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Agric. Econ. – Czech

Török A., Jámbor A.:

Agri-food trade of the new member states since the EU accession

Agric. Econ. – Czech, 59 (2013): 101-112

In 2004 and 2007, twelve New Member States (NMS) joined the European Union (EU), causing several changes in the field of agriculture. One of the major changes was the transformation of the national agri-food trade. The aim of the paper is to analyse the effects of the EU accession

on the NMS agri-food trade, especially considering the revealed comparative advantages. The results suggest that the intensity of the NMS agri-food trade has increased significantly after the accession, though there was a serious deterioration in the NMS agri-food trade balance in most cases. It has also become evident that the NMS agri-food trade was highly concentrated by country and by product, though the concentration has not changed significantly after the EU accession. Moreover, our analyses highlight one of the most important characteristics of the NMS agri-food trade structure – the focus on the agri-food raw materials in export together with the agri-food processed products in import. As to the NMS agri-food trade specialisation, the diversity among member states becomes apparent. Almost all countries experienced a decrease in their comparative advantage after the accession, though it still remained at an acceptable level in most cases. As for the stability of the comparative advantage, the results suggest a weakening trend, underpinned by the convergence of the pattern of revealed comparative advantage. By estimating the survival

function to the sample, it can be observed that the accession has radically changed the survival time of agri-food trade, meaning that the revealed comparative advantage has not turned out to be persistent in the period analysed. From the policy perspective, there is a clear need for structural changes in the NMS agriculture and agri-food sector in order to tackle the negative tendencies of the national agri-food trade. The most important long-term goal should be the production and export of higher value-added processed products based on domestic raw materials.

Keywords:

agri-food trade, EU accession, New Member States

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