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Answer given by Mr Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.6.2025)

The EU-Southern African Development Community (SADC) Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) has been provisionally applied since 2016. A comprehensive external ex-post evaluation of the EPA was published in September 2024¹. It shows that the EPA has delivered on its main aim to increase trade in goods between both sides, with an overall increase since 2016 of 24% (31% for SADC exports and 18% for EU exports). It has also helped to diversify SADC exports as particularly visible in the South African automotive sector. The Commission will publish a staff working document this year to follow-up on the ex-post evaluation study.

The ex-post evaluation study is also used as input for the EPA review that is provided for in Article 116 of the EPA². In the course of the review, both sides are assessing to what extent the implementation of the EPA can be further complemented or improved. Based on the current state of play, the Commission does not expect any reopening of the agreement or any addition of new trade areas. The Commission aims at concluding the review by the next EU-SADC Joint Council (at political level) that will be prepared beforehand by the EU-SADC Trade and Development Committee (at senior official level; both meetings are envisaged to take place in 2026 at a date still to be determined).

¹ https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/analysis-and-assessment/ex-post-evaluations_en.

² Art. 116: (1) The Parties agree to review this Agreement in its entirety no later than five (5) years after its entry into force. Such review is without prejudice to instances of adjustments, reviews or revisions otherwise provided for in this Agreement, such as those contemplated under Articles 12(2), 16(8), 17(5), 18(5), 26(10), 33(3), 35(6) and 65(e). (2) As regards the implementation of this Agreement, either Party may make suggestions oriented towards adjusting trade-related cooperation, taking into account the experience acquired during the implementation thereof. (3) The Parties agree that this Agreement may need to be reviewed in light of further developments in international economic relations and in the light of the expiration of the Cotonou Agreement; [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22016A0916\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22016A0916(01)).