**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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**4226. Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:** Whether any agreements were signed / or agreed to during the visit by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr A Botes, to the (a) Czech Republic and (b) Lithuania; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? **NW5292E**

**REPLY:**

1. **Czech Republic**

**No.**

**Why not:** No bilateral agreements were scheduled for signing, and none were agreed to during the visit.

**(b) Lithuania**

**No.**

**Why not:** No bilateral agreements were scheduled for signing, and none were agreed to during the visit.

**Additional details on the Czech Republic Visit**

Deputy Minister Botes undertook an official visit to the Czech Republic from 10 to 12 October 2022 at the invitation of his Czech counterpart, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Martin Tlapa. The purpose of the visit was to conduct political consultations, promote trade and investments, and explore more areas of cooperation.

While in Prague, Deputy Minister Botes also promoted economic diplomacy in line with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation’s priority focus, and promoted cooperation in areas of trade and investment, higher education and science and technology, amongst others. In addition, the Deputy Minister met with existing and prospective Czech investors.

Economic relations between South Africa and Czech Republic are managed through a Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation (JCEC). The JCEC was established through the signing of an Agreement on Economic Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of the Czech Republic in December 2006.

In terms of Agreement, the Department of Science and Innovation is currently engaged in a process of developing a science technology and innovation cooperation instrument with the Czech Republic. Much progress has been achieved, negotiations are being finalised and both sides are in agreement with the contents and provisions of the draft partnership agreement.

Although the formal bilateral Defence relationship is currently still limited in scope, it has progressed to the level where it was formalised by means of the signing of two bilateral agreements. Despite the two agreements, high level contacts have been established and defence-industrial cooperation has expanded during the recent past. No substantial business transactions have been concluded recently. It is, however, foreseen that future defence-industrial cooperation has the potential to expand and that joint ventures could become a possibility.

**Additional details on the Lithuania Visit**

Deputy Minister Botes undertook an official visit to Lithuania from 12 to 13 October 2022 at the invitation of his Lithuanian counterpart, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Mantas Adomėnas. The purpose of the visit was to conduct political consultations, promote trade and investments, and explore areas of technical cooperation. The visit was also in recognition of 30 years of bilateral relations with Lithuania.

During the visit Deputy Minister Botes met with Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Mantas Adomėnas, the Vice Minister of Economy and Innovation, and participated in a Business Roundtable hosted by the Vilnius Chamber of Commerce and Crafts.

In terms of bilateral Agreements, South Africa and Lithuania had signed a Visa Waiver Agreement for Diplomatic and Official passport holders on 29 August 2022. Parliamentary processes have been completed on both sides and the Agreement will enter into force on 14 December 2022. An agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation is under consideration by the parties but this did not form part of the Deputy Minister’s discussions.