

South African exporters uncertain as Brexit deadline looms

With the Brexit deadline fast approaching, uncertainty is rife among South African manufacturers and growers' continued preferential access to the UK market. The government said recently that the Southern African Customs Union (Sacu), of which SA is a member state, was close to fin

alising a deal with the UK to replicate the existing economic partnership agreement which the customs union has with the EU. (Sacu includes SA, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Eswatini (Swaziland).)

The UK is due to leave the EU with or without a deal at the end of October. With no deal in place, Britain would immediately fall outside the EU's trade regime. The UK, a major investor in SA, is the world's sixth-biggest economy with a GDP nearly nine times the size of SA's. The country was SA's sixth-largest trading partner in 2018.

DA MP Dean Macpherson said on Monday he had written to trade & industry minister Ebrahim Patel calling on him to update the National Assembly on the progress made towards a post-Brexit deal between the UK and SA: "By all accounts, it appears that the UK is set to crash out of the European Union without a deal which could have massive consequences for South Africa's economy, our exports, especially in the agricultural and financial sectors and jobs in these sectors."

According to an article on [businesslive.co.za](https://www.businesslive.co.za)

(<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/2019-09-09-sa-exporters-uncertain-as-brexit-deadline-looks/>), SA exports R64bn (€3,84 bln) worth of goods through the EU customs union, duty free, of which R10bn (€600 mln) is from Western Cape industries such

as fruit and wine. Once the UK leaves the EU, this preferential trade could be at risk due to the non-finalisation of a roll-over deal between the UK and Sacu, said Macpherson.

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(<http://eng.unitec-group.com/>).

