

Economic Cooperation Attempts between Sweden and Romania (1939–1944)*

Zviedrijas un Rumānijas ekonomiskās sadarbības mēģinājumi (1939–1944)

Andreea Dahlquist, Dr.

General Secretary of the Romanian Association for Baltic and Nordic Studies
University Valahia of Târgoviște
Lt. Stancu Ion 35, 130105 Târgoviște, Romania
E-mail: andreeaarch87@gmail.com

During the Second World War, both Sweden and Romania tried to balance their economies despite pressure from the Great Powers. The progression of war made a closer collaboration between these two nations possible, increasing their trade. This article aims to follow the evolution of Swedish-Romanian economic relations between 1940–1944, identify successful businesses and highlight the challenges faced during this period. The main difficulties that impeded the Swedish-Romanian economic cooperation were Germany's refusal to issue transit licenses, Romanian anarchic trade practices and the inefficiency of the clearing system. The most significant event would be the signing of the first trade treaty between Sweden and Romania on 5 May 1943.

Keywords: trade, Second World War, Sweden, Romania, Germany, war economy, trade agreement.

Otrā pasaules kara laikā gan Zviedrija, gan Rumānija centās sabalansēt savu ekonomiku, neraugoties uz lielvaru spiedienu. Kara attīstība padarīja iespējamu ciešāku sadarbību starp šīm divām valstīm, palielinot to savstarpējo tirdzniecību. Šī raksta mērķis ir izsekot Zviedrijas un Rumānijas ekonomisko attiecību attīstībai no 1940. līdz 1944. gadam, identificēt veiksmīgus uzņēmumus un izcelt problēmas, ar kurām šajā periodā nācās saskarties. Galvenās grūtības, kas pasliktināja Zviedrijas un Rumānijas ekonomisko sadarbību, bija Vācijas atteikums izsniegt tranzīta licences, anarhiska tirdzniecības prakse un kliringa sistēmas neefektivitāte.

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Nozīmīgākais notikums bija pirmā tirdzniecības līguma parakstīšana starp Zviedriju un Rumāniju 1943. gada 5. maijā.

Atslēgvārdi: tirdzniecība, Otrais pasaules karš, Zviedrija, Rumānija, Vācija, kara ekonomika, tirdzniecības līgums.

Introduction

On the eve of the Second World War, Sweden did not have close economic relations with Romania, as illustrated in the paragraphs below. The Swedish government focused on regulating trade by signing treaties and agreements with Germany, Great Britain, the USA, and the Nordic countries. On the other hand, Romania had good economic ties with Germany, Great Britain, France, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.

Trade between Sweden and Romania developed simultaneously with the diplomatic and consular relations established by the two countries. Sweden was the first to move forward and opened its first consular representations on Romanian territory in Galați (1851), Brăila (1852), Bucharest (1852) and Constanța (1880). Romania established one vice-consulate in Gothenburg and two honorary consulates in Stockholm and Malmö. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 20th century the trade between Sweden and Romania was unremarkable. The situation changed when the Romanian authorities adopted laws facilitating the entry of foreign capital in sectors such as agriculture and industry. Among the investors were Swedes who had become interested in providing capital for the modernization of the oil industry.¹

During the interwar period, Sweden and Romania decided the legal framework for their trade through ministerial notes. In November 1921, the governments of both

states agreed to extend the stipulations of the Bern Convention on the International Transport of Goods by Rail, signed on 14 October 1890.² Initially, the document was signed by Austria-Hungary, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Russia, and Switzerland. The convention extended gradually, and other countries acceded to it. Romania signed the agreement in 1904 and Sweden – in 1907.³ This document imposed a supranational law concerning freight transport for the first time. The new law entered into force in 1893, the same year the Central Office for International Carriage by Rail was established. This central body was responsible for ensuring the implementation, maintenance, and revision of the agreement. The Office also had the authority to intervene and solve conflicts between railway companies.⁴

Through ministerial notes dated 11 November and 18 December 1922, the Swedish and Romanian governments signed a preliminary agreement regarding commercial and economic relations. This document would be essential for further development of the trade between Sweden and Romania as both countries accorded, based on mutual application, the most favoured nation clause; this meant that trade partners should treat each other equally, without providing special terms to one specific country. However, the agreement's provisions did not apply to coastal shipping or to special benefits that Sweden may grant to Norway and Denmark, if these were not then also extended to other countries.⁵

A significant event for the Swedish-Romanian trade was the \$30 million loan granted to Romania by the Kreuger Group in 1929. In return, the Romanian government would concede to Kreuger the match monopoly in the whole country, as well as the electricity production and distribution monopoly in three counties (Brașov,

Vâlcea and Vaslui).⁶ This business represented an opportunity not only for Swedish Match (STAB) and Elektro-Invest, but also for other companies that opened offices in Romania and increased their exports. Notable companies in this category included L. M. Ericsson (leading phone company), ASEA (electrical engineering company), Garvämnes AB Weibull (tannin provider), SKF (multinational company of bearings) and Helsingborgs Gummifabriks AB (rubber factory).

The trade between Sweden and Romania intensified, especially following the renewal of the preliminary agreement signed in 1922. The new document, which included five articles, was ratified by the Swedish Minister Plenipotentiary in Bucharest, Jonas Alströmer, and by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Alexandru Vaida-Voievod, on 26 July 1930.⁷ This convention subsequently provided positive results, which were reflected in the statistics compiled by the authorities of both states. Thus, between 1936–1937, the Romanian state budget received 275 million lei as a result of trade with Sweden.⁸ However, Sweden failed to maintain a balanced trade; imports from Romania increased considerably, while exports to this country sometimes did not even reach half the amount of imports. In 1939, for example, Sweden bought goods from Romania worth 6.8 million Swedish crowns (SEK), while exported goods amounted to only 1.2 million SEK.⁹ However, the situation changed following the German invasion of Denmark and Norway, and the launch of the Barbarossa Operation. Both nations then understood the necessity of increasing their trade to avoid total monopoly of Germany.

Swedish-Romanian bilateral relations, including those of an economic nature,¹⁰

have only recently become a subject of interest for historiography, hence, many aspects have been only partially analysed. The primary purpose of this paper is to highlight the dynamics of Swedish-Romanian economic cooperation during 1939–1944. This timeframe is of particular interest, as both years greatly impacted Swedish-Romanian trade. The invasion of Poland by both Germany and the Soviet Union affected one of the direct railway networks that connected Romania to the Port of Szczecin and the Baltic Sea. The following year, Germany took control of Öresund and Skagerrak by invading Denmark and Norway, thereby cutting economic ties between Sweden, North America, and South America. On 6 September 1940, General Ion Antonescu named himself “Conducătorul Statului” and established a military dictatorship after King Michael appointed him as prime minister with absolute power. Antonescu, one of Hitler’s most devoted allies, would make several decisions that influenced trade between Romania and Sweden. We chose to end our investigation at the events of 1944 because, in September, Romania would join the Allies and fight against Germany. This significant change dramatically influenced Romania’s economy and trade with other countries, including Sweden.

Our research is based mainly on primary sources we identified in the Swedish National Archive from Stockholm and the Diplomatic Archives of the Romanian Foreign Ministry from Bucharest. During our systematic study of the archival documents, we attempted to address the following questions: Which events marked the Swedish-Romanian economic cooperation? What challenges were faced by Swedish-Romanian trade, and how did the authorities of both countries solve them?

Swedish-Romanian trade between 1939–1942: Challenges and opportunities

Sweden and Romania declared neutrality at the beginning of the Second World War. The countries tried to balance their economies in the face of pressure from Germany, France, and Great Britain, whose goals included monopolizing the Romanian oil market and Swedish iron ore export. The situation became complicated for Sweden following the Soviet Union's attack on Finland. The Winter War blocked the harbour of Petsamo, and sailing the Baltic Sea became almost impossible. The war's evolution led to the rupture of economic ties between Sweden and East Asia, which affected the Swedish economy. Several industries lacked raw materials, such as coal and oil, as well as other products – coke, grain, and fodder.¹¹ Moreover, following the German occupation of Denmark and Norway, Sweden was cut off from the transatlantic trade, which had represented approximately 70% of Swedish commerce.¹² This critical situation required the Swedish government to find new markets and business partners.

At the other end of Europe, Romania struggled to keep its economy independent. Following the signing of the economic treaty between Romania and Germany in March 1939, the Romanian national economy had to respect and fulfil German demands. During the summer of 1940, Romania was forced to hand over Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and the Hertsa region to the Soviet Union. Northern Transylvania would be transferred to Hungary, and Southern Dobruja to Bulgaria. Consequently, Romania lost one-third of its territory, largely – farming land that would affect agricultural production capacity and the national economy.

However, this international backdrop brought the distant nations of Sweden

and Romania closer and prompted their leaders to increase economic cooperation. As a result, the balance of 1940 showed that Sweden imported Romanian goods worth 8 201 471 SEK. Among the products bought by the Swedish importers were kerosene and other refined fuels, oil cakes, fodder, peas, corn, acetone, and industrial lubricants.¹³ Romania, on the other hand, imported Swedish goods valued at only 1 873 881 SEK – the list contains articles such as artillery components, bearings, ferrosilicon, and chemical products.¹⁴

Romania joining the war alongside the Axis in June 1941 affected economic relations with Sweden. Germany could better control the transit through its occupied territories and was unwilling to approve transportation licenses for products considered crucial to Hitler's war machine. Swedish-Romanian trade would also face other challenges that year. Firstly, Romania needed more tank trains to transport petroleum products to Sweden. This meant that Romania would need to deliver its products via the Danube – however, the river froze during winter, making transportation impossible. In this case, Sweden had to provide tank trains to import the needed products.¹⁵ When the situation seemed settled, a conflict broke out between Swedish and German authorities, as the Reich had used some of the Swedish wagons transiting its territory for its own operations without paying rent. Moreover, the Dahlqvist company in Gothenburg, which had sent 42 train tanks to Romania, reported that most were lost.¹⁶ To avoid further misunderstandings, the German authorities decided to keep in circulation only the tanks provided by Förenade Svenska Oljeimportörers AB.¹⁷

Trade agreements based on compensation represented another problem, as Romania did not have sufficient funds to pay for its imports and often claimed products

that were too valuable for the Swedish domestic market. At the same time, Sweden did not use a clearing system due to the geographic distance between the two nations. Payment through compensation harmed negotiations between Swedish and Romanian partners, and contributed to the failure of several businesses; for example, Romania requested 400 wagons of fodder, 10 tons of ferrovanadium, 30 tons of ferromolybdenum, 100 tons of ferromanganese and 400 tons of ferrosilicon.¹⁸ These demands were too high for Sweden, who could export only ferrosilicon up to 1000 tons, as the remaining alloys were needed by the national industry.¹⁹ The parties negotiated and agreed that Sweden would offer 470 tons of ferrosilicon, 1000 telephones, 30 tons of ferromanganese and bearings worth 1 million SEK in exchange for 2000 tons of fodder.²⁰ However, Swedish Commerce Commission on 16 September 1941 announced that Romania delivered the 2000 tons of fodder for only 1000 tons of ferrosilicon.²¹

Just a few weeks before Romania renounced its neutrality and joined Germany in the war against the Soviet Union, the Romanian Aeronautical Industry, an enterprise from Brşov, ordered aircraft engine components from the company See Fabriks AB Sandviken. The State Trade Commission had no objection to the transaction and approved the export of 950 kilograms of components. The Swedish company delivered the ordered material on 5 June 1941.²² This would be one of a few deals concluded with positive results for both involved parties.

The German monopoly constituted another impediment to Swedish-Romanian trade and influenced fodder selling. The authorities from Berlin bought high quantities of grain and fodder from Romania to sell on to other countries. This was the case when Denmark acquired large quantities of Romanian feed from German

trading houses.²³ Consequently, at the end of 1941 Sweden remained the largest Scandinavian direct importer of fodder from Romania. This outcome could also have been prompted by the appointment of the first Romanian commercial attaché to Stockholm, Grigore Gheaşă.²⁴

In December 1941, Swedish Commerce Commission approved a new list of goods that Sweden could trade with Romania the following year. This included surgical instruments, agricultural machinery and tools, bearings, woodworking machinery, cellulose, elevators, electric cables, water turbines, pumps, compressors, refrigeration plants and components for telephony. Swedish Commerce Commission was interested in importing oil cakes, mineral oils, and canned vegetables from Romania.²⁵ The Swedish authorities were confident that they could supply most of the aforementioned goods, except the industrial machinery and cellulose that was needed in the Swedish market.²⁶

The price represented a critical indicator that guided Swedish-Romanian trade. Besides the fact that the Romanian government had increased the price of hydrocarbons by 15% since the beginning of 1942, intermediary trade companies could also apply a commercial markup varying between 20 to 200% of the original price. Swedish companies were losing already-purchased lubricants due to long waiting periods for export licenses, while refineries sold to Germany the oil tanks that have been reserved for export to Sweden. Despite protests from Sweden, representatives of the Romanian refineries continued with the same practices. Moreover, they demanded new increased prices for the delivery of petroleum products that Sweden had already paid for.²⁷

Germany's pressure on the Romanian economy caused a complete trade freeze between Sweden and Romania in the first

half of 1942. German authorities refused to issue new transport licenses, even though they had agreed with the Romanian Foreign Minister, Mihai Antonescu (a distant relative of Ion Antonescu) not to interfere with the trade between Romania and Sweden. The Reich's decisions led to considerable delays, additional fees and customs duties, as well as blocked the export of various types of merchandise already paid for by the Swedish state.²⁸

In June 1942, Mihai Antonescu discussed a new commercial convention between Romania and Germany with the German Plenipotentiary Minister in Bucharest, Carl August Clodius. During negotiations, Antonescu and Clodius also tackled the transit issue through the territory occupied by the Reich. The Romanian Foreign Minister asked Clodius to urgently release the transit licenses for the loads waiting to leave Romanian harbours for Sweden. Antonescu emphasized that the suspension of exports to Sweden affected the interests of Swedish business partners and led to the deterioration of already-purchased goods. Both negotiators drew up a list of commitments that the German Minister was to respect if he wanted the signing of a new commercial convention with Romania. Firstly, Germany would streamline the transit of goods between Romania and Sweden. In addition, the Reich was to cease all sales of Romanian oil to Sweden, as such practice seriously damaged the Romanian national economy.²⁹

Despite the verbal guarantees offered by Clodius that German authorities would approve transit for the freight trains to Sweden and would no longer delay the issuance of the transport licenses,³⁰ these clauses were not specified in the Romanian-German trade agreement.³¹

Hence, the situation remained unchanged, and Mihai Antonescu had to actively engage to break the deadlock in trade with Sweden.³² Once again, the Germans formally assured that they were working to facilitate the trade between Romania and Sweden. To ensure that these promises would materialize, Mihai Antonescu threatened the German diplomats in Bucharest that he would drastically limit exports to the Reich if the authorities from Berlin did not release the transport licenses.³³

Other negotiations concluded much more positively – such as the purchase of 25 Bolinder-Munktell AB tractors by the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture. Romanian authorities paid cash and expected to receive the delivery at the beginning of 1943.³⁴ The Swedish Commerce Commission also approved the export of twelve diesel engines manufactured by the same company.³⁵ The institution consented to the export of 100–200 engines, gearboxes and 100 pre-assembled tractors, all manufactured by the Jönköpings Mekaniska Verkstads AB. The condition was that the delivery would be made following the end of the war.³⁶

Despite numerous challenges, commerce between Sweden and Romania yielded positive results in 1942 compared to the previous years. One explanation could be that the prices constantly increased during this year. Moreover, the authorities of both states agreed to conduct payments by using free currency and only accepted compensatory exchanges in exceptional cases. The annual balance showed that Sweden imported Romanian goods worth 51 603 000 SEK – much more than in 1941, when Sweden had paid 28 133 000 SEK. On the other hand, Romania imported merchandise worth 3 895 000 SEK, while in 1941 it had paid 581 000 SEK.³⁷

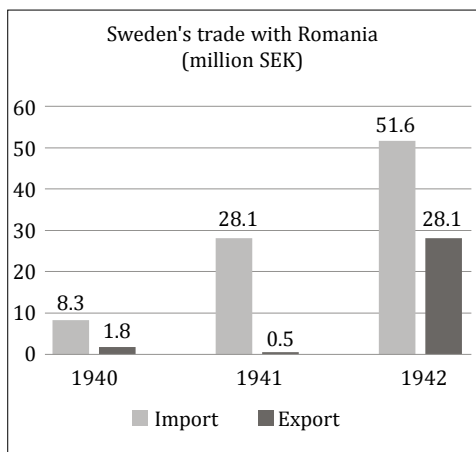


Figure 1. Sweden's trade with Romania, 1940–1942 (compiled using the data from Riksarkivet, Stockholm).

The first trade treaty signed by Sweden and Romania on 5 May 1943

A Swedish delegation, including Romania's consul in Malmö Albert Waldén and the first secretary of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs K. A. Belfrage travelled to Bucharest on 25 September 1942, to initiate negotiations on concluding a trade treaty between Sweden and Romania. Their visit aimed to establish the list of goods for the following year and to try and recover debts that Romanian banks owed to several Swedish companies.³⁸ During his stay in Bucharest, Belfrage sent a report to Stockholm describing the lack of organization in Romanian institutions. The Swedish diplomat arrived in Romania when the Ministry of National Economy was undergoing a reform. Moreover, a month before, a new minister in the person of Ion N. Fiñescu was appointed, and he was still in the process of selecting people for his team. This atmosphere led Belfrage to consider the Romanian administrative system too chaotic for him.³⁹ Belfrage took advantage of his visit and went to meet the representatives

of the three essential oil refineries: Astra Română, Steaua Română and Concordia. He wanted to ensure that the petroleum products designated for export to Sweden existed and that they would be delivered as promised. Belfrage feared that German agents could potentially buy the entire stock of refined petroleum, leaving Sweden without anything to purchase.⁴⁰

K. A. Belfrage returned to Bucharest in February 1943 to agree on import-export products. He also met with Nicolae Răzmeriță, the Finance Ministry general secretary, who returned from Berlin with positive news for the Swedish-Romanian trade. During discussions, German authorities promised to issue transport permits for approximately 850 tons of oil – the equivalent of two tank trains – as soon as naval traffic on the Danube was reopened.⁴¹ Belfrage was unable to conclude any agreement, mainly because of the high prices demanded by the Romanian authorities.⁴² It was necessary for a delegation, including Răzmeriță and Grigore Gheță, Romania's commercial attaché in Stockholm, to meet the Swedish representatives for trade and international affairs in order to finalize the work started by K. A. Belfrage in Bucharest.⁴³ This visit resulted in the conclusion of the first trade treaty established between Sweden and Romania, signed on 5 May 1943.

According to the protocol signed by the head of the trade department, Gunnar Häggglöf, and the president of the Romanian delegation, Nicolae Răzmeriță, the governments of both countries were equally interested in promoting the development of their trade. The treaty included twelve articles and was divided into two parts: the first six articles outlined the Romanian exports to Sweden, while the next six focused on standards regarding Swedish exports to Romania. By the end of the year, Romanian authorities undertook the responsibility

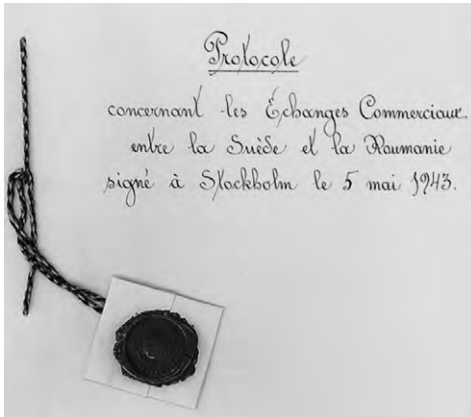


Figure 2. The first page of the Trade Treaty.
Source: Riksarkivet, Stockholm.

to obtain all necessary permits and export to Sweden 24 000 tons of mineral oil products (lubricating oils 16 000 tons, bitumen 7000 tons and other products 1000 tons). A particular requirement was that the monthly delivery should not be under 3000 tonnes of petroleum products. The Romanian government should also intervene and, in order to obtain transit papers for the named merchandise from Germany. The third article of the agreement focused on the export of fodder products. Romania would grant transport licenses for at least 25 000 tons of fodder cakes and residuals from the 1942 harvest. Moreover, the authorities from Bucharest would grant permits by the end of the year for the following goods: beef, bacon, eggs, poultry, nuts, fruit pulp, soya, oilseeds, acetone, naphthenic acids, and others. The value of all these goods was to reach 50 million lei. There was a clause regarding the trade using private compensations, but both governments decided to use this practice only in exceptional circumstances. The two governments also stipulated that exports to be shipped via the Danube were to respect the tonnage used for Romanian rivers.⁴⁴

On the other hand, the Swedish government undertook the responsibility at the end of 1943 to approve export permits for the following goods: iron and steel, machines and tools, miscellaneous materials, and other goods. The exports should reach around 31.5 million SEK. The agreement had an annex that specified detailed information about the products from each category that the Romanian authorities had requested. Both parties agreed that the quotas provided in the treaty were minimum amounts, so that they could then exceed the given numbers. Regarding payments, both countries agreed to use free currencies and irrevocable letters of credit before the delivery of the goods. Moreover, if one of the two parties obtained assets from the reciprocal commercial exchanges, then Swedish and Romanian authorities would examine the possibility of allowing this capital to be used for additional orders. The last article of the agreement specified that the signed protocol would come into force on 5 May 1943, and would remain in force until the end of the year. Both countries would begin negotiations for a new agreement before the expiry of the protocol.⁴⁵

The document had an annex in which the Swedish Commerce Commission reserved the right to examine offers sent by the Romanian companies before negotiations began. According to the regulation, Swedish companies were to present complete documentation in order to obtain transport permits. The papers should include details about product type, quantity, value, payment conditions, and information about the company that had made the offer.⁴⁶ Romania needed modern machines and tools for its industrial and agricultural sectors, and planned to import Swedish technology in large quantities. However, the Swedish Commerce Commission analysed the offers, compared them with its internal needs and concluded that

it would not issue transport licenses for some goods such as diesel locomotives, pumps and motorized draisines.⁴⁷

Clearly, the list of goods was similar to the ones filed before by the representatives of Sweden and Romania. Swedish authorities were still interested in buying petroleum products and fodder, while Romania needed machinery, iron, and steel products. The requirement regarding the use of an irrevocable letter of credit as a method of discharge meant that both governments needed a guarantee of payment for the goods purchased; a document that could only be cancelled if all the involved parties agreed. It was a matter of trust, and, as mentioned before, Swedish authorities were wary of Romanian traders, following previous transactions that had gone awry. This agreement also solved an old problem regarding the payment using compensation, a practice considered archaic by Swedish authorities.

Reactions to the conclusion of this economic treaty varied. While the Minister of Foreign Affairs Christian Günther expressed his enthusiasm in a telegram sent to his counterpart Mihai Antonescu,⁴⁸ Germany did not react with the same satisfaction. In a conversation held between C. A. Clodius and M. Antonescu regarding the transit situation of Romanian goods through the Reich's territory to Sweden, the German diplomat displayed his bewilderment towards Romania's insistence on maintaining commercial ties with Sweden. Clodius believed that exporting goods to Sweden was equivalent to supplying enemies of the Axis.⁴⁹ However, the treaty had immediate, positive results for Swedish commerce. In June, the Romanian authorities reduced customs tariffs by 75% for agricultural equipment from Sweden. This reduction had been applied previously for similar products bought from Germany, Italy, and Switzerland.⁵⁰ Moreover, Sweden

exported goods in the value of nine million SEK to Romania in the first half of 1943, proving the commercial treaty to be the catalyst that accelerated exports.⁵¹

It is interesting to note that soon after the conclusion of the commercial treaty, both sides signed additional documents. Nicolae Răzmeriță informed Swedish authorities that the Romanian government would try to raise the limit of 2000 tons of petroleum products per month to 3000 tons, with the caveat that German authorities must be willing to approve the necessary transit documentation.⁵² Moreover, Răzmeriță added that Romanian authorities were ready to increase the quota of 25 000 tons of cakes and residues from the 1942 harvest to 30 000 tons. The Romanian government committed to inform the Swedish partners about the fodder quantity that could be added to the quota established by the agreement signed on 5 May 1943, as soon as the authorities evaluated the harvest of 1943. An official response to this matter was to be sent no later than 15 September 1943.⁵³ Hägglöf responded that if the Romanian government wished to transform its assets resulting from Romanian export to Sweden, the National Bank of Sweden was willing to sell gold to Romania. The transaction would conform to the following conditions: the respective quantity of gold would be transferred to the National Bank of Romania in Switzerland, and the value would be fixed according to the price in Swiss France. If circumstances hindered Sweden from making the gold available in Switzerland, then the National Bank of Sweden would examine the possibility of selling its gold in Stockholm.⁵⁴

Analysing the additions made immediately after the signing of the commercial treaty, it becomes clear that Romania wished to retain Sweden as a business partner. The real reason why Romania

needed a stable trade with Sweden was that Germany had stopped paying for its imports in gold or free currency. Therefore, Romanian authorities were forced to sell their merchandise to the countries with a strong currency, so that they could collect the money needed to cover harvesting expenses. At that time, only two countries were able to pay in free currency: Sweden and Switzerland.⁵⁵

Swedish-Romanian trade during 1944

At the beginning of 1944, engineer Petre Dumitraşcu – a technical expert within the Procurement Commission – was found in Stockholm. His task was to change the order of six tons of high-speed steel, placed in the fall of 1943, to 49 tons of tungsten steel. Dumitraşcu's negotiations yielded positive results, and Swedish authorities approved the proposal.⁵⁶ While in Stockholm, Dumitraşcu took note of the list of products planned for trade with Romania. The primary goods Sweden wished to procure were: lubricants, oil, gasoline, paraffin, flour, bran, rapeseed cake, fodder and offal. Romania purchased drilling machines, metal cutters, drills, iron pipes and various machinery.⁵⁷

The problematic situation created by the war severely limited the options of Swedish companies, which needed somewhere to sell their products or source the required raw materials, especially after Germany blockaded merchant boats from the USA.⁵⁸ Because of this situation, many firms were on the verge of bankruptcy. The company AB Archimedes was one of the businesses struggling because its export had decreased considerably. The problem was that the machine park only manufactured outboard motors for small boats. The company officials persistently asked Swedish institutions to authorize export to

Romania. Finally, the company received approval to sell 44 motors, under the proviso that the buyer declare that these engines were for civil and not military use.⁵⁹ One of the few businesses for which the Swedish authorities gave their consent promptly was Fagersta Bruks AB, concerning the sale of equipment estimated at 17 037 SEK to the Autonomous House of Monopolies in Romania.⁶⁰

A visible decline in trade between Sweden and Romania appeared in the first half of 1944. One explanation for this phenomenon could be that Romania focused on negotiating and signing the armistice with the Allies. The dynamics of the Romanian economy and commerce changed dramatically after 23 August 1944, when Romania turned its weapons against Germany and later on signed the armistice with the Allies. As a result, the authorities from Berlin cut trade ties between Romania and the Axis, and completely blocked the transit of goods through its territory. Simultaneously, Romania was to accept conditions given by the new allies, which interrupted trade connections with Switzerland and the USA.⁶¹

Between 1940 and 1944, Sweden and Romania's import/export balance fell in Romania's favour. The Romanian state's imports from Sweden represented only 0.3% of total imports, while exports to Sweden represented 2.2% of the total quantity. These percentages were very low compared to the imports/exports that Sweden and Romania practised with other countries. However, as stated previously, Swedish-Romanian trade contributed to economic survival of both nations during the war.

Conclusions

The evolution of economic cooperation between Sweden and Romania during the analysed period demonstrated that

the governments of both nations displayed a keen interest in cultivating trade with each other in order to survive economically. Prior to the Second World War, Romania was not at the top of Swedish commercial destinations, and Sweden was not interested in the Romanian economy. The outbreak of conflict limited trade alternatives and led to a mutual discovery in terms of trade, while both countries attempted to procure raw materials and other goods needed for domestic consumption. The conflict's evolution, Germany's restrictive attitude towards issuing transport licenses, and the complications caused by payment via compensation as opposed to free currency would come to represent the main challenges to Swedish-Romanian trade. Another challenge was that Sweden and Romania would not sign their first trade treaty until 1943, an agreement that positively impacted trade evolution and encouraged Swedish businesses to invest in the Romanian market.

Maintaining a reasonable level of trade under such conditions was not easy. There were significant fluctuations in the import/export balance. Romania did not have

the same purchasing power as Sweden, so authorities from Bucharest reserved a limited budget for imports from Sweden. On the other hand, Swedish authorities attempted to buy as much fodder and petroleum products as possible. Moreover, several Swedish companies perceived Romania as a means of survival and tried to increase sales to this country. The Swedish Commerce Commission would occasionally deny export licenses – a result of prioritising domestic need, or due to insecure transport roads through Europe that had been destroyed by war. There is evidence of businesses that succeeded and yielded a positive profit for Swedish companies following the end of the war.

When analysing economic statistics, the trade between Sweden and Romania can appear insignificant when compared to other nations. However, the true importance of Swedish-Romanian trade lies in the type of goods exchanged and the fact that this economic partnership ensured both nations a degree of economic independence that could not otherwise have been achieved.

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- ¹⁶ Letter from Berlin to UD, 29.01.1941. RA, Folkhushållningsdepartementet, Utrikeshandelsavdelningen [Department of Public Economy, Foreign Trade Department], FIIIc: 77, unpagged.
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- ²² Letter from The Swedish Commerce Commission to UD, 09.07.1941. RA, Statens Handelskommission [The State Trade Commission] (hereafter – SH), Vol. 285, unpagged.
- ²³ OANA POPESCU. România și Danemarca în prima jumătate a secolului XX / Romania and Denmark in the First Half of the XX Century. Târgoviște 2010, p. 102.
- ²⁴ Unsigned report, 17.12.1941. RA, UD, 1920 års dossier system [1920s dossier system], HP 2803, Rumänien, Vol. VII, April–December 1941, unpagged.
- ²⁵ Raport from Gunnar Hägglöf to Victor Brabețianu, 13.12.1941. *Ibidem*.
- ²⁶ Letter from The Swedish Commerce Commission to AB Transfer, 18.02.1942. RA, SH, Vol. 285.
- ²⁷ Letter from G. & L. Beijer Import och Exort Aktiebolag, to Crispin, 28.04.1942. RA, Statens Livsmedelskommission [The State Food Commission], F I: 17, 1940–1949, unpagged.
- ²⁸ Report from Patrik Reuterswärd to Gunnar Häggalöf, 14.04.1942. RA, UD, 1920 års dossier system [1920s dossier system], HP 2803, Rumänien, Vol. VIII, unpagged.
- ²⁹ Arrangements that Minister Clodius should respect, 15.05.1942. AMAE, fund 71, Romania, Vol. 510, f. 65.
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- ³¹ Letter from Nils Montan to Kurt Belfrage, 15.06.1942. RA, UD, 1920 års dossier system [1920s dossier system], HP 2803, unpagged.

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- ³⁵ Letter from E. Kördel to UD, Handelavdelning, 05.08.1943. RA, SH, Vol. 285, unpag.
- ³⁶ Letter from E. Kördel to CA Wallenborg & Son, 24.07.1943. RA, SH, Vol. 286, unpag.
- ³⁷ Report, 01.12.1942. RA, UD, 1920 års dossier system [1920s dossier system], HP 2804, Vol. XI, unpag.
- ³⁸ Letter from Stockholms Enskilda Bank AB to Gunnar Hägglöf, 17.09.1942. *Ibidem*, Vol. X, unpag.
- ³⁹ DAHLQUIST, *Economic Relations between Sweden and Romania*, pp. 81–112.
- ⁴⁰ Report from K. A. Belfrage, 19.10.1942. RA, UD, 1920 års dossier system [1920s dossier system], HP 2804, Vol. X, unpag.
- ⁴¹ Note, 10.02.1943. *Ibidem*, Vol. XII, unpag.
- ⁴² Telegram No. 36 for UD, 11.02.1943. *Ibidem*.
- ⁴³ Letter from K. A. Belfrage to G. Bergensträhle, 23.02.1943. *Ibidem*.
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- ⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.
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- ⁵² Note from Răzmeriță to Hägglöf, 05.05. 1943. RA, *Traktater, Avtal med främmande makter* [Treaties, Agreements with Foreign Powers], Vol. 1477, unpag.
- ⁵³ *Ibidem*.
- ⁵⁴ Note from Hägglöf to Răzmeriță, 05.05.1943. *Ibidem*.
- ⁵⁵ DAHLQUIST, *Economic Relations between Sweden and Romania*, pp. 81–112.
- ⁵⁶ Unsigned note to Petre Dumitrașcu, 14.03.1944. RA, UD, 1920 års dossier system [1920s dossier system], HP 2805, Vol. XVI, unpag.
- ⁵⁷ Report, 28.08.1944. *Ibidem*.
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- ⁵⁹ Letter from Bertil Swärd to Sven Breusewitz, 01.03.1944. RA, SH, Vol. 285, unpag.
- ⁶⁰ Letter from Fagersta Bruks AB to the Swedish Commerce Commission, 16.09.1944. RA, *Avtalstillämpning, Allmänt* [Contract application, General], 1994–, unpag.
- ⁶¹ Letter from AB Astra to Fritz Stackelber, 21.12.1944. RA, UD, 1920 års dossier system [1920s dossier system], HP 2805, Vol. XVI, unpag.

KOPSAVILKUMS

Otrā pasaules kara priekšvakarā Zviedrijai nebija ciešu ekonomisko attiecību ar Rumāniju. Abu valstu valdības koncentrējās uz tirdzniecības regulēšanu, parakstot līgumus ar kaimiņvalstīm. Starpkaru periodā Zviedrija un Rumānija ar 1922. gada 11. novembra un 18. decembra ministru notām noteica tirdzniecības tiesisko regulējumu un parakstīja provizorisku līgumu par tirdzniecības un ekonomiskajām attiecībām. Zviedrijas un Rumānijas tirdzniecībai nozīmīgs notikums bija *Kreuger Group* 1929. gadā Rumānijai piešķirtais aizdevums. Pretī Rumānijas valdība piešķīra *Kreuger* sērskociņu monopolu un elektroenerģijas ražošanas un sadales monopolu. Tirdzniecība starp Zviedriju un Rumāniju kļuva intensīvāka, jo īpaši pēc tam, kad 1930. gada 26. jūlijā tika atjaunots provizoriskais līgums. Piemēram, 1939. gadā Zviedrija no Rumānijas iegādājās preces 6,8 miljonu Zviedrijas kronu (SEK) vērtībā, kamēr eksportētās preces sasniedza tikai 1,2 miljonus SEK.

Otrā pasaules kara sākums satuvināja Zviedriju un Rumāniju un pamudināja to vadītājus pastiprināt ekonomisko sadarbību. Rezultātā 1940. gada bilance liecināja, ka Zviedrija importēja Rumānijas preces par 8 201 471 Zviedrijas kronu. Rumānijas pievienošanās karam Ass valstu pusē 1941. gada jūnijā ietekmēja ekonomiskās attiecības ar Zviedriju. Vācija varēja labāk kontrolēt tranzītu caur tās okupētajām teritorijām un nevēlējās apstiprināt transporta licences vairākiem produktiem. Tirdzniecības līgumi, kas balstījās uz kompensācijām, radīja vēl vienu problēmu, jo Rumānijai nebija pietiekami daudz naudas, lai samaksātu par importu, un tā bieži pieprasīja produktus, kas bija pārāk nepieciešami Zviedrijas iekšējam tirgum.

No 1942. gada septembra līdz 1943. gada maijam notika sarunas par pirmā tirdzniecības līguma noslēgšanu starp Zviedriju un Rumāniju. Dokumentā, kas tika parakstīts 1943. gada 5. maijā, bija iekļauti 12 panti. Šis līgums pozitīvi ietekmēja tirdzniecības attīstību un mudināja Zviedrijas uzņēmumus uzticēties Rumānijas tirgum. Galvenās preces, ko Zviedrija iepirka no Rumānijas partneriem, bija smērvielas, eļļa, benzīns, parafīns, milti, klijas, rapšu sēklas un subprodukti. Rumānija iepirka urbjašīnas, metāla frēzes, urbjus, dzelzs caurules un dažādas iekārtas.

1944. gada pirmajā pusē vērojams ievērojams tirdzniecības samazinājums starp Zviedriju un Rumāniju. Viens no šīs parādības skaidrojumiem varētu būt tas, ka Rumānija koncentrējās uz sarunām un pamiera parakstīšanu ar Sabiedrotajiem. Analizējot statistikas datus, redzams, ka Zviedrijas un Rumānijas tirdzniecība šķiet nenozīmīga, ja to salīdzina ar citām valstīm, taču Zviedrijas un Rumānijas tirdzniecības patiesā nozīme slēpjas konkrēta veida preču apmaiņā.



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