



Deutsche Industrie- und Handels-
kammer für das südliche Afrika
Southern African-German Chamber
of Commerce and Industry



Business and Government Unite to Cut Red Tape – Luncheon Hosted by German, Austrian & Swiss Chambers

Location & Date: Johannesburg, 9 April 2025

Hosts: Southern African German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAGCC)
Austrian Business Chamber (ABC)
SwissCham Southern Africa – South Africa Chapter (SCSA-SAC)

Guest: Dr. Leon Schreiber, Minister of Home Affairs

Key Highlights:

- The business luncheon organized by Southern African German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAGCC), Austrian Business Chamber, and SwissCham Southern Africa (SA Chapter) provided a platform for constructive and direct exchange between government and the German-speaking business community in South Africa.
- The luncheon was warmly received by the German-speaking business community and marked a meaningful step toward strengthening cooperation between business and government -creating space for open dialogue, engaging exchange of ideas, and deeper collaboration.
- The event reinforced the German speaking chambers' commitment to working with government on removing structural barriers and making South Africa a more investor-friendly environment.
- In her welcome, Simone Pohl, CEO of SAGCC, reaffirmed the region's importance as a key business and investment destination for German, Austrian, and Swiss companies, describing South Africa as a gateway into the region with immense potential.
- According to the recently published **Business Outlook 2025** survey, German companies identified South Africa's top advantages as:
 - Access to regional markets (44%)
 - Strong supplier networks (38%)
 - A relatively reliable regulatory environment (35%)
- Despite these positives, businesses continue to face visa-related challenges, including (to mention a few):

- Complex and inconsistent application processes
- Delays and inefficiencies
- Ongoing issues with critical skills, spousal, and family visas
- Inconsistencies with the processing times of the Trusted Employer Scheme
- Minister Schreiber presented a strategy to modernize immigration and customs processes:
 - A groundbreaking agreement has been signed between Home Affairs, the Border Management Authority, Government Printing Works, and SARS to digitally transform government services in South Africa. A major step toward a more efficient, secure, and accessible Home Affairs system by leveraging SARS's technology expertise
 - Digitalization efforts to reduce human discretion & curb corruption
 - Implement secure, automated systems at border posts and land ports
 - Roll out “one-stop border posts” and automated entry-exit platforms
 - Supporting legislation has already been tabled in Parliament (One-Stop Border Post Bill (B12-2024), introduced in Parliament on September 11, 2024. This bill aims to regulate the establishment of one-stop border posts through international agreements, facilitating joint border control operations with neighboring countries).
 - Phase 2 of the digitalized Trusted Tour Operator Scheme launched which has fast tracked application process of tourist visas – this process highlighted the benefit of digitally transforming the department
- Regulatory reforms will follow once the systems are in place, forming part of a phased approach to long-term change.

Quotes:

*“While we acknowledge the progress made in recent months, today's discussion on visa processes and upcoming policy developments is a valuable opportunity to further strengthen South Africa’s position as an attractive and competitive business destination. We remain committed to addressing persistent structural challenges to make doing business here in South Africa even more seamless and sustainable.” – **Simone Pohl***

*“Home Affairs is rapidly reforming and moving in the right direction. We are making meaningful progress towards delivering better services and enabling economic growth. We can deliver prosperity for all by staying the course we have charted.” – **Dr Leon Schreiber***