

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003278/25
to the Commission**

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(25 August 2025)

Subject: Respect for human rights in South Africa

The future agreement between the EU and South Africa, currently under negotiation, aims to strengthen trade and economic cooperation. This partnership will be supported by a EUR 4.7 billion Global Gateway investment plan.

However, there are worrying practices on the ground, including South African citizens being evicted from their land, leading to significant population displacements and cases of forced exile.

These evictions are documented and constitute violations of fundamental rights. They raise serious questions about the coherence of Ms von der Leyen's external policy. Despite these reports, the Commission is pursuing negotiations with the South African authorities without having clearly announced binding measures to ensure that human rights are respected.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following question:

What conditions does it intend to impose going forward in the negotiations to ensure an effective improvement in the situation of evicted farmers and respect for human rights?

Supporters ⁽¹⁾

Submitted: 25.8.2025

**Answer given by Mr Sikela on behalf of the European Commission
(12 December 2025)**

The EU and South Africa (SA) have a Strategic Partnership ⁽¹⁾ based firmly on democratic values and the respect for human rights, as exemplified by the recent EU-SA Summit, which resulted in the announcement of the Global Gateway Investment Package with SA ⁽²⁾ to which the Honourable Members refers.

In this context, the EU and SA regularly engage in a dedicated human rights dialogue, whereby business and human rights, land rights and other relevant issues are steadily covered.

In pursuit of partnerships with all third states, the EU follows the procedures that are outlined in the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) — Global Europe Regulation (Article 13 and 14) ⁽³⁾.

Applying a human rights-based approach to all interventions is an obligation enshrined in the NDICI — Global Europe Regulation (Article 8).

The Financial Regulation ⁽⁴⁾ makes an explicit reference to the EU values, which comprise human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and the rights of minorities.

It requires that the EU budget be implemented in full respect of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the EU values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on EU.

Democratic principles, good governance and transparency are embedded in all EU-funded projects and investments.

The EU-Southern African Development Community Economic Partnership Agreement ⁽⁵⁾ in place foresees that neither partner can lower environmental or social standards to attract business or investment ⁽⁶⁾.

¹ This question is supported by Members other than the authors: Anja Arndt (ESN), Fernand Kartheiser (NI)

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=legissum:r12551>.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/140na1ze/published-8-eu-south-africa-joint-declaration.pdf>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32021R0947>.

⁽⁴⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509?utm_source.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content/epa-sadc-southern-african-development-community>.

⁽⁶⁾ Article 9.

The newly signed Clean Trade and Investment Partnership ⁽⁷⁾ which focuses on creating trade and investment opportunities in clean supply chains provides also for civil society involvement in its implementation, thereby supporting labour and environmental standards.

⁽⁷⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_2755.