

Belarus

Bilateral relations in agriculture



Main Country Indicators 2013

	Belarus	EU28
Total area (km ²)	207 600	4 385 992
Population (million)	9 466*	506.7
Population density (per km ²)	46.6	120
GDP (current USD)	71.7	17.3 trillion
GDP per capita (current USD)	7 575	34 240
GDP growth (% change with previous year)	0.9	0.1

Sources: Eurostat, World Bank

Economic importance of agriculture (2011)

	Belarus	EU28
Agricultural land (km ²)	88 750	1 878 817
Agricultural land as proportion of land area (%)	43.7	44.3
Arable land as % of land area	27.2	25.6
Permanent cropland (% of land area)	0.6	2.8
Employment in agriculture (% of total employment)	10.5**	5 *
Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)	9.1	1.6 *

Sources: World Bank * year 2012, ** year 2009

Trade Statistics

EU28 **exports** of agricultural products to Belarus (2013): EUR 915 million
 EU28 **imports** of agricultural products from Belarus (2013): EUR 199 million

More statistical information

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/trade-analysis/statistics/outside-eu/belarus_en.pdf

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Agriculture in Belarus

The agricultural sector in Belarus, which employs about one-tenth of the labour force but constitutes a diminishing proportion of GDP, is dominated by large collective and state farms. Private holdings were permitted for household use during the Soviet era, but, while their number increased dramatically following independence, they remained small in size. In the early 21st century a significant number of collective farms were sold to private or state-controlled companies. Most of the country has mixed crop and livestock farming, with a historic emphasis on flax growing. (During the late Soviet era the Belorussian S.S.R. produced about one-fourth of the U.S.S.R. total). Potatoes, sugar beets, barley, wheat, rye, and corn (maize) are other important field crops; a large percentage of the grains are used for animal feed. Cattle, poultry, and pigs are the main livestock. Considerable areas of the swampy lowlands have been drained since the late 19th century, with much of the reclaimed land being used for fodder crops. Dairying and truck farming are locally important in the vicinity of Minsk. Nearly two-fifths of Belarus is covered by forests, which are exploited for the production of wood and paper products. Most of the country's small fish yield results from aquaculture.

EU-Belarus Relations

EU-Belarus relations are currently governed by the [Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council](#) as last set out on 15 October 2012. Ratification of an EU-Belarus Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (negotiated in 1995) has been frozen since 1997 in response to the political situation in the country: the violations of electoral standards in Belarus' presidential elections (especially in 2010) and the ensuing crackdown on civil society, political opposition and independent media.

Belarus is covered by the [European Neighbourhood Policy](#) but, in view of the political situation, no action plan is yet in place. Belarus is also a member of the [Eastern Partnership](#) Initiative, but participates only in its multilateral track. Assistance for Belarus is granted under the [Country Strategy Paper 2007-13](#) and focuses on:

- supporting the needs of the population directly and indirectly
- supporting democratization mitigating the effects of the self-isolation of Belarus on its society.

In response to Belarus' lack of commitment to democracy and political and civil rights, the EU has not yet ratified the bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreement concluded with Belarus in 1995.

The bilateral trade and economic relations therefore remain covered by the [Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#) concluded by the European Community with the Soviet Union in 1989 and subsequently endorsed by Belarus. Belarus applied for membership of the WTO in 1993. Its accession process is ongoing.

The EU is Belarus' second main trade partner with almost a one third share in the country's overall trade. Russia is Belarus' most important trading partner and absorbs almost half of Belarus' international trade.

The EU-Belarus bilateral trade in goods has been growing steadily over the past years.

General information about EU-trade with Belarus can be found here:

<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/belarus/>