

Forum to deepen trade and investment ties between SA and Spain

On 27 October Agbiz was invited to participate in a SA-Spain Business, Trade and Investment Forum hosted by the presidents of both countries in Pretoria. The Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Ebrahim Patel, further co-hosted the Forum with Reyes Maroto, Spanish Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

The forum sought to deepen trade and investment ties between South Africa and Spain, focusing on a range of sectors including agro-processing, renewable energy, mining, automotive, manufacturing, water, transportation, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, and tourism. Spain is a significant investor in the renewable energy sector in South Africa and a key EU member state export market for South African products. South Africa and Spain comprise the two largest exporters of citrus fruit globally. The top five agri exports to Spain comprise fish and crustaceans, fruit and nuts (the bulk being citrus with South Africa supplying 24% of market, followed by macadamias, with South Africa supplying 60% of the Spanish market), maize, sugar, wood, and fruit juices, jams and preserves. Total South African exports across all economic sectors have steadily increased from around R7.6 billion in 2012 to around R28.5 billion in 2021.

Agbiz members CGA and SAMAC joined Agbiz at the event. Agbiz and CGA further participated in a 10-a-side business pre-meeting held before the forum, focused on potential areas of sectoral investment for both nations. CGA was selected to represent South Africa business during the report backs to the plenary. The business engagements provided an opportunity to flag areas of mutual agricultural and agro-processing interest, including the new cold treatment measures recently imposed on South African citrus entering the EU. South Africa and the EU are currently engaged in a WTO dispute-resolution process with regard to the measures. President Ramaphosa noted that he and President Sánchez agree that a solution is needed regarding the new regulations imposed by the EC on South African citrus fruit imports, and the Spanish President assured President Ramaphosa that there was a commitment to address the matter and find solutions.