



**Humane
World for
Animals™**

Formerly called
Humane Society International

Executive summary

The Pecking Order 2024 Romania

Paving the path forward for improved chicken welfare in the fast-food industry

About this report

The Pecking Order reviews the fast-food industry's progress on broiler chicken welfare in EU countries. This report focuses on Romania's top fast-food brands that use chicken meat. Each year, billions of chickens – raised solely for meat – suffer in crowded, intensive farms.

As a major chicken meat buyer, the fast-food industry influences how chickens are raised and slaughtered. *The Pecking Order* 2024 evaluated 75 fast-food chains, including 12 in Romania, using the [European Chicken Commitment \(ECC\)](#)

criteria – a recognized set of science-based standards for broiler chicken welfare. This evaluation checks each chain's commitment and progress in improving chicken welfare, using publicly available information.

This report highlights both progress and challenges in Romania's fast-food sector, emphasizing companies' roles in reducing animal suffering and meeting consumer demand for more humane practices. It reveals policy gaps, stressing the need for stronger welfare commitments and unified European regulations, paving the way for a more sustainable industry.

Key findings

- **Progress varies by country:** In 2024, *The Pecking Order* reviewed 75 fast-food companies across Europe, including Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain. While there have been improvements since 2023, Romanian chains had the lowest scores in both years, showing a clear need for further progress
- **The state of the industry:** One-third of the Romanian fast-food companies surveyed have started working to improve chicken welfare, which is a good first step. However, most companies have not started to make any changes yet. The industry needs to follow ECC standards to improve chicken welfare. Also, companies that made commitments did not share progress, so consumers do not know if improvements are happening.
- **International vs. national chains:** International chains in Romania often follow their parent company's policies, showing some global progress but not much locally. Local branches may not know about or follow these commitments. National chains are further behind, because they do not have any chicken welfare policies. It is important for fast-food chains to ensure their animal welfare commitments are visible and active in Romania.



Facts

Romania is the eighth-largest chicken meat producer in the EU, slaughtering 300.8 million chickens yearly.⁷

80% of Romanians are willing to pay up to 10% more for higher animal welfare products.⁸

13.9% increase in retail sales of free-range and organic chicken meat in Romania between 2018-2022.⁹

69% of Romanians want better protection for farmed animals.¹⁰

92% of Romanians find it very important to ensure good farm animal welfare.¹¹



1957

0.9 kg in 56 days



1978

1.8 kg in 56 days



2005

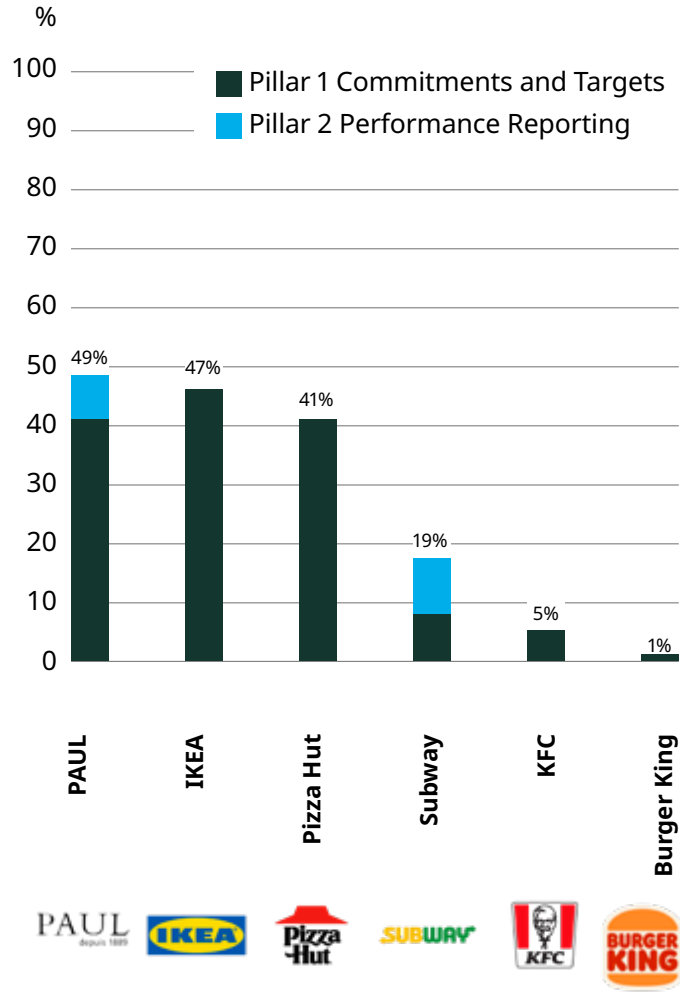
4.2 kg in 56 days

Chickens raised conventionally are bred for extremely rapid weight gain.¹²

Animal welfare matters – for chickens and Romanian people

Chicken welfare is an important but often ignored issue in food production. Over 6.4 billion chickens were slaughtered in the European Union in 2023,¹ including in Romania, under poor conditions that cause health problems such as lameness,^{2,3,4} respiratory problems⁵ and muscle damage.⁶

The ECC criteria address key welfare issues, such as reducing overcrowding of chickens in the barn; using slower-growing, higher welfare chicken breeds; providing better environments, including natural light, perches, pecking substrates and no cages; and ensuring more humane slaughter practices. These crucial improvements highlight the shortcomings in current laws and align with modern welfare expectations.



Industry brand overview based on assessed fast-food companies that made progress in 2024

Brands with a 0% score

5 To Go

SALAD BOX

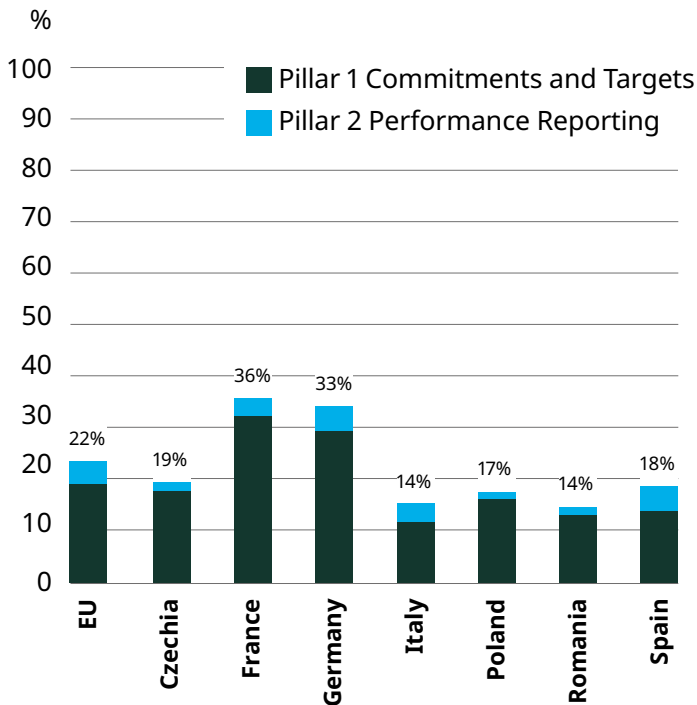
Romania’s fast-food industry

In Romania, 12 fast-food companies were assessed on their publicly available chicken welfare policies and practices. PAUL, IKEA and Pizza Hut lead, with strong targets but low scores in progress reporting, followed by Subway and KFC. 5 to go, Burger King, Domino’s, McDonald’s, Salad Box, Spartan and Starbucks received very low scores.

Positive developments in Romania’s fast-food industry include ECC commitments from IKEA, PAUL, Pizza Hut and Subway, although overall performance is still low. IKEA is the first to get points by showing its plans to implement with a published road map. Six companies now score above zero, with Burger King joining in 2024. Both PAUL and Subway are reporting progress on the implementation of the company’s higher welfare commitments.

Results on country level

The fast-food industry's performance on broiler welfare policies varies significantly across the European Union. In 2024, *The Pecking Order* assessed fast-food companies in Czechia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania and Spain. While some progress has been noted compared to 2023, Romanian chains consistently had the lowest scores in both years (14% in 2024; 17% in 2023), signaling a significant need for improvement to meet customer expectations.



Overview of the country results based on the fast-food industry scores in that country in 2024

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Ways forward for Romania

- **Commitments and road maps:** Fast-food companies without a chicken welfare commitment should begin developing policies aligned with ECC criteria. Those with existing commitments should create clear road maps to achieve their goals.
- **Collaboration between companies and producers:** With only a few chicken producers in Romania using alternative, higher welfare farming models aligned with the ECC criteria, fast-food chains and producers must collaborate closely to meet these standards. Producers need dedicated buyers to justify investments in higher welfare, while fast-food chains rely on these producers for a steady supply of higher welfare chicken.
- **Legislative action:** Lawmakers play a critical role in ensuring the transition to higher welfare standards for broiler chickens. Through policy development and enforcement, legislators can drive industrywide changes that protect animal welfare while keeping the industry competitive in both the national and European markets.

As a key player in Europe's broiler chicken market, Romania's fast-food industry has the ability and responsibility to improve welfare standards. Supporting higher welfare practices can reduce the suffering of billions of chickens and align with consumer expectations for a more humane food system, reflected on fast-food menus.

[Explore the full report for detailed insights, year comparisons and methodology.](#)



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