

Citrus on the agenda as South Africa's President meets with the President of the EU Council

President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa has welcomed "the commitment to resolve current and urgent trade matters particularly on the export of citrus products from South Africa to the EU," the South African Presidency noted after a bilateral meeting between him and European Union Council President Charles Michel in Pretoria yesterday.



President Cyril Ramaphosa, right, receiving a courtesy call from the President of the European Union Council, Charles Michel, on 19 July 2022 (photo: GCIS)

From various quarters, calls had been made on the South African President to intervene in the matter of the so-called 'floating consignments' of oranges shipped to the EU arriving 14 July, the start date of the new orange protocol. The South African citrus industry seeks to save around 2,000 containers of oranges, with an estimated worth of over R600 million (34.4 million euros).

"President Ramaphosa supported the process of further discussions to be held at Ministerial level to work out a solution that will allow for sustained trade in the citrus sub-sector," noted the Presidency's statement.

The European Union is South Africa's largest trading partner as a bloc.

According to the South African Presidency, since the adoption of the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) in 2004, total trade has grown from R150 billion (8.6 billion euros) in 2000 to R843 billion (48.3 billion euros) in 2021.

South African exports to the EU have increased from R64 billion (3.6 billion euros) in 2000 to R482 billion (27.6 billion euros) in 2021, much of that as a result of South Africa's fruit exports.

New markets, especially in the East and in Africa, have opened up for South African fruit over the past two decades, reducing the country's heavy reliance on Europe as an export destination for certain fruit categories.

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Author: [Carolize Jansen](#)

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