

**VIETRADE** - Russia and Belarus are potential trading partners of Vietnam. Although trade exchange between Vietnam and Russia has achieved positive results in recent years, trade exchange between Vietnam and Belarus is still modest. Currently, Vietnam and its partners, i.e. Russia and Belarus, are still putting a lot of efforts together to develop bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

### Promoting trade cooperation with Belarus

The two-way trade turnover between Vietnam and Belarus in 2016 was only US\$ 94.5 million. In the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2017, the figure is US\$ 37.7 million, of which the export turnover of Vietnam to Belarus is US\$ 1.4 million and Vietnam's import turnover from this market is US\$ 36.3 million.

Vietnam's exports to Belarus are mainly aquatic products, wood products, garments and textiles, footwear, rice, natural rubber, cashew nuts, peanuts, pepper, spices, tea, canned fruits and vegetables, pharmaceuticals, computers, etc. At the same time, Vietnam also imports such commodities from Belarus as fertilizers, machinery, equipment, automobile spare parts, tractors, trucks, chemicals, etc.

In the joint statement between Vietnam and Belarus during the official visit of Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang to the Republic of Belarus from 26-28 June 2017, the two countries affirmed their desire to strengthen bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

At the talks between Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on 27 June 2017 during the visit, the two sides discussed and agreed on specific measures to develop the economic cooperation, trade and investment between the two countries to a higher level. The first and foremost action is the effective cooperation in the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Vietnam and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), of which Belarus is a member; and the Protocol on Supporting the Production of motorized vehicles in the territory of Vietnam to create a breakthrough in economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

President Tran Dai Quang and President Alexander Lukashenko have agreed to a target of reaching the bilateral trade turnover of US\$ 500 million in the several years to come.

The two leaders have also agreed to actively support the activities of import, export, trade and investment promotion between the two countries and continue to effectively coordinate the implementation of cooperation programs between Vietnam and Belarus in the field of science, economy, etc. for the period of 2016-2018.

At the Vietnam – Belarus Economic Talks held on the same day, President Tran Dai Quang said that, with a high level of complementariness in the structure of the economy, Vietnam and Belarus can strengthen links in value chains and have further export cooperation rather than just building a two-way trade relationship. The Vietnamese President also affirmed that Belarus is a priority partner in Vietnam's foreign policy in the EAEU region. In that process, the business community of the two countries is not only the subject of the economic cooperation but also plays the role of initiating ideas and creating new impetuses in trade and investment.

President Tran Dai Quang emphasized that, with the aim of increasing the bilateral trade turnover in line with the trade balance, in the coming time, Vietnam would like to provide more choices for 10 million potential customers in Belarus by exporting its high-quality processed agro-aquatic and seafood products, electronic products and consumer goods. At the same time, Vietnam will create favourable conditions for Belarus to export industrial, mechanical, energy and mineral products to Vietnam, a country with increasing purchasing power.

### **Creating impulses for economic cooperation with Russia**

As the leading trading partner of Vietnam in the EAEU block, Russia has a lot of potential for Vietnam's exports. Vietnam-Russia trade relations have developed significantly and achieved positive results in recent years. Only in the first five months of 2017, the bilateral trade turnover between Vietnam and Russia already reached US\$ 1.37 billion. The exports of Vietnam to Russia include telephones, garments, agro-aquatic products, etc. and Vietnam's imports from Russia are mainly gasoline, oil, steel, fertilizer, machinery and equipment of all kinds, etc.

At the talk between President Tran Dai Quang and President Vladimir Putin on 29 June 2017 during his official visit to Russia from 28 June to 1 July 2017, the two sides were pleased about the economic and trade cooperation results between the two countries in recent time. The two leaders said that Vietnam and Russia should make greater efforts to maintain the growth of the current bilateral trade relations to be commensurate with the existing successful political relations between the two countries, striving to increase the bilateral trade turnover to US\$ 10 billion by 2020.

Both sides have agreed to cooperate closely and effectively with each other in implementing the FTA between Vietnam and EAEU to make the most of this agreement to expand economic cooperation, trade and investment between the two countries. The two leaders have also agreed to create favourable conditions for the two nations' businesses in import-export activities, including the acceleration of agreements on food safety control and enhancement of trade promotion activities, expansion in the scale of payment in local currencies.

President Tran Dai Quang and Russian President Vladimir Putin have also agreed to actively and effectively implement priority investment projects in the two countries, including joint ventures for oil and gas in Vietnam and Russia, the light-industrial zone project in the province of Moscow, the TH Group's projects in some localities of Russia; to establish joint ventures between the two countries on assembling and manufacturing automobiles in Vietnam on the basis of the Protocol between the Government of Vietnam and the Government of Russia on supporting the production of motorized vehicles in Vietnam, etc.