



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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14 July 2022

Mr M C Ramaphosa
President of The Republic of South Africa
P O Box 15
Cape Town
8000

Dear President Ramaphosa

RE: NEW EU CITRUS EXPORT REGULATIONS

I write to urge you to intervene urgently to save hundreds of millions of rands of lost income for South African citrus exporters, and to keep South African citrus export channels open.

Please use your position as President of the Republic to plead with the European Union Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (SCoPAFF) for leniency regarding their new citrus export regulations, which require citrus imported from South Africa to have undergone extreme cold treatment before arrival. This new requirement, which aims at avoiding contamination by false codling moth (FCM), comes into effect today 14 July. Millions of cartons of fruit already headed for the European Union risk being destroyed. And South African citrus farmers do not have an immediate alternative market for their produce.

Please urge the EU SCoPAFF to exempt South Africa altogether, on the basis that the new regulations are neither necessary nor justified. South Africa has recorded very few incidents of FCM in the past three years, whereas other countries which have recorded many more incidents are not subject to this new EU regulation. According to South African scientists, the proposed levels of cooling that are required for the oranges are going to damage the fruit. Furthermore, there are already effective measures in place to cool the oranges, measures which have been successful in avoiding/limiting contamination of the fruit.

Failing an outright exemption, please urge EU SCoPAFF to give South African exporters more time to comply with these regulations. The lead time for production is months and years, yet upon publication of these regulations South Africa is expected to comply within three weeks. This is unreasonable and extremely harsh treatment towards South African farmers and exporters.

Unless South Africa is exempted, or at the very least given more time to comply, South Africa's citrus industry will be dealt a very harsh blow, risking the jobs of thousands of local rural workers. These regulations pose a serious threat to the continuity of orange exports from South Africa to Europe. To make matters worse, these regulations have been imposed at a time when Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine has already posed huge obstacles for South Africa's agricultural export sector. Ships cannot dock, there is massive congestion at harbours, and costs for farmers and exporters are escalating.

None of this is to negate the importance of pest control measures. But South Africa has had considerable success to date with pest control, and furthermore these new regulations do not satisfy the EU's own requirements that they be necessary, justified, proportionate or feasible. South Africa's citrus farmers feel strongly that they are neither necessary nor justifiable. On their behalf, and on behalf of all those who work in our citrus industry, I urge you to intervene.

As you will know, the process to review the developmental concessions contained in the Southern African Development Community European Union Economic Partnership Agreement (SADC-EU EPA) is currently underway. I furthermore urge your government to use this matter of the new citrus regulations as an opportunity to ask the EU to review and relax the phytosanitary standards currently in place for SADC exports.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Steenhuisen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'S'.

John Steenhuisen MP
Leader of the Official Opposition
Parliament of RSA