

Hot Issue

Remarkable Trade Cooperation under Belt and Road Initiative.

P2

Projects

On the whole, China and B&R countries achieved rapid growth in total imports and exports, with the import growth rate exceeding the export rate for the first time.

P3

Story

Guangzhou is like a second home to those who have spent a long time living there.

P4

new
stories
of the

★ Silk Road

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18

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The National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai), the venue for the China International Import Expo

(Photo/Xinhua)

The first China International Import Expo was held at the National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai) from November 5 to 10 with participants from 172 countries and regions. Up to one third of them were from countries and regions along the Belt and Road. The Import Expo is a bridgehead for trade between the Belt and Road countries and China.

Impressive Outcomes over Last Five Years

In the last five years, the Belt and Road Initiative has yielded fruitful results with increasing support from more and more countries and international organizations.

From 2013 to 2017, total goods trade value between China and Belt and Road countries exceeded \$5 trillion. According to statistics issued by the General Administration of Customs, in 2017 China's imports and exports with these countries totaled 7.37 trillion yuan, up by 17.8 percent year-on-year and accounting for 26.5 percent of China's total trade value. For the first two months of 2018, China's total import and export value with these nations was 1.26 trillion, with an increase of 21.9 percent.

Trade relations are expanding. China is dedicated to promoting two-way open markets and facilitating foreign trades. Its trade structure is improving with new growth points. Platforms of comprehensive expos and fairs are utilized to host trade activities. In the past five years, total trade value between China and the Belt and Road countries was more than \$5 trillion, at an average growth rate of 1.1 percent.

Investment cooperation is also deepening. China has enhanced services and support for Chinese companies who are investing in the Belt and Road countries. Over the last five years, China's direct investment in these nations exceeded \$70 billion at an average annual growth rate of 7.2 percent.

Economic and trade zones are under steady development. China and the Belt and Road countries are working closely to construct economic and trade zones. For five years, Chinese companies have set up 82 economic and trade zones in the Belt and Road countries, with an accumulative investment of \$ 28.9 billion.

The network of free trade is also expanding. China has signed or upgraded five free trade agreements with 13 Belt and Road countries. A free trade network, meeting high standards and targeting global markets while well-positioned for regional markets among the Belt and Road countries, is taking shape at an accelerating rate.

Trade Connections Fueled by Import Expo

The area allocated to the over 1000 companies from 58 Belt and Road countries at the exhibition was 45,000 square meters, "Belt and Road" exhibitors brought to the expo their traditional competitive products, and also specialty products and services marking their recent industrial and technological breakthroughs. Some countries hosted promotional events at the expo. The exhibitors took all opportunities to show their brands to China and the rest of the world, seeking new business.

Egypt was one of the first nations to sign a Belt and Road memorandum of understanding (MoU) with China. As guest nation at the expo, Egypt has brought to China agricultural products such as food, textiles, hand-crafted items, furniture, engineering devices, and leather products, all meant to show the breadth of Egypt's industry, trade, and tourism.

Russian Deputy Minister of Economic Development Alexei Gruzdev said that the Import Expo will help find new growth points for trade and investment cooperation between Russia and China.

"The Import Expo will be an open cooperation platform for the Belt and Road countries to show their development achievements and promote international trade," said Liang Ming, head of the Foreign Trade Research Institute at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Commerce. "Many Belt and Road countries previously did not have opportunities to meet the Chinese buyers. This expo gives them a great opportunity."

Source: Xinhua, people.com.cn

Belt and Road Trade Cooperation in Big Data 2018

In the last five years, more than 100 countries and international organizations have been actively supporting and participating in the Belt and Road Initiative, and a good number of influential landmark projects have been successfully launched.

I. On the whole, China and B&R countries achieved rapid growth in total imports and exports, with the import growth rate exceeding the export rate for the first time.

- In 2017, China exported \$774.26 billion to the B&R countries, up 8.5 percent year-on-year, accounting for 34.1 percent of China's total exports.
- Imports totaled \$666.05 billion, with a year-on-year increase of 19.8 percent, accounting for 39 percent of China's total imports.



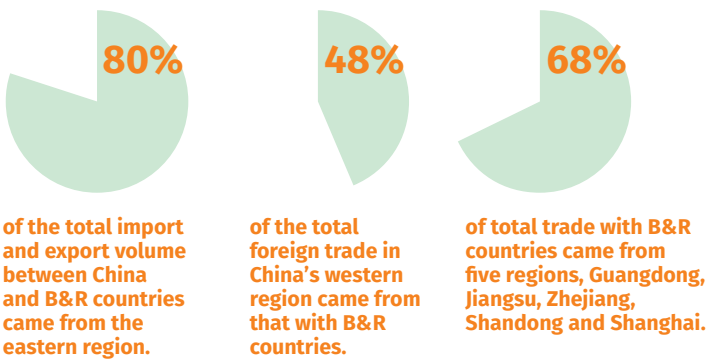
II. In terms of country and region, the proportion of trade between the Asia-Oceania Region and China accounts for more than 50 percent, with the fastest growth rate of trade with central Asia. South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, India and Russia are the major trade partners.

- In 2017, China's trade with the Asia-Oceania Region made up 56.8 percent of its total imports and exports with B&R countries.
- China's trade with central Asia grew at the fastest pace in 2017, up 19.8 percent from 2016.
- In 2017, China's fastest-growing trading partners in total imports and exports were Qatar, Montenegro, Mongolia and Kazakhstan, all growing at more than 35 percent.



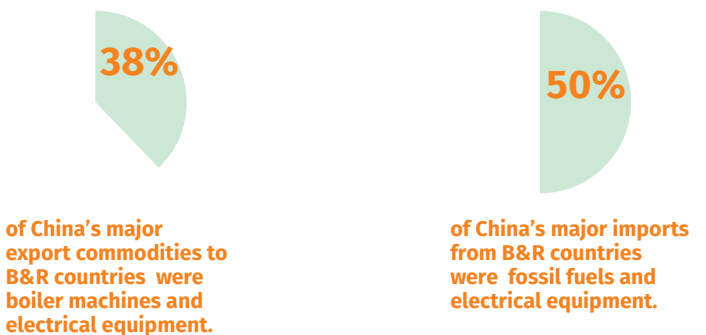
III. In terms of domestic regions, the eastern region accounted for nearly 80 percent of China's trade with B&R countries, while the western and northeastern regions showed outstanding performance. Guangdong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shandong and Shanghai were ranked in the top five.

- In 2017, the total import and export volume between eastern region and B&R countries was \$1149.41 billion, accounting for 79.8 percent of the total import and export volume between China and B&R countries.
- The total import and export volume between China's western region and B&R countries accounted for the highest proportion of total foreign trade in the region, reaching 48.1 percent in 2017, while that of the northeast region accounted for 41.7 percent of its total foreign trade.
- The five regions in China that have the highest import and export volume with B&R countries are Guangdong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shandong and Shanghai, accounting for 67.8 percent of total trade.



IV. In terms of commodity composition: boiler machinery and electrical equipment are China's major export commodities to B&R countries, while fossil fuel and electrical equipment are the major commodities that China imports from B&R countries.

- In 2017, China's major export commodities to B&R countries were boiler machines and electrical equipment, which together accounted for 38.2 percent of China's exports to B&R countries.
- China's major imports from B&R countries in 2017 were fossil fuels and electrical equipment, which together accounted for 50.3 percent of China's imports from B&R.



V. In terms of trade body: private enterprises are the main force; state-owned enterprises are growing significantly.

- The total import and export volume between private enterprises and B&R countries accounted for the largest proportion, with \$619.98 billion in 2017, making up 43 percent of total trade volume between China and B&R countries.
- The imports and exports volume between state-owned enterprises and B&R countries grew at the fastest rate, reaching \$279.59 billion in 2017, up 24.5 percent from 2016.



VI. In terms of trade mode, the total import and export of general trade accounted for nearly 60 percent, and the import of general trade and border trade increased significantly.

- In 2017, general trade imports and exports totaled \$840.76 billion, accounting for 58.4 percent of China's trade with B&R countries.
- In terms of growth rate, the import and export of small-scale border trade grew fastest, totaling \$37.95 billion, up 17.3 percent from 2016.



Source: yidaiyilu.gov.cn

Guangzhou has been a trade hub for a thousand years, acting as an all-time window of opening-up to the rest of the world. Many foreigners live and work in this southern city of China. Guangzhou is like a second home to those who have spent a long time living there. What changes has the Belt and Road Initiative brought to them during the last five years? Herman, a businessman running a trade business in Guangzhou with Latin American countries, shares his story.

Herman is from Panama, and now he can communicate with the Chinese buyers in fluent Mandarin. He started his own business in 2006 after he arrived in Guangzhou to export petty commodities to Latin America. In recent years, he discovered new opportunities in South American markets.

His business has also shifted from trade to consultancy. Many big names in China are his partners in seeking penetration into South American markets. It is interesting to note that his company is downsizing though the business is expanding. He employs fewer staff now, down from the over 30 people working for him in beginning to several people now. Herman said that Belt and Road Initiative has facilitated foreigners running businesses in Guangzhou. Outsourcing services and technology have helped him a lot. He used to need five staff to manage 10 projects. Now one can process 20 projects of equal size.

B&R
expand-
ing Herman's
Guangzhou
business

Belt and Road Companies as Key Players at Canton Fair

Many foreign businessmen like Herman come to Guangzhou to attend the Canton Fair, or the China Import and Export Fair. With a history dated back to 1957, the Canton Fair is the largest trade event in China. In a lot of ways it mirrors China's opening-up, and it's a collective memory of many foreign businessmen in China. With the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, exhibitors and buyers from those countries and regions are acting as key players at the Canton Fair.

Herman still keeps many Canton Fair exhibitor passes of his business partners. They are from Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador, and even the Dominican Republic. When they are in Guangzhou, he plans trips for them and takes them to the Canton Fair and to the factories.

African businessman Kingsley is also a regular visitor to the Canton Fair. He first came as a garment trader. He has since observed changes in the African markets and now exports buses and glass plates to Africa. He runs a transportation and construction business there.

Checking on a batch of plates to be shipped to Africa, Kinsley, CEO of Guangzhou Kanhewan Trade Co., Ltd, said that the goods were for a project of his partner's in the capital city of Cameroon. "We buy high-quality glass plates at reasonable prices from China, and use them in local buildings so that they can be as good-looking as those in China."

Arriving in the city of Guangzhou in 2006, he is now married to a Chinese woman and has his own family here. Recently, he was granted permanent residency in China. Kinsley said that he hopes to see Africa set up commerce platforms just like Canton Fair, and feels Africans can learn from China's successful experiences. According to Kinsley, many African countries need Belt and Road Initiative so that communication between people and trade connections can be further enhanced.

Over the last five years, the Canton Fair has signed 46 agreements with 32 Belt and Road countries. In this year's spring session, buyers from these countries accounted for 45 percent of total on-site buyers.

According to Xu Bing, spokesperson for the Canton Fair and deputy head of the China Foreign Trade Centre, seven out of the top ten buyers at the fair are from Belt and Road countries.

Source: cctv.com

