

Belarus: Market Profile

Major Economic Indicators

	2015	2016	2017**
Population (000)	9,481	9,498 [#]	9,451
GDP (US\$ bn)	56.329	48.847 [#]	54.689
Real growth (%)	-3.8	-3.0 [#]	-0.8
GDP per capita (US\$)	5,941	5,143 [#]	5,787
Inflation – CPI index	13.5%	11.8% [#]	9.3%
Unemployment rate	0.9%	1.0% [#]	1.0%
Exports (US\$ bn)	26.660	23.340	N.A.
YoY growth (%)	-26.2	-12.5	N.A.
Imports (US\$ bn)	30.292	27.573	N.A.
YoY growth (%)	-25.4	-9.0	N.A.
Average exchange rate (Belarusian ruble per US\$)*	15,865	1.9885	1.9051 ^{##}

Note: # estimate, ## Jan-Jul 2017, ** forecast

* New Belarusian ruble (BYN) replaced Belarusian ruble (BYR) at 1:10,000 on 1 July 2016

Source: IMF, WTO, National Bank of the Republic of Belarus

- Belarus is a landlocked nation, bordering Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine. Due to its strategic location, it is an important trade and transport route in Eurasia. The country's transportation infrastructure consists of a broad network of motorways, railways and air routes. The thoroughfares crossing the country – including two Pan-European corridors (II and IX) – are the most important component of the European transportation system.
- Being a founding member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Belarus serves not only as a gateway to other signatories, namely Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, but also to the whole regional market. Every year more than 100 million tonnes of European cargo cross Belarus, of which 90% is bound for either Russia or the EU.
- With few mineral resources of its own, Belarus is striving to stimulate foreign investment to promote privatisation, economic restructuring and innovative development. Priority areas include pharmaceuticals, food, transport and logistics, chemistry and petro-chemistry, mechanical engineering, renewable energy and IT.
- A number of preferential regimes has been put in place to facilitate investment, including special incentives for business within six free economic areas (0% profit tax for five years; 10% VAT), the High-Tech Park (0% profit tax for 15 years; 0% VAT), and the Belarusian-Chinese Industrial Park (0% profit tax for 10 years). More information can be found at the [National Agency of Investment and Privatization](#).



- The inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI) to Belarus amounted to US\$1.7 billion in 2015, with China contributing US\$54 million. As of the end of 2015, China’s total stock of FDI to Belarus topped US\$475 million, up from US\$0.3 million in 2006. Hong Kong, holding an FDI position of US\$2.7 million as of end-2015, ranked 45th in the list of Belarus’s inbound foreign investors. Among Asian investors, Hong Kong, however, trailed only the Chinese mainland, South Korea and Singapore.

Hong Kong’s Trade with Belarus

(US\$ million)	2015		2016		Jan-Jun 2017	
	Value	Growth	Value	Growth	Value	Growth
Total Exports	48.965	-24.4	58.553	+19.6	36.838	+70.5
Domestic exports	*	-96.9	0.002	+287.1	0.012	+788.8
Re-exports	48.965	-24.4	58.552	+19.6	36.826	+70.4
Imports	6.679	-30.7	5.208	-22.0	2.351	+13.8
Total Trade	55.644	-25.2	63.762	+14.6	39.189	+65.5

* insignificant

Source: Hong Kong Trade Statistics, Census & Statistics Department

More Information

More information on the Belt and Road countries’ economic and investment environment, tax and other subjects that are important in considering investment and doing business are available in [The Belt and Road Initiative: Country Business Guides](#).

Find this page at

<http://china-trade-research.hktdc.com/business-news/article/The-Belt-and-Road-Initiative/Belarus-Market-Profile/obor/en/1/1X000000/1X0A3IVN.htm>

Copyright©2017 Hong Kong Trade Development Council. Reproduction in whole or in part without prior permission is prohibited. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council is not responsible for any errors. Views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council.