: This description is written from the perspective of members of the Republic of Türkiye's government .

General Description: As an important regional power in the Black Sea Region, it is only natural that Türkiye has taken a leadership role in regional diplomacy since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. One of the most important outcomes of the diplomacy was the Black Sea Grain Initiative, or Black Sea Grain Deal, which established a humanitarian corridor for grain to travel safely by ship from Ukraine to Istanbul (source: *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/20/what-was-the-black-sea-grain-deal-and-why-did-it-collapse>). Russia pulled out of the grain deal in July 2023, but Türkiye's leadership in the region did not end then. The Turkish government has made it a priority to negotiate a new grain deal, and ultimately to negotiate peace between Ukraine and Russia. As a leader in the region, Türkiye cares deeply about stability and food security, and is willing to carefully **mediate** and balance the needs of Russia, Ukraine, and the rest of the region to keep the region safe and ultimately return peace to the Black Sea.

Values: Security, Stability, Cooperation

Comments and Resources Supporting this Perspective:

- Solving the problem of Ukrainian grain in the Black Sea requires a mediator like Türkiye, which can balance the priorities of both Russia and Ukraine with the need for regional security. Other countries are too hot-headed and, because they can't maintain this delicate balance, might cause the war to spread beyond Ukraine.
Resource: *Turkey's goals in the Russia-Ukraine war*. Wilson Center. (2022).
<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/turkeys-goals-russia-ukraine-war>
- Türkiye is deeply concerned with the breakdown of the initial Black Sea Grain Deal because of its **implications** for food security and stability, but it is uniquely positioned to reopen grain trade across the Black Sea. In other words, another deal brokered by



Türkiye is the only way to get enough of Ukraine's grain out of the country in wartime, and Türkiye will make that deal possible.

Resource: *FM Fidan highlights importance of reviving Ukraine grain deal.* Daily Sabah. (2023). <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/fm-fidan-highlights-importance-of-reviving-ukraine-grain-deal>

- Türkiye has taken on an important leadership role since the beginning of the war, one which goes beyond grain deals and includes the ultimate goal of peace—the only way for trade to truly return to normal on the Black Sea.

Resource: *Erdogan offers to host Ukraine-Russian peace summit after meeting Zelenskiy.* Reuters. (2024). <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-stress-ukraine-support-during-zelenskiy-visit-turkish-source-says-2024-03-08/>

Comments and Resources Opposing this Perspective:

- The first grain deal was useful, but it's time for Türkiye to take on a stronger leadership role in the region and stop trying to balance the priorities of Ukraine and Russia.

Resource: *One year into the war, it's time for Turkey to reconsider its Ukraine-Russia balancing act.* Atlantic Council. (2023). <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/turkeysource/one-year-into-the-war-its-time-for-turkey-to-reconsider-its-ukraine-russia-balancing-act/>

- By focusing so much on the grain deal, Türkiye is allowing Russia to distract from the real problem: Russia's blockades and bombings of Ukrainian ports. Lifting such blockades is much more important to global food security than another grain deal.

Resource: *In Turkish-Russian relations, the Ukraine grain deal is not the point.* Middle East Institute. (2022). <https://www.mei.edu/publications/turkish-russian-relations-ukraine-grain-deal-not-point>

- Ukraine has found other ways to export grain despite the lack of a new grain deal, so another one would be obsolete.

Resource: *Ukraine has new way to get grain to world despite Russia's threat in Black Sea.* VOA. (2023). <https://www.voanews.com/a/ukraine-has-new-way-to-get-grain-to-world-despite-russia-s-threat-in-black-sea/7372950.html>

Primary Outcomes of Perspective: The Black Sea Grain Initiative was a crucial humanitarian effort by Türkiye, without which it would have been impossible for large quantities of grain to leave Ukraine in the early days of the war. Such an effort demonstrated Türkiye's leadership

and commitment to food security and stability, and Türkiye's diplomatic actions since then have shown that it is the only country that can mediate such a delicate situation by re-establishing another grain deal, bringing peace to the region, and ensuring that Ukraine's agricultural products can be safely exported for decades to come.

Secondary Consequences: The Black Sea Grain Initiative was helpful, but Türkiye is only focusing on it as a way to gain more power and influence for itself. Focusing so closely on this one project means that Türkiye is willing to let Russia walk all over it, without any new grain deal resulting. Türkiye needs to remember that it is not the only country trying to help the situation and accept that it doesn't need to be the leader all the time. Besides, Ukraine has already found other ways to export grain, so there is no need for another grain deal.

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PERSPECTIVE THREE*:

Government of Ukraine

***This perspective description is being handed out to your team only.**

NOTE: This description is written from the perspective of members of Ukraine's government.

General Description: Ukraine is in a fight for its very survival, and safely exporting its grain, which is an important part of Ukraine's economy, is more important than ever. Still, Ukraine faces great obstacles in achieving this task—Russia is bombing its ports and is refusing another grain deal. To make matters worse, Ukraine can no longer count on unconditional support from its neighbors. Neighboring countries in Europe were initially supportive in response to Ukraine's export problems, establishing alternative export routes over land through their own countries. However, their citizens have recently grown angry because Ukrainian imports have lowered prices for their own goods. As a result, Ukraine can no longer count on anyone but itself, and has been fighting to export its grain by many different methods over both sea and land.

Values: Freedom, Security, Community

Comments and Resources Supporting this Perspective:

- Ukraine depends on its agricultural exports for the health of its economy and needs to be able to sell its grain outside the country. Since the Black Sea Grain Deal collapsed, Ukraine has been using several different routes to export grain, but it is still much more dangerous, difficult, and expensive than before.

Resource: *How Russia's blockade of Black Sea ports is hitting Ukraine's economy [WSJ].* The Wall Street Journal. (2023). YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFgFTD4xoEA>

- Lately, even Ukraine's allies in Europe have been unsympathetic to their export problems, protesting at their borders and blocking their exports. If their neighbors and allies are willing to protest and block their grain exports when Ukraine most needs their support, Ukraine will have no choice but to block imports from their neighbors, which makes the situation more difficult for everyone and supports Russia's military goals.



Resource: *Fracturing solidarity: The grain trade dispute between Ukraine and the European Union.* Center for Strategic and International Studies. (2024).

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/fracturing-solidarity-grain-trade-dispute-between-ukraine-and-european-union>

- Russia has been relentlessly bombarding Ukrainian ports, purposefully trying to keep them from exporting their grain to the places that need it most and preventing a new humanitarian corridor. Despite this, and against all odds, Ukraine has persevered, finding new ways to export its grain *on its own*, even without a new Black Sea Grain Deal, and with our neighbors complaining about exports by land.

Resource: *How Ukraine overcame Russia's grain blockade.* Council for Foreign Relations.

(2024). <https://www.cfr.org/article/how-ukraine-overcame-russias-grain-blockade#:~:text=Before%20Russia%20launched%20its%20full,14%20percent%20of%20its%20jobs>

Comments and Resources Opposing this Perspective:

- Ukraine is demanding that its European neighbors punish their citizens who are upset about Ukrainian imports. But these countries have already invested their money, time, and effort into making land imports from Ukraine possible—they aren't obligated to do anything more when they have already been so supportive.

Resource: *Ukraine demands Poland punish protesting farmers for dumping grain.*

Aljazeera. (2024). <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/26/ukraine-calls-on-poland-to-punish-those-responsible-for-grain-spill>

Primary Outcomes of Perspective: In this time of war, Ukraine faces great challenges in exporting its grain. Rather than complaining about their own political and economic issues, Ukraine's allies need to understand that there are bigger things at stake. Ukraine has bravely and resourcefully found alternative ways to export its grain, even under heavy bombing of its ports, but it needs the support of its neighbors to continue exporting grain during wartime.

Secondary Consequences: Ukraine is alienating its neighbors by being ungrateful for their support. If Ukraine keeps threatening to block imports from its neighbors, those countries will no longer be so ready to import Ukraine's grain, especially since they're risking their own economies in the process.

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PERSPECTIVE FOUR*:

Governments of Ukraine's Neighboring Countries (Romania, Poland, Moldova)

***This perspective description is being handed out to your team only.**

NOTE: This description is written from the perspective of members of the governments of Romania, Poland, and Moldova.

General Description: Romania, Poland, and Moldova have been nothing but supportive of Ukraine since the beginning of the war, from taking in countless refugees to organizing **humanitarian relief efforts**, even though they themselves are not rich countries with a lot of resources. Romania, Poland, and Moldova also understand Ukraine's agricultural **plight** and have done much to help—they have created special routes for Ukrainian grain to travel out of the country by land (in the EU countries of Poland and Romania these are called solidarity lanes), and Romania has allowed Ukraine access to its **territorial waters** in the Black Sea and the **Danube Delta**, even at risk of war spilling over from Ukraine into these waters. However, the governments of these countries also need to listen to and support their own people and, in the case of Romania and Poland, follow EU regulations. As the war drags on and their own farmers start to worry about the effects of cheap Ukrainian grain on their **livelihoods**, it's not fair to expect Romania, Poland, and Moldova to continue to prioritize Ukraine's economy over their own people.

Values: Security, Cooperation, Self-Reliance

Comments and Resources Supporting this Perspective:

- The Danube Delta is a critical lifeline for grain leaving Ukraine—and this critical lifeline is only possible with Romania's support, which they continue to give despite the danger of stray bombs.

Resource: *Ukraine's neglected Danube region is a crucial front in the war with Russia.* Atlantic Council. (2023). <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraines-neglected-danube-region-is-a-crucial-front-in-the-war-with-russia/>

- Cheap Ukrainian grain is absolutely overwhelming the economies of neighboring countries. When countries like Moldova talk about restricting or banning grain imports,

it's not because they don't support Ukraine, but because they don't have any other choice if they want their own agricultural economies to remain **solvent**.

Resource: *Ukraine threatens to bar Moldovan imports amid grain dispute*. BalkanInsight. (2023). <https://balkaninsight.com/2023/05/09/ukraine-threatens-to-bar-moldovan-imports-amid-grain-dispute/>

- Poland is happy to maintain its solidarity lanes and support its neighbor Ukraine, but it can only do so if the grain that travels through the country actually leaves it to go further abroad. Since Poland is now flooded with Ukrainian grain, there need to be more regulations on that grain, or at least an import tax, so that it does not overwhelm the Polish grain market and ruin Polish farmers' livelihoods.

Resource: *Grain dance: What Poland wants in return for its solidarity with Ukraine*. Poltico. (2023). <https://www.politico.eu/article/grain-poland-solidarity-ukraine/>

Comments and Resources Opposing this Perspective:

- Ukraine has one challenge facing its agricultural sector that neighboring countries do not: a war. Any restrictions that those neighboring countries place on grain exports are unacceptable and cruel—they have real consequences in the form of human lives lost and show that European countries don't care about their neighbor very much after all.

Resource: *Zelensky: Any extension of EU ban on Ukraine imports "unacceptable"*. AFP English. (2023). Dailymotion. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8mrkxk>

Primary Outcomes of Perspective: Since the end of the Black Sea Grain Deal, exporting any grain at all from Ukraine would be impossible without the support of Ukraine's neighboring countries: Poland, Romania, and Moldova. The fact that grain can be transported via land solidarity routes and by sea via the Danube Delta and Romania's territorial waters is a **testament** to that ongoing support. In order for such support to continue, however, these countries need to impose some restrictions or taxes on Ukrainian grain exports, because they can't help Ukraine without supporting their own people first.

Secondary Consequences: The governments of Poland, Romania, and Moldova talk about supporting Ukraine, but their actions tell another story. Ukraine is fighting a war and trying to feed the world at the same time, and to place restrictions on Ukrainian grain leaving the country makes it harder to do both of those things. The governments of these countries need to understand that there is more at stake than the health of their agricultural sectors—people's lives and the fate of an entire country hang in the balance.