

Beat: Business

A Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and South Africa

European Union Talk Trade

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USPA NEWS - South Africa's Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries have met with the Ambassador of the European Union (EU), Dr Marcus Cornaro, to discuss bilateral trade relations. The meeting took place about the entry into force of Economic Partnership Agreement.

South Africa's Minister of Trade and Industry and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries have met with the Ambassador of the European Union (EU), Dr Marcus Cornaro, to discuss bilateral trade relations.

The meeting took place in the context of the entry into force of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) EPA group in October 2016. The Minister of Trade and Industry, Rob Davies; and Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Senzeni Zokwana; agreed that the EPA marked the strengthening of investment relations between South Africa and the EU. The relevance of the EPA was emphasised in the 2017 State of the Nation Address that was delivered by President Jacob Zuma on 9 February. The ministers and Dr Cornaro discussed the crisis in the domestic poultry industry. Some poultry producers have announced major retrenchment plans amid concerns of the import rate of poultry products from other countries. "The ministers emphasised the importance of the poultry sector to rural development and the revitalisation of the agriculture and agro-processing value chain. The ministers highlighted the measures implemented by government to date, which aimed to address the challenges facing the industry in totality," said the Department of Trade and Industry (dti).

The meeting recognised the crisis in the poultry industry as being complex and thus offered a platform to exchange views on the challenges faced by the industry, which included structural and competitiveness issues, as well as increased imports.

Dr Cornaro said the EU was of the view that the crisis was caused more by the structural challenges affecting the poultry sector rather than EU imports. He also expressed the EU's support for the restructuring of the industry. He said exports of South African poultry to the EU were an opportunity which should be pursued. Both parties expressed goodwill to help facilitate market access and to enhance their cooperation on sanitary and phytosanitary issues. The EU and South Africa are further committed to engage in outreach activities, sectors analyses, tackling trade barriers and smoothening trade flows to help business take full advantage of the EPA. Both parties acknowledged that 2016 was a very good year, with bilateral volumes of exports increasing on both sides. This is expected to improve this year, in view of the number of new opportunities created by the EPA. Meanwhile, the dti last month announced that a task team set up to deal with challenges in the domestic poultry industry had made progress since its inception. (South African Embassy to the Federal Republic of Germany).

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