EU TRADE EXPLORER

Market evolution: Tractors (CN 8701) — 2015–2025

Introduction

EU external trade in tractors (CN 8701), covering agricultural and road tractors (excl. heading 8709), experienced a pronounced boom-and-bust cycle between 2015 and 2025. After a pandemic-driven dip, exports and imports surged to historic highs in 2023 before correcting sharply. The period also saw a major reorientation of trade partners, a strengthening of the EU's net-exporter position, and a sustained shift toward higher-powered and road-tractor models. This report dissects the main dynamics using the dashboard data.

A boom-and-bust cycle: the 2022–2023 export surge and subsequent correction

Exports skyrocketed to an all-time high of EUR 17.1 billion in 2023, driven overwhelmingly by road tractors

EU tractor exports expanded from EUR 9.67 billion in 2015 to a peak of EUR 17.10 billion in 2023, a cumulative rise of 77 % before falling back to EUR 11.62 billion in 2025 (still 20.2 % above the 2015 level). The volume followed a similar arc — from 1.49 million units to a 2023 maximum of 1.97 million units, then retreating to 1.62 million units in 2025. As the General trade overview shows, the roller-coaster ride was almost entirely propelled by road tractors for semi-trailers (CN 870121). The Product segment comparison reveals that road tractor exports leapt from virtually zero in early years to 1.39 million units in 2023, worth EUR 10.0 billion, before receding to 1.24 million units in 2025 (EUR 7.1 billion). High-power models (870194 and 870195) also contributed strongly but peaked simultaneously.

Table 1 – EU tractor trade, 2015-2025

Year	Exports (bn EUR)	Imports (bn EUR)	Balance (bn EUR)
2015	9.67	2.05	7.63
2016	8.85	2.12	6.74
2017	9.82	2.35	7.47
2018	9.39	3.30	6.09
2019	9.57	3.36	6.21
2020	8.40	2.77	5.63
2021	11.47	3.54	7.93
2022	14.33	4.47	9.86
2023	17.10	5.04	12.06
2024	13.58	3.41	10.17
2025	11.62	3.73	7.89

Source: General trade overview.

Import values also peaked in 2023, but unit prices rose even faster, pushing average import prices up 40 % over the decade

Imports followed a similar, albeit less extreme, boom-bust pattern. The import bill climbed from EUR 2.05 billion in 2015 to EUR 5.04 billion in 2023 (+146 %) before falling to EUR 3.73 billion in 2025 — still 82.5 % above the 2015 value. Import volumes grew from 298 000 units to a peak of 506 000 units in 2023, then settled at 389 000 units in 2025 (+30.5 % over the decade). The unit price of imported tractors jumped from EUR 6 868 in 2015 to EUR 9 603 in 2025, a 39.8 % increase that outpaced the export price gain (+10.8 % to EUR 7 185). Thus, the import surge was partly price-driven, reflecting a shift towards higher-specification machines.

After the peak, both exports and imports corrected sharply in 2024-2025, reflecting post-boom normalisation

In 2024, exports dropped to EUR 13.58 billion and imports to EUR 3.41 billion; the trend continued into 2025. The correction was broad-based across product categories, with road tractor exports (870121) losing 11 % in volume and high-power tractor exports (870195) falling by 35 % from their 2023 highs. This contraction points to a cooling of the exceptional demand pressures — likely linked to the unwinding of supply-chain disruptions, easing agricultural commodity prices, and higher financing costs — that had supercharged trade in 2022-2023.

Geopolitical realignments redraw the trade map: Türkiye's rise, Russia's collapse, and import diversification

Türkiye emerged as the dominant import supplier, with EU imports surging by nearly 870 % over the period

Türkiye's tractor exports to the EU soared from EUR 104 million in 2015 to EUR 1 005 million in 2025 (+866.9 %), making it the largest external supplier, according to the Top partners by value data. Other notable gainers on the import side were China (+694.2 %), India (+287.1 %), and Korea (+121.3 %). Conversely, imports from the United States contracted by 17.7 % and from Japan by 27.8 %, while the United Kingdom remained a major but steadier source (+32.9 %).

Table 2 – Top EU import partners (value, EUR million)

Partner	2015	2025	Change (%)
Türkiye	104	1 005	+866.9
UK	598	795	+32.9
USA	656	540	-17.7
China	76	603	+694.2
India	57	222	+287.1

Source: Top partners by value.

The Russian market for EU tractors imploded after the 2022 invasion, triggering a historic price shock of +128 % for the few units still exported

EU exports to Russia, which had been a top-five destination in the late 2010s (EUR 0.76 billion in 2018), collapsed to EUR 22 million in 2025. Volumes plunged from over 100 000 units per year to just 1 216 units. The Price shock events dashboard identifies a massive price shock centred in 2023, when the average unit price leapt by 127.7 % relative to the 2021-2022 baseline — a consequence of sanctions drastically curtailing supply while residual demand persisted for high-value spare parts or specialised equipment. This event alone explains much of the heightened export price volatility (Russia's coefficient of variation: 0.85).

Import concentration fell markedly, as China, India, and Korea gained share, while traditional suppliers such as the US and Japan lost ground

The Herfindahl-Hirschman Index for import value declined from 2 105 in 2015 to 1 733 in 2025 (−17.7 %), as shown by the Concentration (HHI) indicator. This diversification, driven by the rapid growth of Türkiye, China, and India, has reduced the EU's reliance on any single foreign supplier. Export concentration, by contrast, remained relatively stable (HHI around 775–800), indicating that the EU's customer base did not undergo a dramatic structural shift despite the Russia disruption.

Strengthened net-exporter position backed by core EU manufacturing specialisation

Net import reliance turned sharply more negative, from -31 % in 2015 to -81 % in 2024, as export propensity nearly doubled

The EU's net-import reliance percentage — a measure of net imports relative to apparent consumption — moved from -30.7 % in 2015 to -80.6 % in 2024, meaning the bloc became an even stronger net exporter, as detailed under Net import reliance. This shift was accompanied by a rise in the export propensity (the share of production exported) from 26.3 % in 2015 to 47.4 % in 2024. In other words, the sector has become far more integrated into global markets, with almost half of production now destined for non-EU customers.

Production volumes recovered to around 239 000 units in 2024, enabling the growing export orientation

EU-level production of CN 8701 tractors stood at an estimated 238 525 units in 2024, up from 115 204 units in 2015, though annual figures are subject to varying reliability (many are rounded estimates). The Production volumes data suggest that domestic output has roughly doubled over the decade, underpinning the expansion of exports. Production value, however, remained essentially flat at about EUR 1.8 billion, implying that the additional output consisted largely of less expensive units or that significant unit-price decreases occurred.

Exports remain concentrated in a handful of Member States with strong revealed comparative advantage

According to the Export specialisation data for 2025, Finland (RSCA 0.38), Sweden (0.33), France (0.27), Belgium (0.20), and Germany (0.11) are the most specialised exporters of tractors. These five countries alone account for more than 60 % of total EU external tractor exports. At the other extreme, Ireland, Greece, Cyprus, and Portugal display strongly negative specialisation indices, confirming that tractor manufacturing is heavily clustered in the north-west of the Union.

Conclusion

The EU tractor market underwent a dramatic cycle: a strong post-pandemic recovery gave way to an extraordinary export and import boom in 2022-2023, powered by road tractors, before a sharp correction in 2024-2025. Geopolitical upheaval — above all the loss of the Russian market and the meteoric rise of Türkiye as a supplier — reshaped trade patterns, while import diversification significantly lowered supplier concentration. Structurally, the EU reinforced its status as a net exporter, with production rebounding and export propensity climbing. The sector's fortunes remain heavily tied to demand for high-power tractors and road tractors, and to the ability of core manufacturing Member States to maintain their competitive edge in a more volatile, multipolar trading environment.

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