National Bank of Romania

Romania: Recent Macroeconomic & Banking System Developments

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Macroeconomic Snapshot

Romania: macroeconomic snapshot

- Fast economic growth in 2001-2008 (6.3% average annual growth) fuelled by large capital inflows:
  - ✓ Rapid wage growth and readily available credit led to a real-estate and consumption boom
  - ✓ An expansionary fiscal policy further contributed to the overheating of the economy

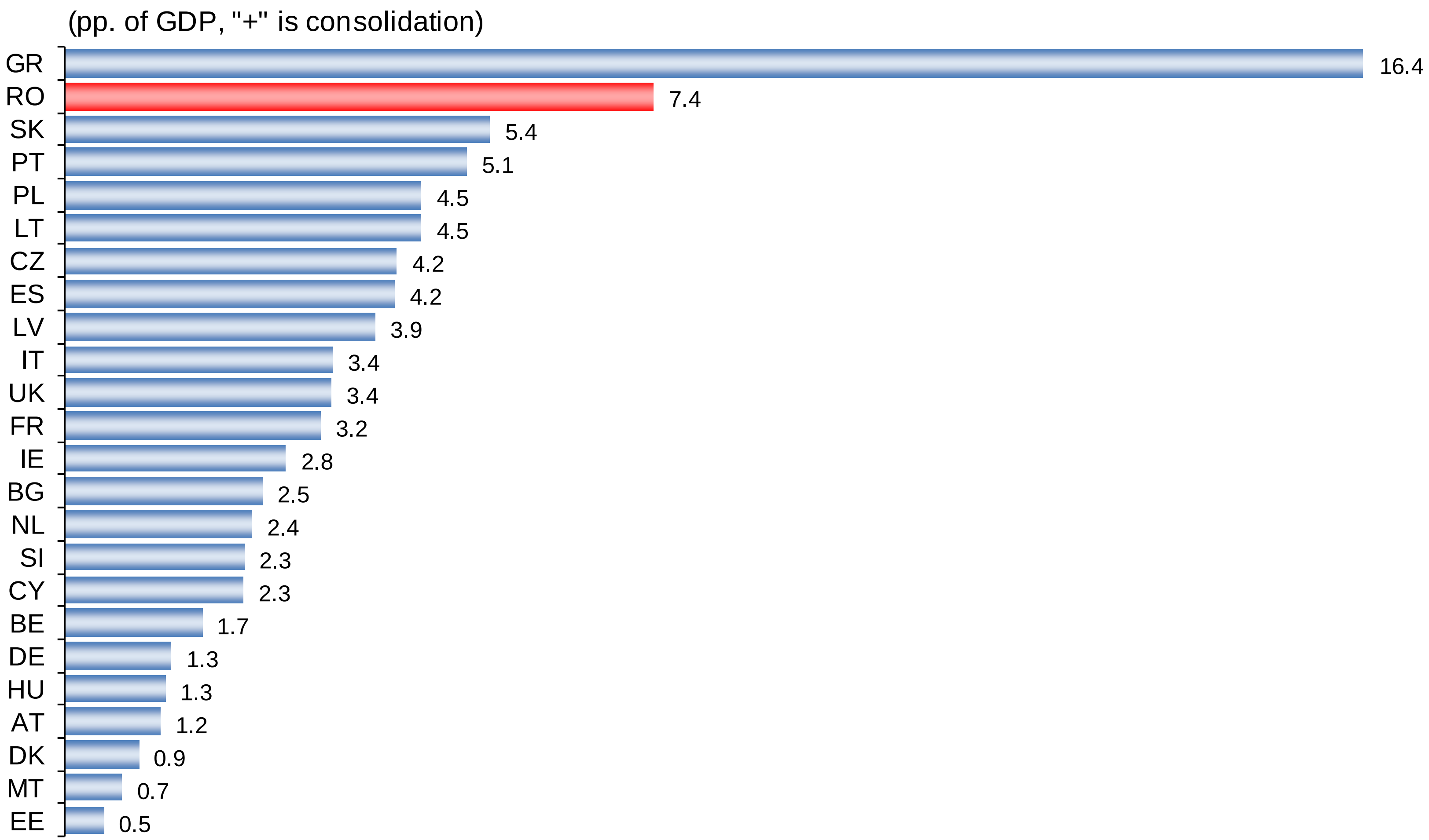
⬇

- Build-up of large imbalances in the pre-crisis period ➡ vulnerability of the economy at the crisis onset
  - ✓ Large structural fiscal imbalances ➡ no room for fiscal stimulus, consolidation unavoidable given financing constraints
  - ✓ Sizeable external disequilibrium (the current account deficit peaked at 13.4% of GDP in 2007)

Romania: macroeconomic snapshot (2)

- The necessary adjustments have already been made
  - ✓ The current account deficit declined to sustainable levels (4.4% of GDP in 2012, 1.1% of GDP in 2013)
  - ✓ Sharp fiscal consolidation brought the deficit back into the comfort zone (below 3% in 2012, narrowing further to an estimated 2.6% in 2013, down from 9% in 2009)
    - the deadline for the adjustment of the excessive deficit (2012) has been complied with
    - despite growing rapidly during the crisis, the public debt-to-GDP ratio is still one of the lowest in the EU and is estimated to stabilize below 40% of GDP over the medium term
- With macroeconomic stability achieved, the prerequisites for sustainable growth seem to be in place

Cumulative structural fiscal consolidation 2010-2013*

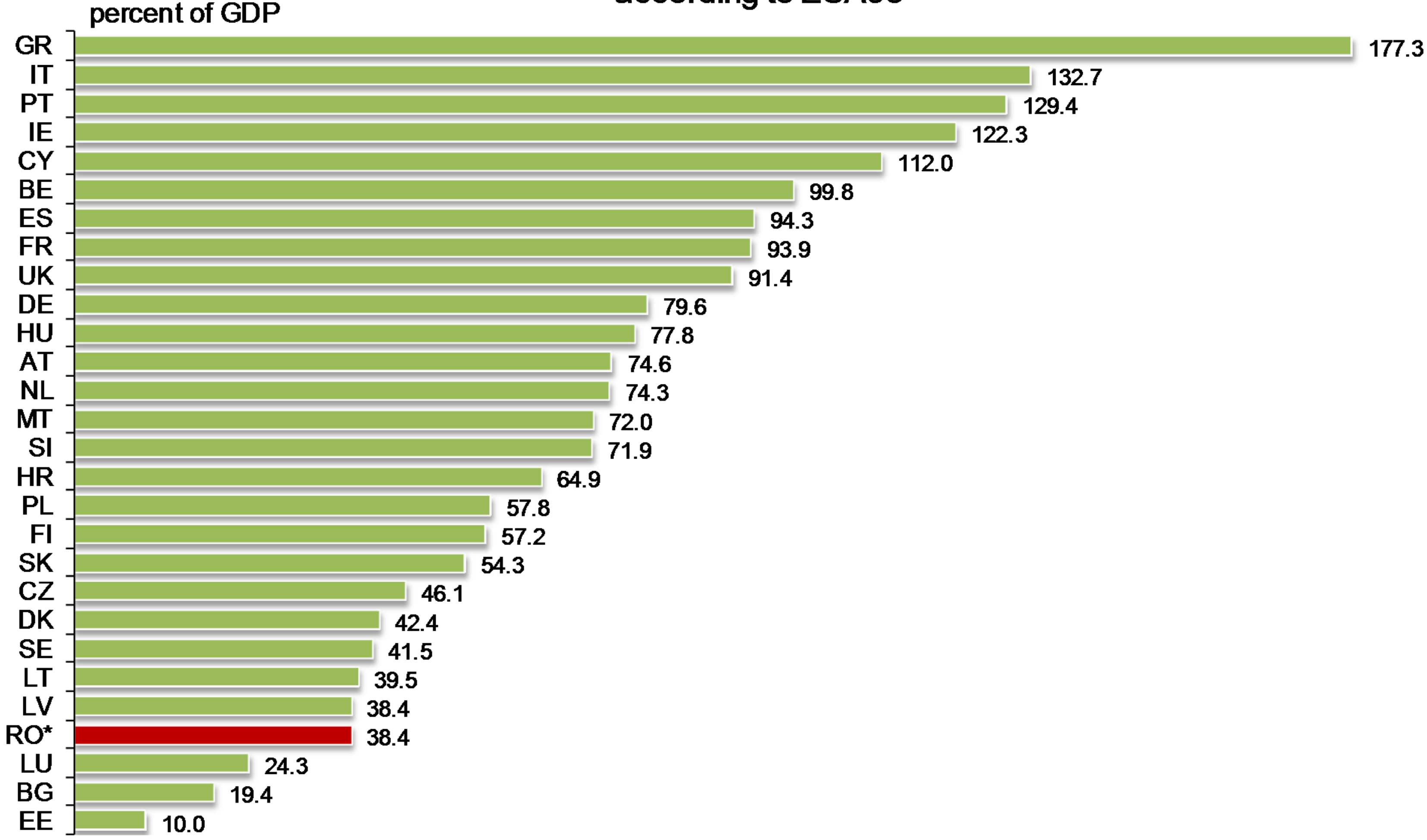


*) forecast

Source: AMECO

Public Debt (2013)

– according to ESA95 –



*) effective

Source: AMECO

Outlook for 2014 and beyond

- Expected macroeconomic outcomes in 2014:
  - ✓ Economic growth looks set to continue
    - current forecasts average around 2.8%, yet recent forecasts indicate higher growth (above 3%) than earlier ones
      - as always, agricultural output may shift the actual outcome in either direction
  - ✓ Average annual inflation is estimated at around 2%, consistent with the ECB's definition of price stability
  - ✓ The fiscal deficit will stay below the Maastricht Treaty limit of 3% of GDP
  - ✓ The current account deficit is expected to stay relatively close to its 2013 level (between 1% and 2% of GDP)
- Given its macroeconomic fundamentals, Romania appears firmly embarked on a sustainable growth trend in the medium run, while actual outcomes depend on regional, European and global developments
- In this context, Romania envisages joining the Banking Union and the euro area when the appropriate conditions are in place

Near-term prospects for cumulative fulfilment of nominal convergence criteria

Maastricht Criteria

Nominal Convergence Indicators	Maastricht Criteria	Romania	Difference from the criteria
Inflation rate (HICP) (percent, annual average)	<1.5 pp above -0.2%* (average of the three best performing Member States)	**2.6** (February 2014)	**+1.3pp**
Long-term interest rates (percent per annum)	<2 pp above 3.4%** (average of the three best performing Member States in terms of price stability)	**5.3** (February 2014)	✓
Exchange rate (vs. euro)*** (percentage change)	±15 percent	**+1.3 / -6.1**	✓
General government deficit**** (percent of GDP)	below 3 percent	**2.6**	✓
Government debt**** (percent of GDP)	below 60 percent	**38.4**	✓

*) reference level, February 2014 (Cyprus, Latvia, Bulgaria).

**) reference level, February 2014 (Bulgaria, Latvia).

***) Maximum percentage deviations of the bilateral exchange rate against the euro from its March 2012 average level in April 2012 to March 2014 based on daily data at business frequency. An upward/downward deviation implies that the currency was stronger/weaker than the average exchange rate in March 2012.

****) 2013; ESA95 methodology, estimate; actual data in the case of government debt.

Source: Eurostat, National Institute of Statistics, National Bank of Romania, European Commission

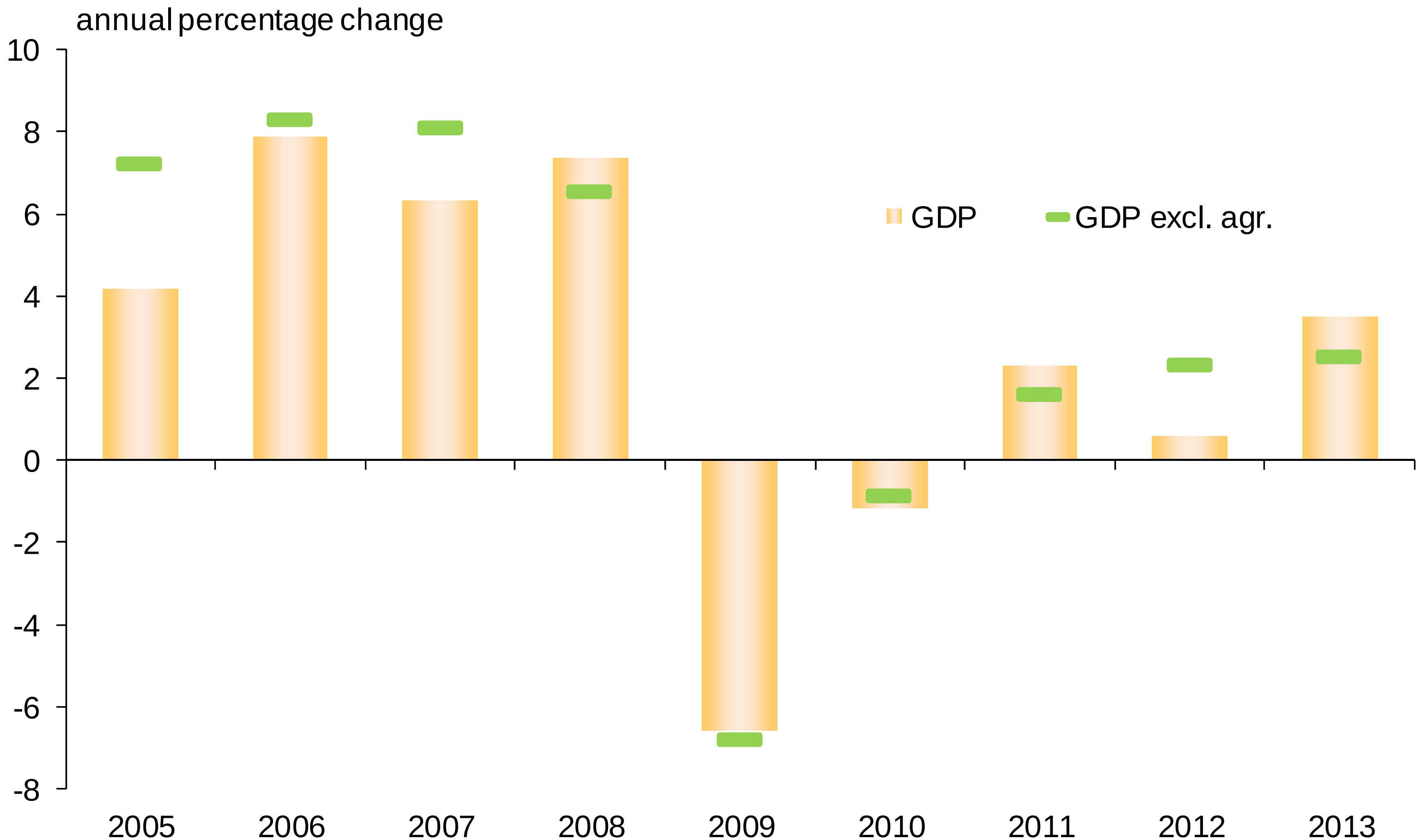
According to the NBR's current projection, the present level of the inflation criterion will be reached in May 2014. Mention should be made however that the present reference value, depending on the Member States' inflation rates, could be subject to change.

GDP Dynamics

GDP growth accelerated in 2013

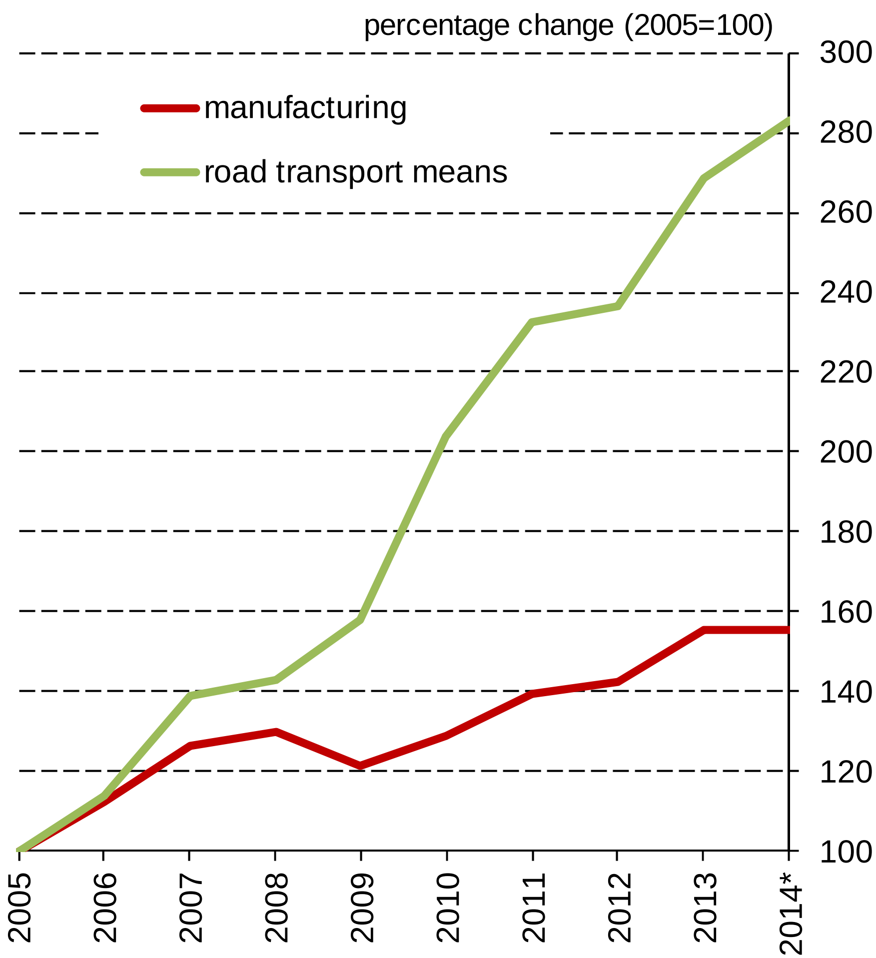
- After a cumulative 7.6% contraction over 2009-2010, real GDP re-entered positive territory in 2011 and grew by 3.5% in 2013
- In 2013, there has been a shift in the drivers of economic growth, from domestic absorption to net exports
  - ✓ However, there was a significant one-off component in the economic growth, related to exceptional agricultural output (1.1 pp contribution to real GDP growth)
- Economic activity is expected to grow further in 2014, as suggested by current developments in short-term indicators (industrial production and retail sales in particular)

Steady post-crisis recovery when controlling for volatility in agricultural output



Source: NIS, NBR calculations

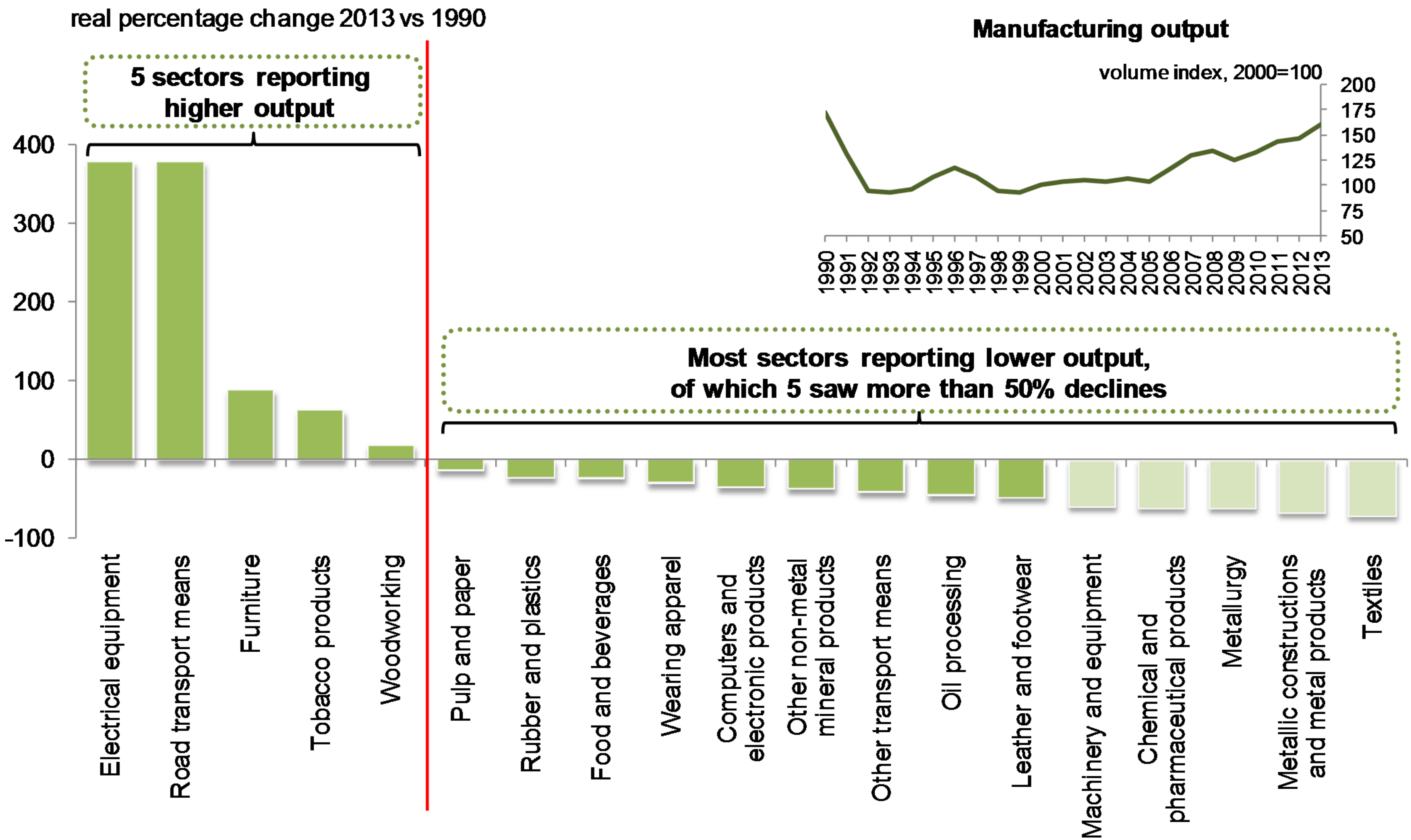
Fast growth in the automotive sector has been the largest contributor to the favourable performance of the overall industrial sector



*) Jan.-Feb.

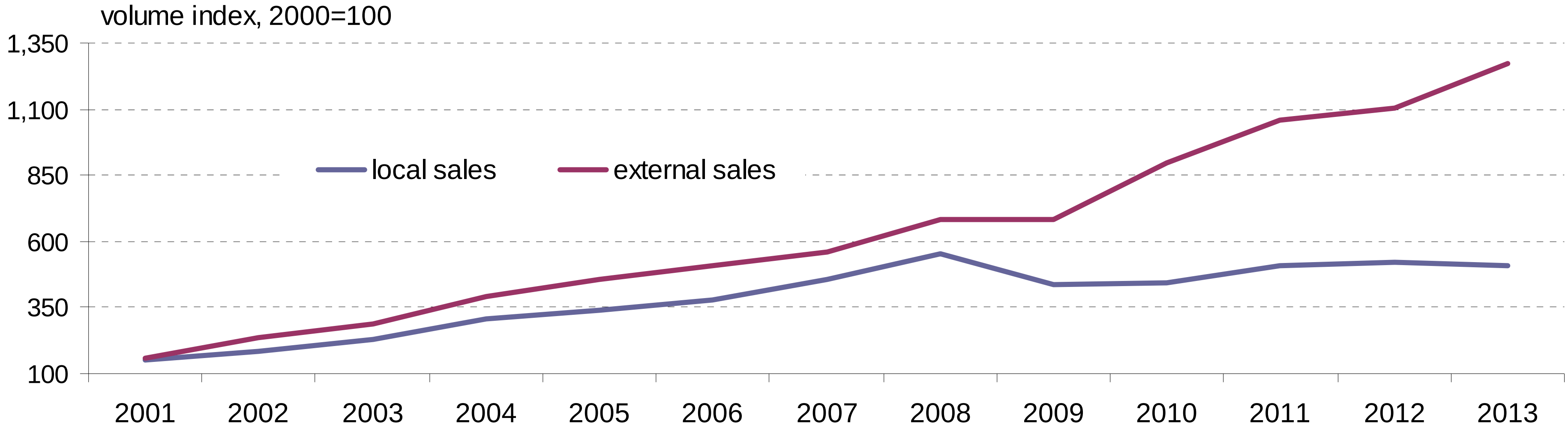
Source: NIS

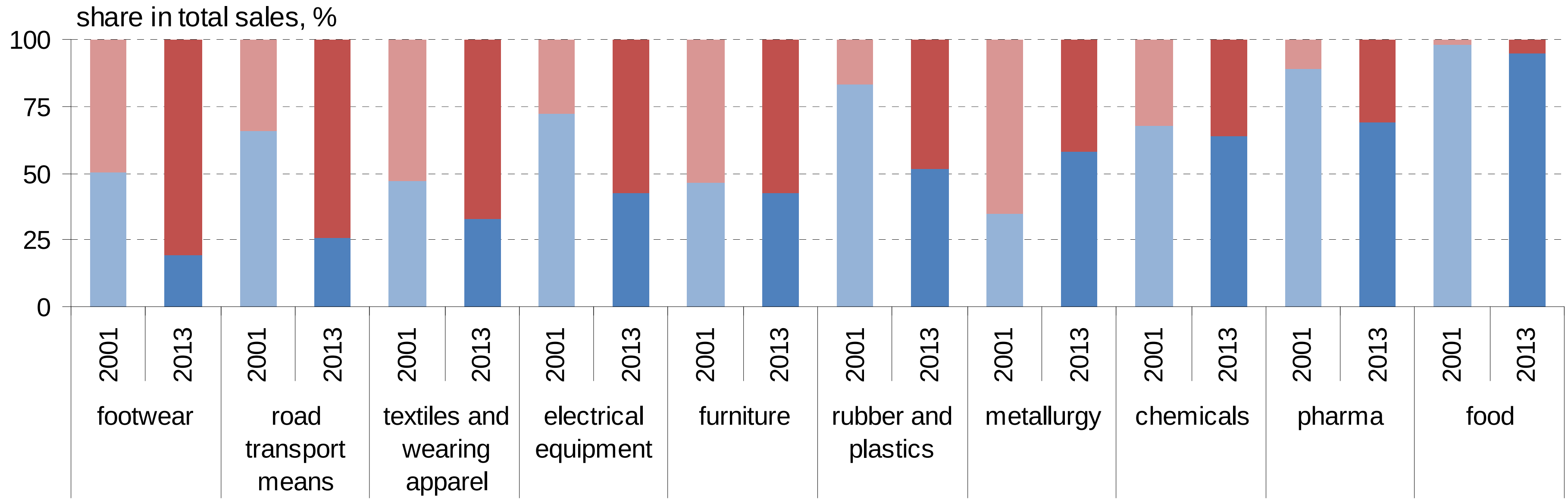
Restoration of industrial output on a more competitive basis



Source: NIS

Industrial development bore the hallmark of improved access to external markets





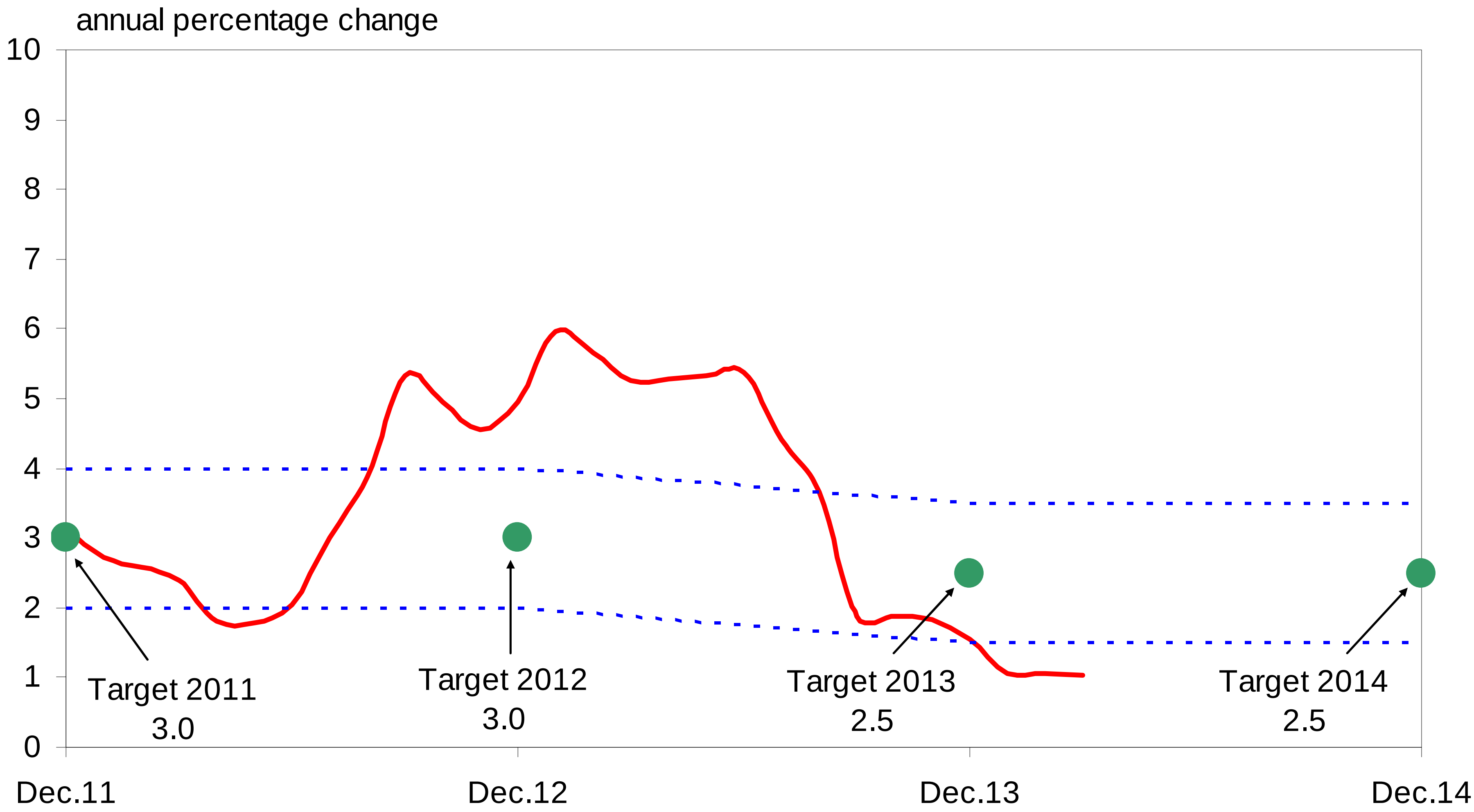
Source Eurostat, NBR calculations

Inflation Developments

Romania joined the club of low-inflation countries

- Currently, the annual inflation rate is in line with the ECB's quantitative definition of price stability
- After staying above 5% throughout 2013 H1, annual CPI inflation fell markedly to 1.55% in December 2013 and hit a new record low of 1.04% in March 2014 in the context of:
  - ✓ Persistence of the negative output gap
  - ✓ Favourable developments in supply-side factors
    - the fall in agricultural commodity prices (as a result of good harvest in 2013)
    - the cut in the VAT rate on some bakery products from 24% to 9% as of 1 September 2013
    - the year-on-year decline in global commodity prices
  - ✓ Downward statistical base effects linked to past increases in food and administered prices
- Inflation is expected to re-enter the target band in 2014 Q3 and to remain there throughout the projection horizon

Inflation Rate



Note: Variation band is ±1 percentage point.

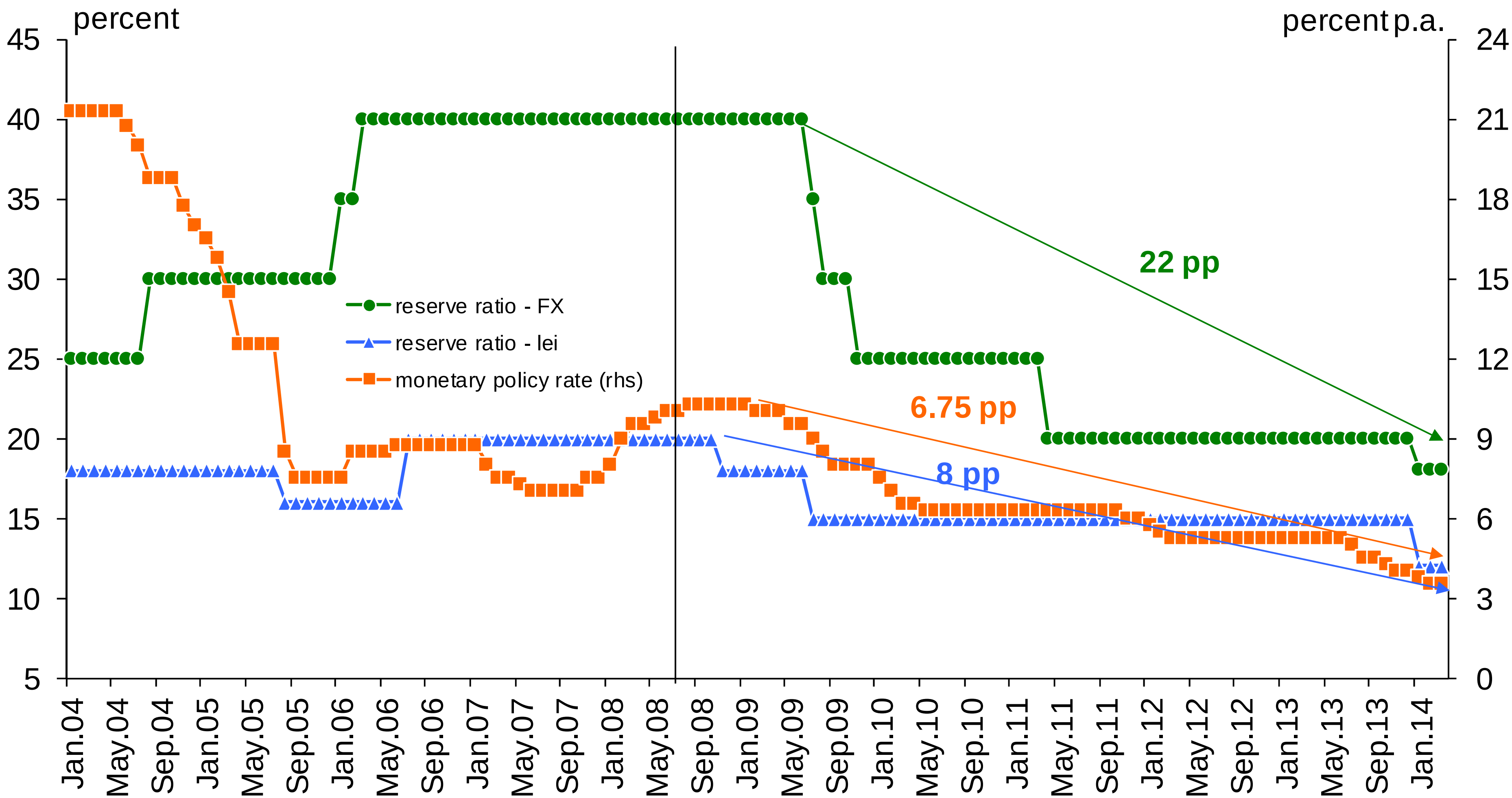
Source: National Institute of Statistics, National Bank of Romania

Monetary Policy

Monetary policy conduct brought credit market parameters into line with regional levels

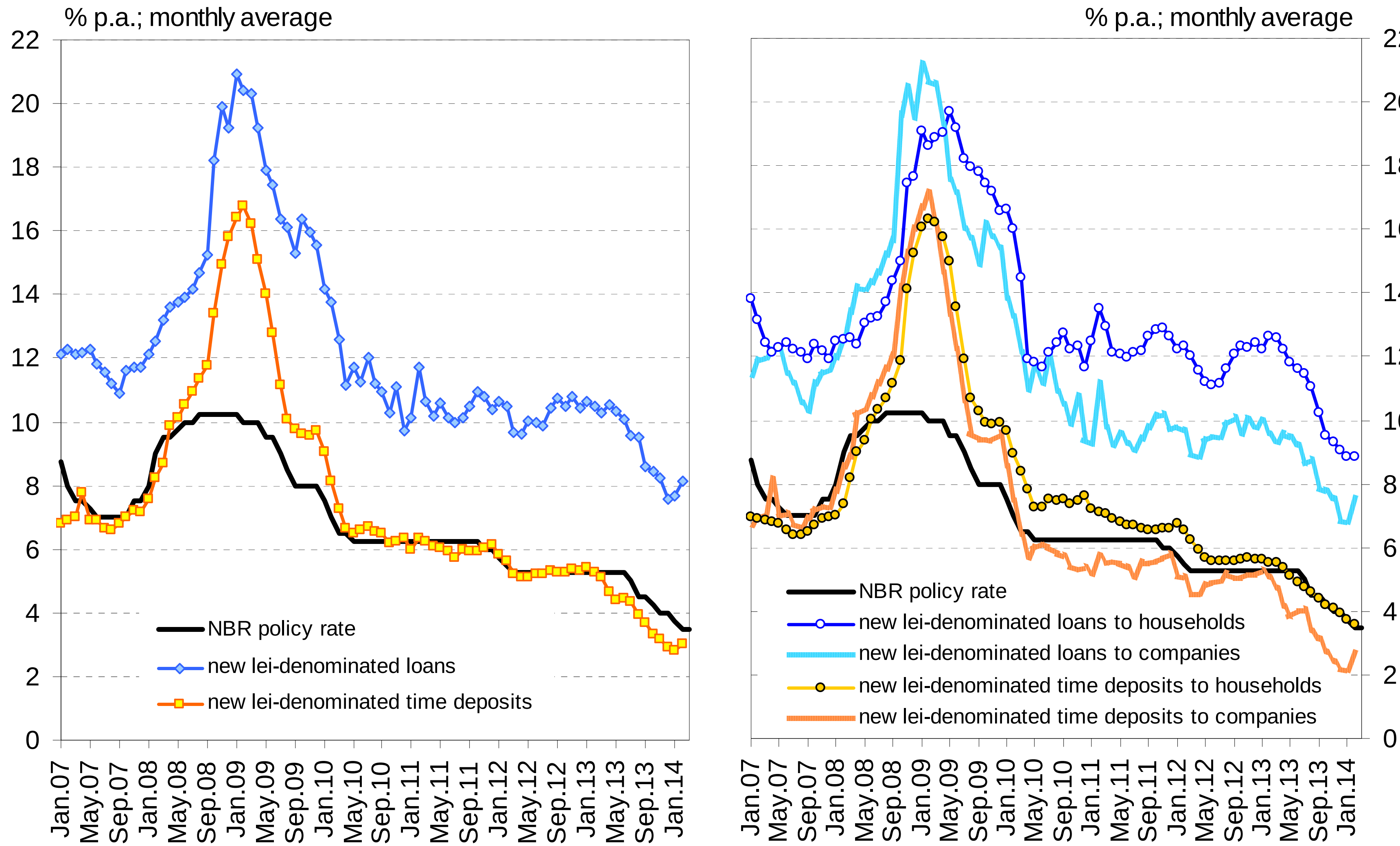
- Over the past years, the NBR has maintained a prudent stance of monetary policy, by gradually reducing the policy rate:
  - ✓ Between February 2009 and March 2012, the NBR cut the policy rate by a cumulative 500 basis points, to 5.25%
  - ✓ Rapid decreases in the annual inflation rate have made it possible for the NBR to resume the downward adjustment of the policy rate: between July 2013 and February 2014, the NBR cut the policy rate by a cumulative 175 basis points, to 3.5%
- Current policy and money market rates, as well as lending and deposit rates for non-bank customers, are broadly in line with regional levels
- In January 2014, in order to support sustainable lending, but also to bring the minimum reserve requirements mechanism closer to ECB standards, the NBR cut the MRR:
  - ✓ On leu-denominated liabilities to 12% from 15%
  - ✓ On foreign currency-denominated liabilities to 18% from 20%

Monetary policy conduct was countercyclical both before and after the crisis outbreak



Source: National Bank of Romania

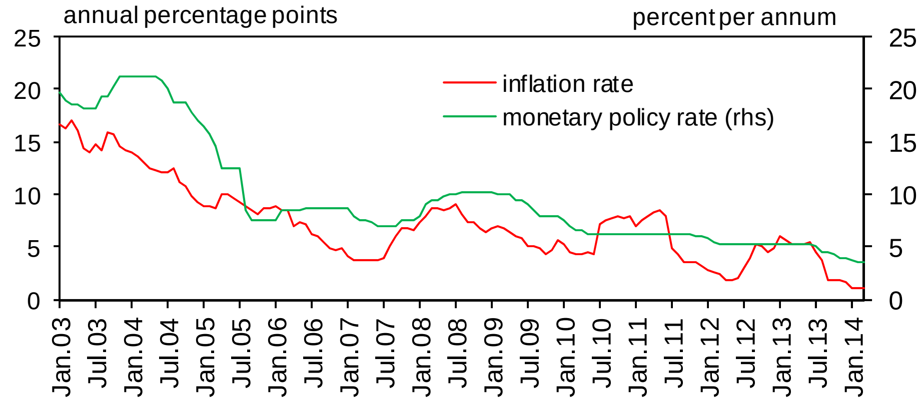
Policy Rate and Bank Interest Rates to Non-Bank Clients



Source: National Bank of Romania

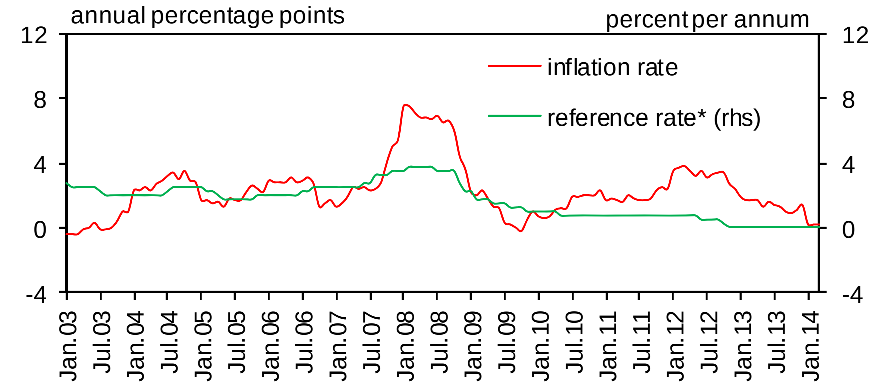
Inflation Rate and Policy Rate
– regional comparison –

ROMANIA



Source: NBR, NIS

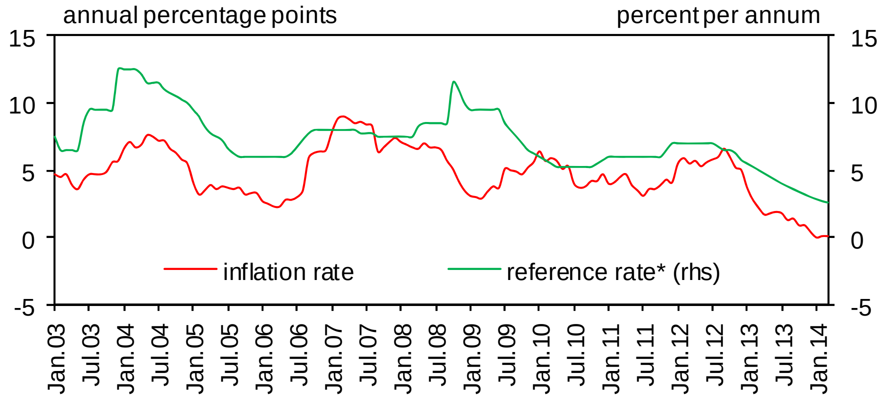
CZECH REPUBLIC



Source: CNB website and Czech Statistical Office

*) 2W repo rate

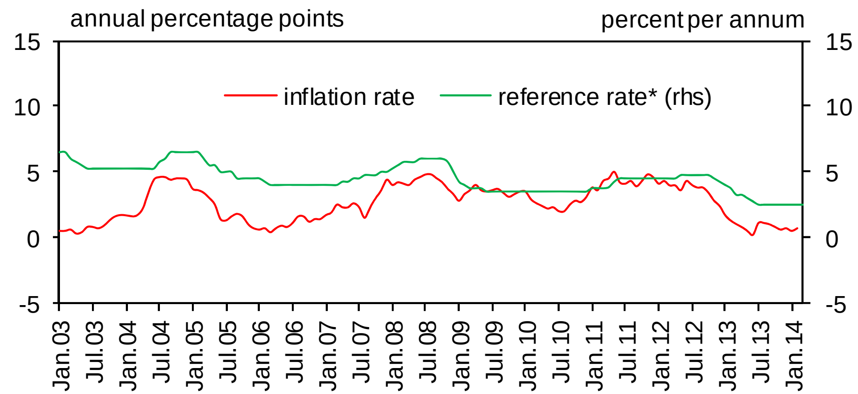
HUNGARY



*) interest rate on 14-day deposits (until 9 January 2007);
interest rate on MNB 14-day certificates (since 9 January 2007)

Source: MNB website and Central Statistical Office

POLAND



*) 14-day NBP money market bills (since 2003);
7-day NBP money market bills (since 2005)

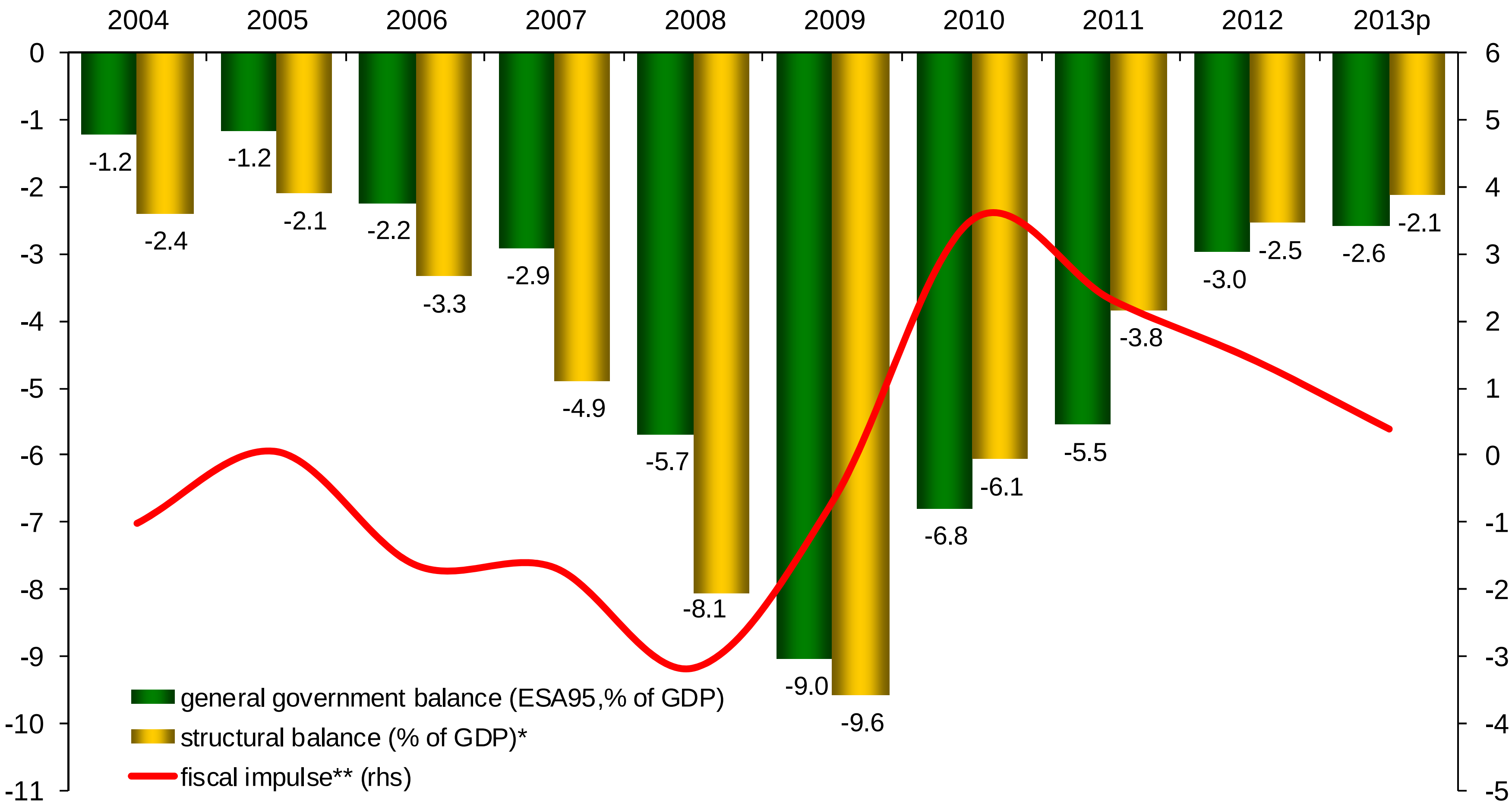
Source: NBP website and Central Statistical Office

Fiscal Policy

Fiscal consolidation largely completed

- After years of pro-cyclical fiscal policy, Romania was left with a **large structural fiscal gap at the onset of the economic crisis** (-8.1% of GDP at the end of 2008) and with no other choice but to embark on a **sharp fiscal consolidation process**
- After peaking at 9% of GDP in 2009, the public deficit was successfully brought down to just below 3% as of end-2012, thus complying with the deadline under the excessive deficit procedure; the deficit is estimated to have declined further to 2.6% of GDP in 2013
- The **structural adjustment effort** amounted to a cumulative 7.3% of GDP during 2010-2013 (the second largest in the EU) and it was achieved through a mix of revenue and expenditure measures, with the latter accounting for the larger share
- A comparatively smaller structural adjustment effort remains to be implemented over the coming two years (1.1 pp. of GDP) in order to ensure that the **medium-term structural deficit objective** of 1% of GDP is met in 2015, thus complying with commitments under the Fiscal Compact

After three years of sharp consolidation, the budget balance is back into the comfort zone



* defined as cyclically-adjusted balance net of one-off and temporary measures

** defined as the change in the structural primary budget balance

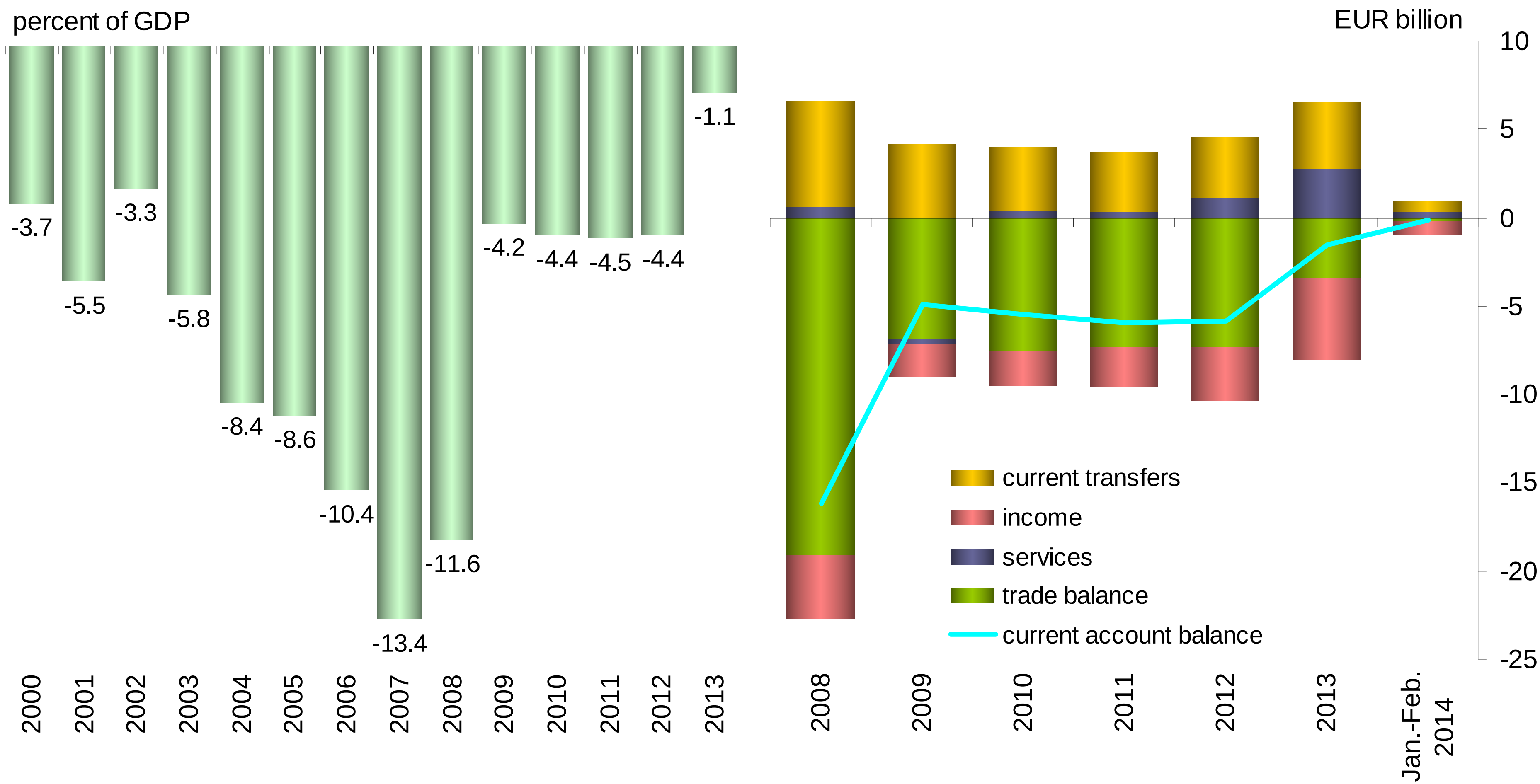
Source: AMECO, Ministry of Public Finance, European Commission projections

Current Account

Significant adjustment of the external imbalance

- The current account deficit narrowed markedly from a peak of 13.4% of GDP in 2007 to 4.2% in 2009, driven by the private sector and supported by fiscal consolidation
- After hovering around 4% of GDP in the following three years, the current account deficit has further fallen to 1.1% of GDP in 2013 amid
  - ✓ The trade deficit narrowing by 53.6% yoy
  - ✓ The larger services surplus, prompted particularly by receipts from transport services (in correlation with higher exports of goods)
- Recent projections for 2014 and 2015 point to levels below 2% of GDP, in line with the gradual consolidation of domestic demand
- At end-March 2014, international reserves stood at EUR 34.4 bn (out of which EUR 31.3 bn forex), covering over 6 months of prospective goods and services imports

Current Account Balance



Note: The current account posted a deficit of EUR 102.8 mn in Jan.-Feb. 2014 against a surplus of EUR 176.3 mn in Jan.-Feb. 2013.

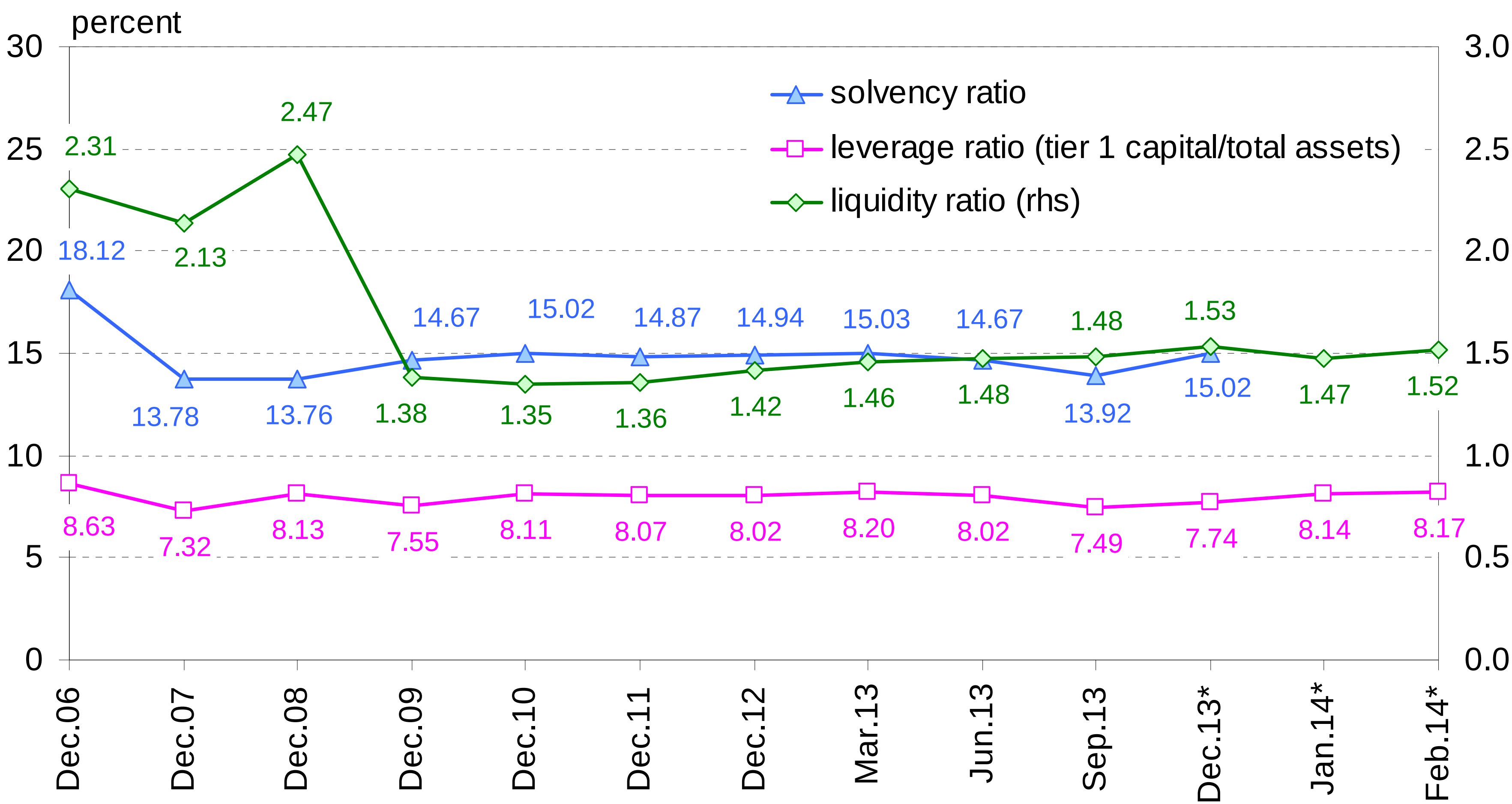
Source: National Bank of Romania, National Institute of Statistics

Banking System

The banking system remains sound

- The banking system is well capitalized, with the average capital adequacy ratio at 15% (headline) and 13.7% (CT1) at end-2013
  - ✓ The NBR is exercising tight oversight of prudential indicators, with a focus on capital adequacy dynamics and banks' efforts to raise additional capital
  - ✓ Most banks exceed the conservative 10% threshold recommended by the NBR (against the regulated level of 8%)
  - ✓ No public funds have been used so far to support the banking sector
- The liquidity ratio (effective liquidity/required liquidity) remained adequate (1.5 in February 2014)

Analysis Ratios for the Banking System

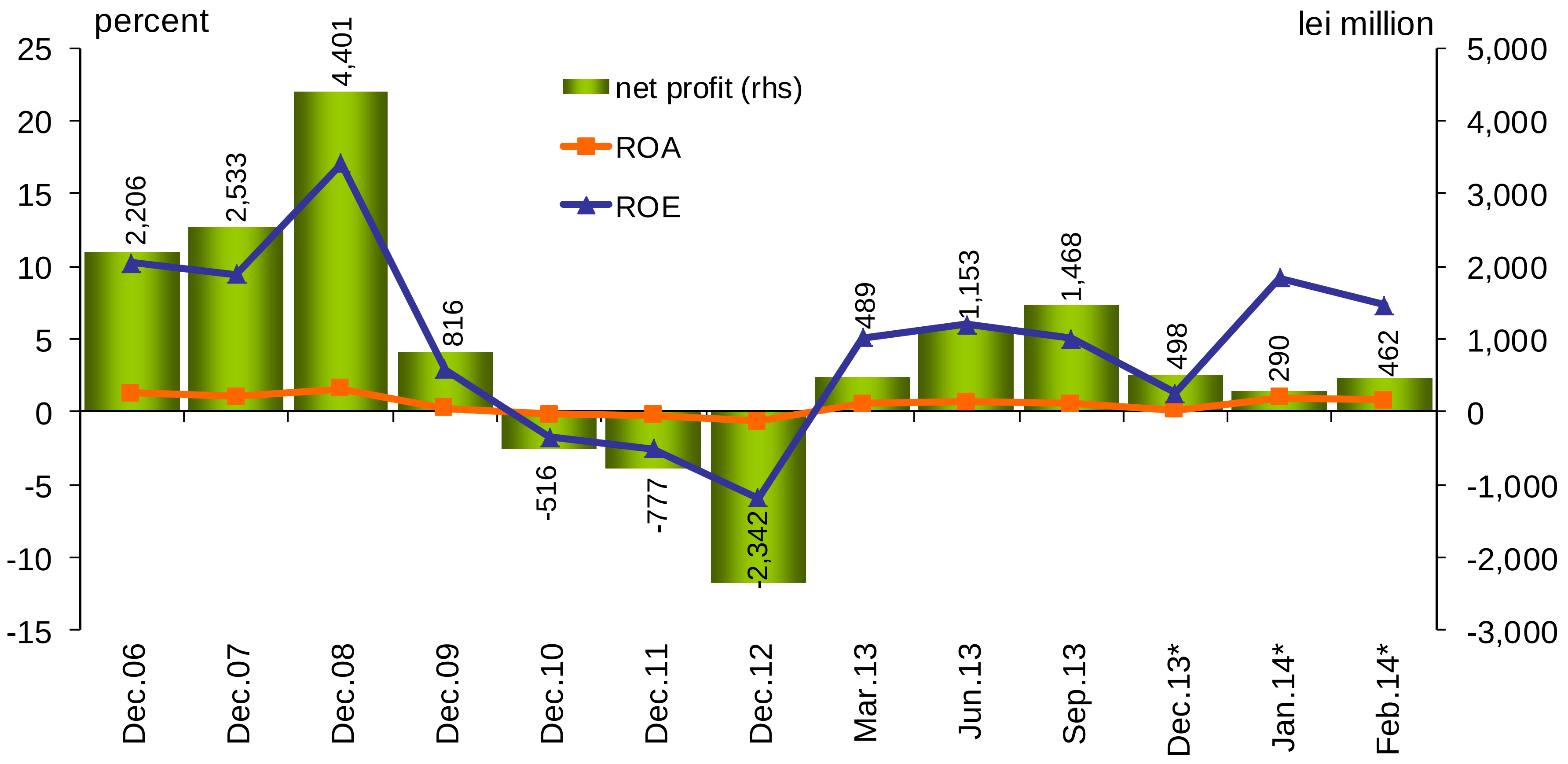


*) Indicators are calculated based on data in prudential reports.

Note: Starting January 1, 2012, Romanian credit institutions apply the IFRS for accounting purposes.

Source: National Bank of Romania

Banking System Profitability



*) Indicators are calculated based on data in prudential reports.

Note: Starting January 1, 2012, Romanian credit institutions apply the IFRS for accounting purposes.

Source: National Bank of Romania

The banking system remains sound (2)

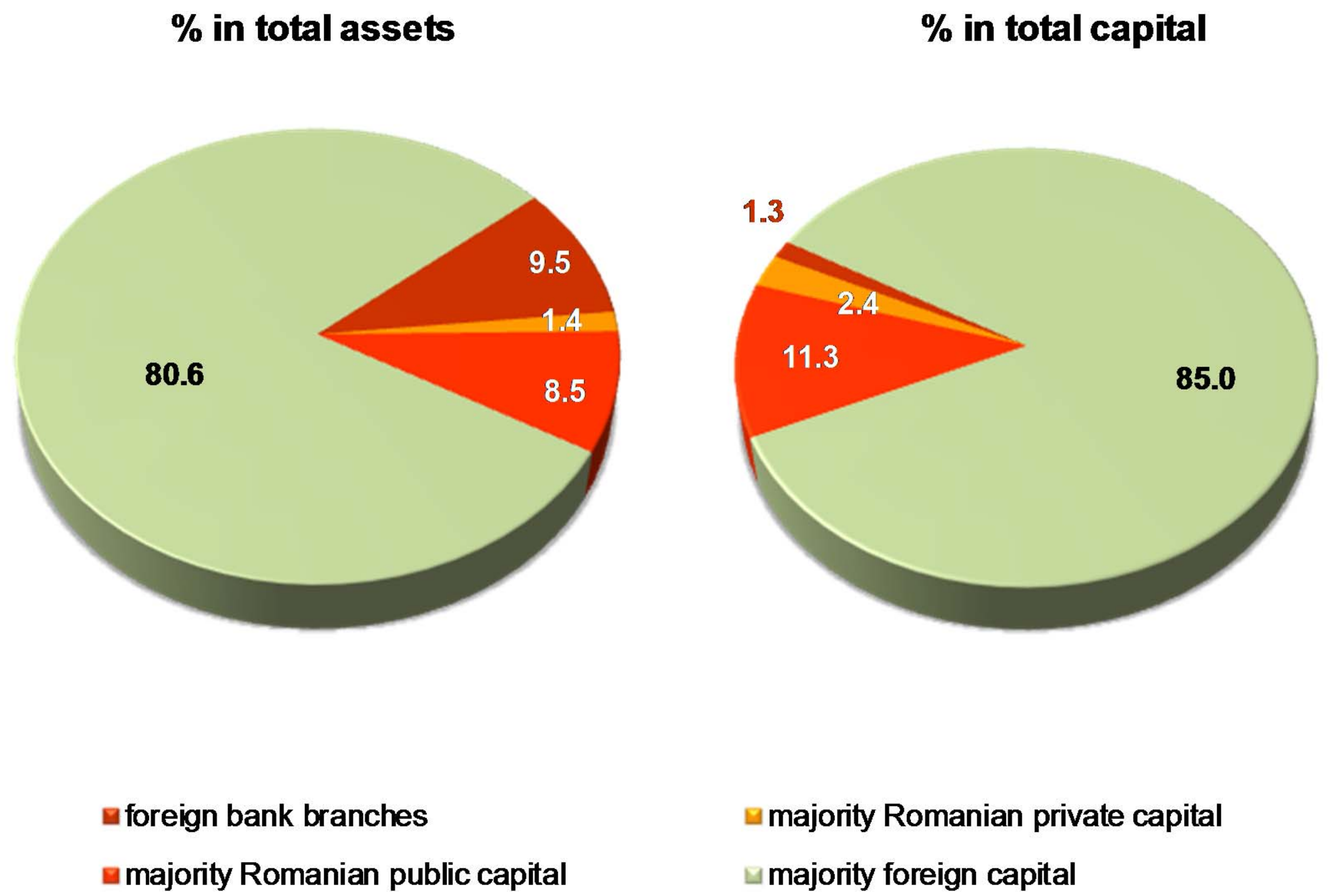
- NPLs continued to increase in 2013 and early 2014, albeit at a slower pace than in previous years, mainly due to
  - ✓ Revaluation of the quality of previously-restructured loans
  - ✓ Constraints on customers' financial standing
- Provisioning of NPLs is adequate
  - ✓ NPL coverage with IFRS provisions and prudential filters remained at a comfortable 89.7% at end-February 2014
  - ✓ If only IFRS provisions are taken into account, the degree of NPL coverage was 67.6% at end-February 2014

The banking system remains sound (3)

- The deleveraging process in Romania has continued to unfold in an orderly manner
  - ✓ The loan-to-deposit ratio fell further, to 100.8% in February 2014, underpinned by credit to the private sector declining by 3% yoy in real terms and bank deposits increasing by 9.6% yoy
  - ✓ Foreign banks participating in the Vienna Initiative reduced their exposure to Romania by 19% between end-March 2009 and February 2014
    - the decline in parent banks' exposure was largely confined to Greek-owned banks
  - ✓ The adverse effects of the deleveraging process initiated by large European banking groups have so far not significantly impacted Romania, also due to the balanced macroeconomic policy under the EU-IMF-WB arrangements and the strategies of leading banking groups operating in Romania, which contemplate preserving local capital outlays

Dominant presence of foreign-owned banks in the system …

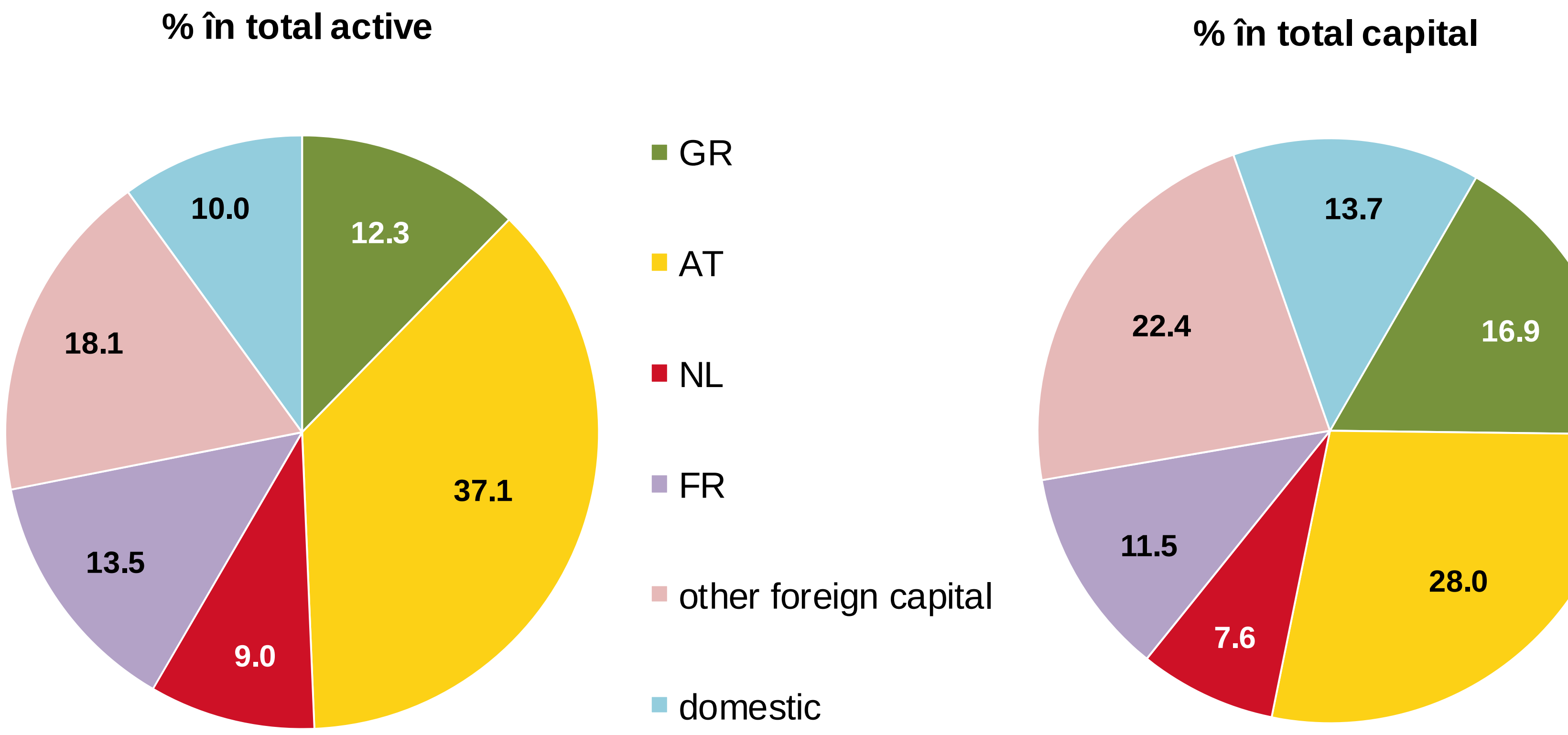
Banking system ownership, December 2013



Source: National Bank of Romania

… with the downside of contagion exposure

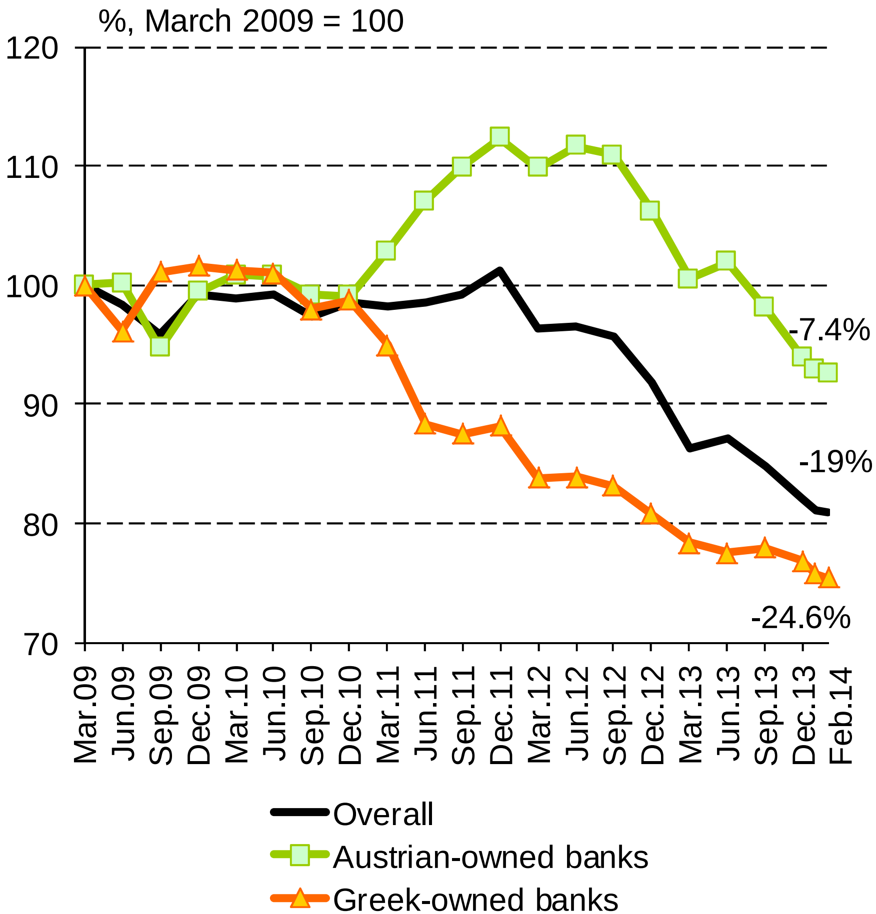
Banking system ownership, December 2013



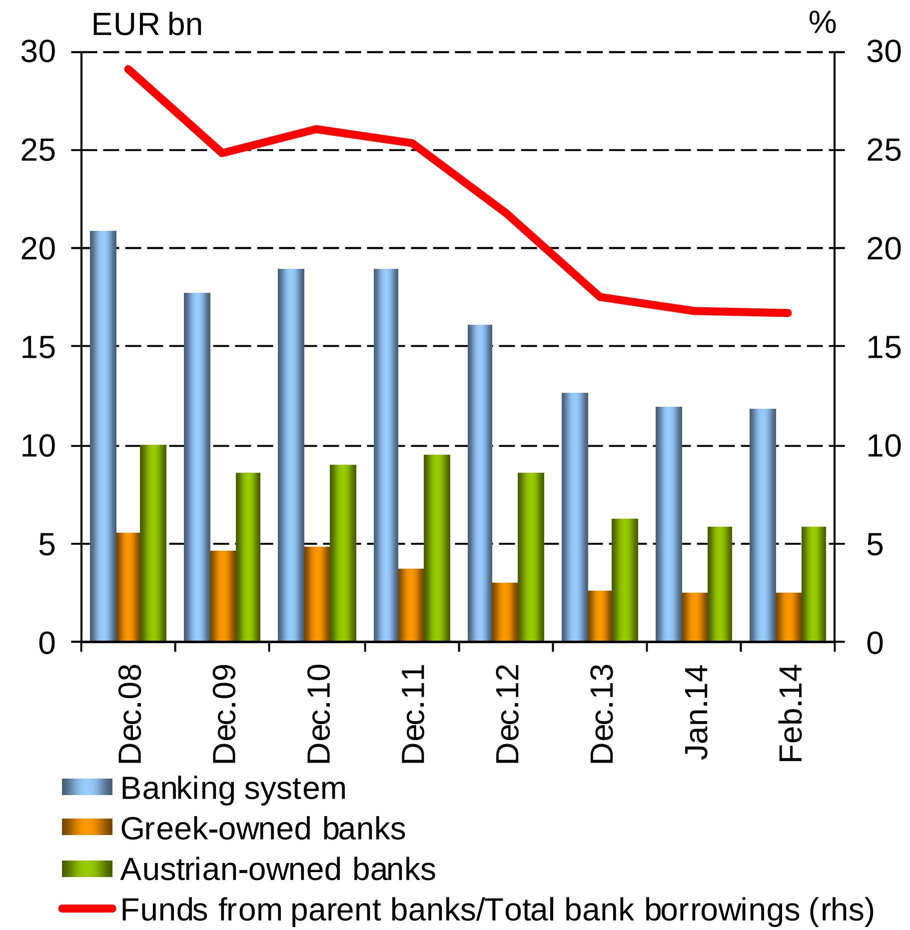
Source: National Bank of Romania

Orderly financial deleveraging in the crisis aftermath

Exposure to Romania of foreign banks participating in the Vienna Initiative



Funds from parent banks*



* subordinated loans excluded

Source: National Bank of Romania

Russia – Ukraine Tensions: Manageable Economic Risks

Tensions between Russia and Ukraine: How large are the risks for Romania?

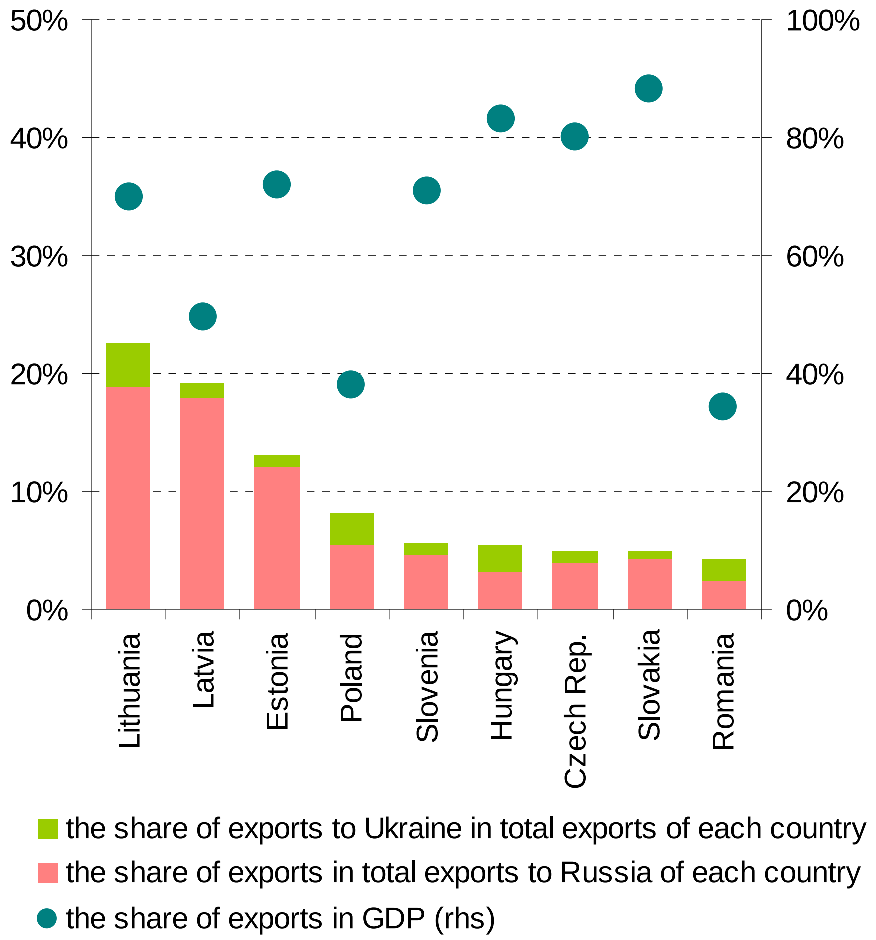
- Trade restrictions or disruptions may affect exports and/or energy supply, yet the risks appear manageable
  - ✓ Exports to Russia and Ukraine account for only 4.7% of total Romanian exports ➡ a 10% fall in the value of exports to these countries, assuming no replacement, would shave 0.16 pp off the growth rate of Romania's GDP
  - ✓ While virtually all imported natural gas comes from Russia via Ukraine, Romania is able to cover on average around 80% of its own consumption from domestic sources
    - Romania ranks the third least imported-energy-dependent country in the EU
    - imported natural gas accounted for only 15% of total consumption in 2013
    - even a total shutdown in gas imports may be weathered without tangible disruptions at least until November-December

Tensions between Russia and Ukraine: How large are the risks for Romania? (2)

- Russian capital has a significant presence (directly or via holding companies based in other EU countries) in the iron and steel (TMK), metallurgy (ALRO Slatina and ALOR Oradea) and oil refining (Lukoil) sectors, yet none of the Russian-owned companies may be deemed to be of systemic importance

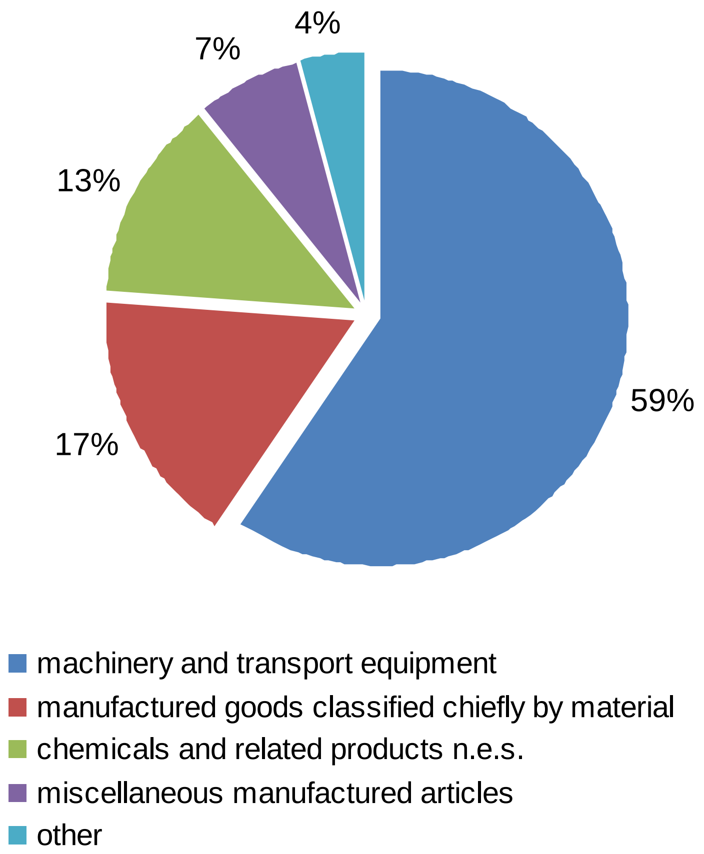
- Financial sector:
  - ✓ No direct links between the Romanian banking system and those of Russia and Ukraine
    - no Russian or Ukrainian capital in the Romanian banking system
    - negligible exposures of Romanian banks to Russian or Ukrainian entities
  - ✓ Potential for spillovers through the common lender channel via the exposure of Austrian and French banks to Russia and Ukraine
    - the comfortable solvency and liquidity buffers in the Romanian banking system should help alleviate such spillovers in case they materialize
  - ✓ So far the impact of regional tension flare-ups on the capital and forex markets has been moderate and short-lived

Exports to Russia and Ukraine account for a comparatively small share of Romania's exports

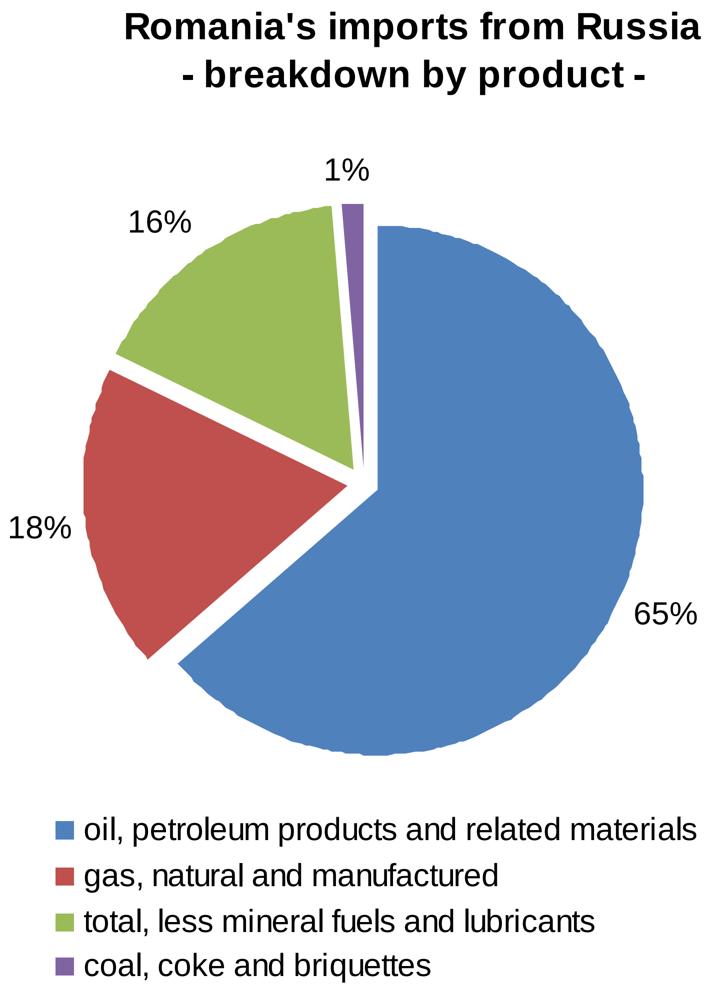


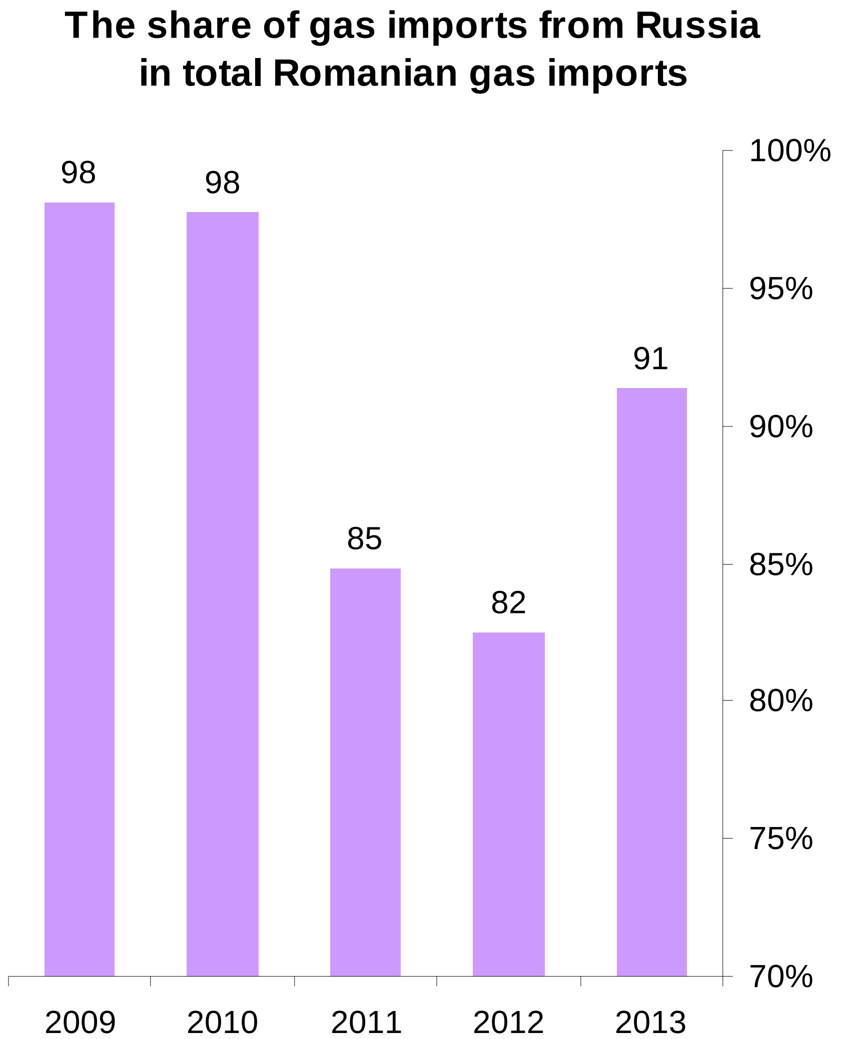
Source: Eurostat

Romania's exports to Russia - breakdown by product -



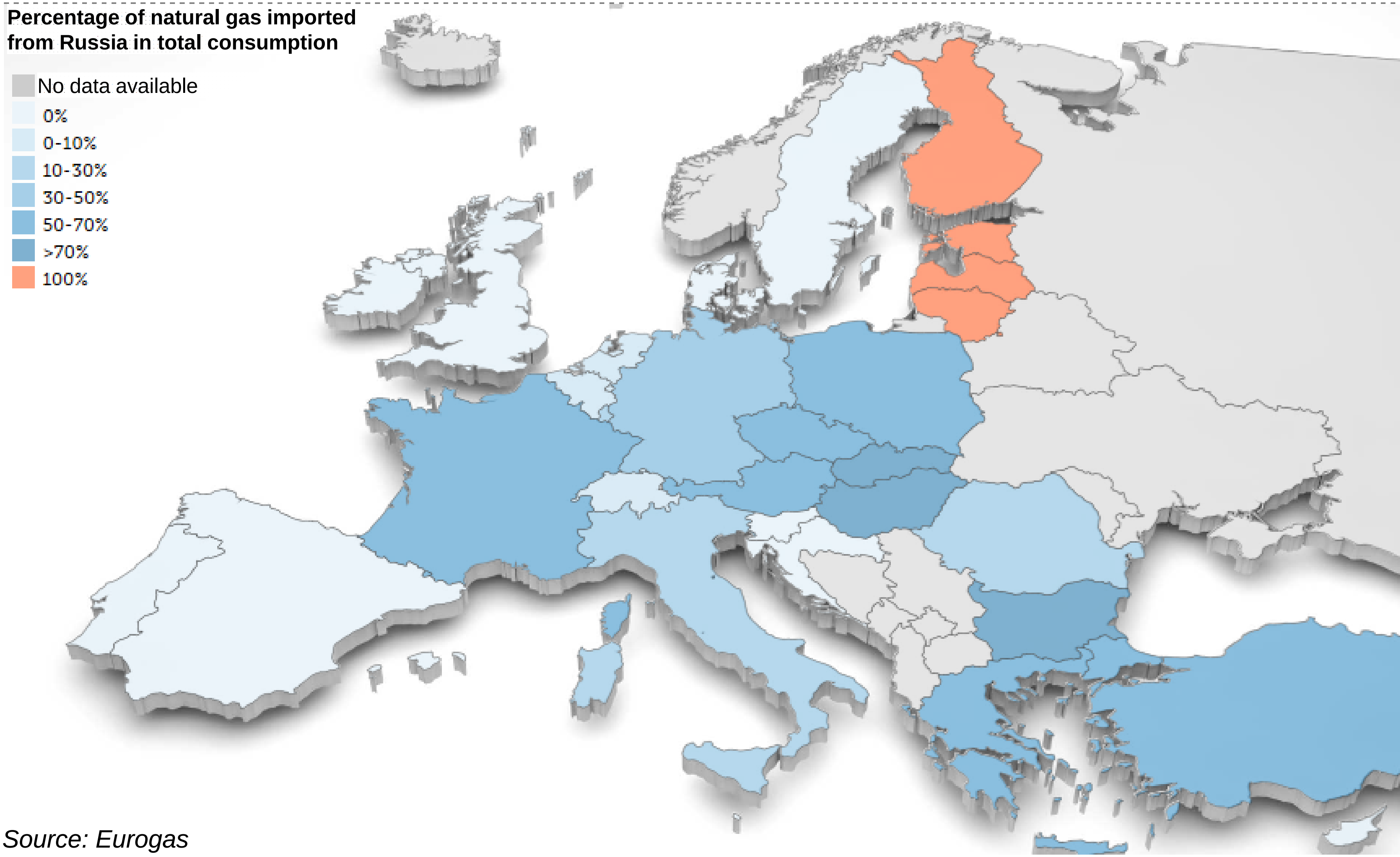
Energy products form the bulk of Romania's imports from Russia, with virtually all imported natural gas coming from there …





Source: Eurostat

… yet Romania ranks among the most self-sufficient countries in Europe as regards its gas consumption



Source: Eurogas