

Regional news : South Africa

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Business kick-off thanks to the World Cup

In May Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard and Daniel Küng, CEO of Osec Business Network Switzerland, opened officially the Swiss Business Hub South Africa. Erwin Lüthi, Head of the Swiss Business Hub at the Embassy in Pretoria, informs about the current tasks. *Gisela Piercey*

Which are the current projects of the Swiss Business Hub?

We started off by redesigning our newsletter which has received very favourable reactions. The SBHSA also participated in the Africa Rail 2007 exhibition in Sandton. We brought together 8 companies under the roof "Swiss German Railway Technology Centre". I spent some days with Osec in Switzerland at the "Company Consulting Days". I had the chance to get together with several executives who are interested in exploring opportunities in South Africa. We prepared some action plans together with Osec. The Swiss Business Directory is another project that we are working on. The aim is to produce a compendium of Swiss Businesses and interests in South Africa that will be available to the general public. Another important step in increasing Swiss visibility is the creation of the SwissCham Southern Africa, South Africa Chapter. Osec through the SBHSA actively supports the creation of a bilateral chamber of commerce. The South African chapter is expected to be implemented in the last quarter of 2007.

What has been planned in view of the World Cup?

The World Cup 2010 was on our agenda long before the opening of the SBHSA. It started shortly after South Africa was awarded with the organisation. Several information meetings have been organised by TINSSA and last year Osec launched the "Swiss South African Business Kick-Off" initiative. The aim of this project is to promote South Africa as a potential market both as an export and investment destination. The WC 2010 serves as an excellent promotion tool for this lucrative market. The launching event for this initiative took place last year at FIFA's headquarters in Zurich and was extremely well attended. As a follow-up, an exploratory business trip to South Africa with a group of 14 Swiss companies took place in April of this year. Based on this success, Osec Business Network Switzerland and its Swiss partners are currently organizing a second trip for Swiss small and medium sized enterprises to explore the potential South Africa offers.

What does the Free Trade Agreement between EFTA and SACU mean for Swiss companies as investors in Southern Africa?

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between EFTA and SACU eliminates disadvantages for exporters from these two trading blocs compared with the EU. By reducing tariffs, exporters will have easier access and can more easily compete with EU companies. Generally it opens new business opportunities which will lead to enhanced bilateral trade between EFTA and SACU member states. The FTA is currently still in the ratification process and expectations are high that legislative procedures will be finalized soon so the FTA can enter into force in the not too distant future.

Which have been the biggest challenges for foreign investments in Southern Africa?

The world is shrinking with the increased opening of markets, introduction of modern and fast communication technology as well as the globalization of financial markets. The world today is much more competitive than some decades ago and that is true for the global investment markets too. Besides traditional investment markets for Swiss companies, new challengers have emerged, such as China, India, Russia or Brazil to attract foreign direct investments.



Erwin Lüthi, Head of the Swiss Business Hub

South Africa is in the same league as the aforementioned emerging markets. The bulk of foreign investments in Africa finds its way to the tip of the African continent but it is a fraction of the global investment activities. The investment protection treaty between Switzerland and South Africa aims to encourage enterprises to explore new investment destinations.

Do you feel a resistance of potential Swiss investors regarding the unpredictable political and economical future of South Africa?

I can say that the general assessment of South Africa as a business location is good, both as an investment destination, production hub and also as an import or export country. Having said that I wish not to hide that some areas exist where South Africa could make improvements that would definitely increase South Africa's attractiveness to Swiss and other foreign direct investors. □



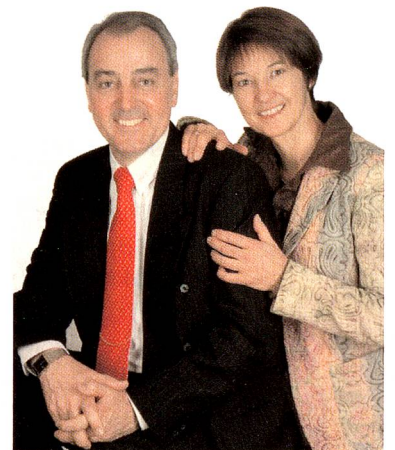
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Will the first Auslandschweizer make it into Parliament?

The summer session of the Council of Swiss Abroad was held in Geneva in August. Your South African Delegation was there in full strength. The Elections on October 21st were the main topic.

President Georg Stucky opened the meeting with his last Presidential Report. In the 9 years of his Presidency, he has transformed the ASR into an influential political Parliament for the Swiss Abroad. His sage advice will be sorely missed, although he has been succeeded by Vice-President Jacques-Simon Eggly, a long-time Liberal Party MP from Geneva. The new Vice-President is Social Democrat MP Remo Gysin from Basel. There should also have been a replacement election for the ASR Executive, as the "seat" vacated by Stucky needed to be filled. However it was brought to the ASR's attention by your delegate Rolf Schudel (also President of the SVP International), that in his opinion, there had not been adequate notice given to political parties to nominate their candidates, resulting in the validity of the SVP nomination being questioned. In the circumstances a motion was tabled by the new Vice-President Gysin, seconded by your delegate Peter Muller, asking the ASR to defer this election till the Spring Session

in 2008. This motion overwhelmingly defeated a motion by the President and Committee, urging the ASR to elect a successor for the seat at this Geneva meeting.

Rolf Schudel from Joburg running for SVP

The major part of the Report dealt with the Elections on October 21st, and Stucky indicated how pleased the ASR was that many Auslandschweizer had agreed to be nominated in various cantons for different political parties. In order for our readers in Southern Africa to be fully informed about candidatures, the ASR in conjunction with SwissInfo has organised special blogs and internet coverage on www.aso.ch and www.swissinfo.org, so please use these websites to your advantage. Your own delegate, Rolf Schudel from Johannesburg, is standing again for the SVP in Canton Schaffhausen, so we encourage you if you have a vote in that canton to use it to further the possibility of election of the first "genuine"

Swiss Auslandschweizer to Parliament. Finally, the ASR sincerely hopes and has pushed for full E-Voting in the elections scheduled for 2011.

Friday afternoon was spent in an almost 3 hour-long question and answer Election-Session with leading members of the four main Bundesrat (Cabinet) parties, and their Auslandschweizer candidates who were present. It was interesting to note the different emphasis placed on different topics by the parties. We urge all Auslandschweizer who have registered to make use of their voting rights, and vote! Worth attending the meeting.

The next ASR Council Meeting (Spring Session) will be in the Rathaus in Bern in April 2008, while the summer ASR meeting as well as the Congress will be in Fribourg in late August 2008, with the Theme "Mobility of Persons with the EU". If you have never attended a meeting of your representative body the ASR, nor the Congress, before, we urge you to schedule your visit to Switzerland for this time so that you may experience this very worthwhile meeting.

*Peter Muller,
Delegate for South Africa*

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Swiss Club Info and Forthcoming Events

JOHANNESBURG

Swiss Society Helvetia,
31 Moerdyk Ave, Vorna Valley,
Midrand, T/F 011 805 3039,
Restaurant T 011 805 3040,
swissclubjhb@whoswho.co.za

Senior Swiss Circle meets every second Saturday of the month for lunch; Andy Tischhauser 011 672 1753/ 082 719 3389.

In the process of transforming and modernizing the Swiss Club JHB. New palisade fencing installed. Building plans for renovating displayed at the club. Construction start early 2008. Until then open Tues-Sun Lunch 11am-2pm + 5pm till late. Closed Sun from 4pm. Cater also for private and business functions, booking essential (Debbie 011 805 3040, 082 651 6152). 13.10.: Prize Jassen & Sunset Dinner; 10.11.: Folklore evening with Sepp Wolf and Swiss groups; 2.12.: Senior Xmas Lunch & Bocchia Day

PRETORIA

Swiss Embassy 012 452 0660
Swiss Society Alpina,
Hans-Georg Bosch, President,
T 012 347 8310, C 082 551 0222,
swissclub.pta@hbosch.com, Diana
Lüthi, Secretary,
swissclub.pta@hbosch.com

The 1st of August celebrations were held at the Fountains Resort. A welcome tradition that goes back

many decades was enjoyed by all, namely the performances of the Swiss Choir. A big thank you must go to them and also to all the club and committee members that helped making that day such a successful event. 24.11.: Christmas function at the home of Margrit & Jo Müller.

CAPE TOWN

Swiss Consulate General
T 021 418 3665
Swiss Social and Sports Club,
Nick Eppenberger
eppen@mweb.co.za,
Nicky Rodrigues
T 072 218 5759,
nicky.rodrigues@
za.sabmiller.com
www.swissclub.co.za

No new update from the city council regarding new premises. Meeting every Thursday evening at our premises until the end of the year. 29.9.: Fondue evening; 17.11.: Over 70's Tea Party, 6.12.: Bänzejass.

SWISS CLUB NATAL

Hanspeter Graber,
T/F 031 568 2457, C 083 262 6107,
hansg@saol.com

21.10. Green Bowling at Westville Bowling Club; 25.11. Steam Train Ride Kloof Inchanga&return&picknick; 14.12. Dinner & Prize Jassen in Westville. Everybody is welcome to all

the aforesaid social gatherings. Call 083 301 4563 or 083 262 6107. Jass Meetings: every second Friday of the month at 18h00 in Westville Bowling Club House near the Westville Civic Centre. Target shooting Practices: every first Saturday of the month at 12h00, Hammond shooting range near Hammersdale halfway between Durban and Pietermaritzburg (call 073 433 9940).

SWISS CLUB EASTERN CAPE

Port Elizabeth, Walter Middleton,
President
T 041 964 1008, Comm.member
Mark Krebsler C 082 3281098,
T w 041 3671422

1st August celebrations were held at the German Club in Lorraine, P.E., with consul Jost Schmid and his wife Yokut and 50 people. Including a special presentation from Marc Jucker who surfed for Switzerland at the Bodyboarding Eurosurf Championships and won Switzerland's first ever medal (Bronze). A new committee was elected: President is Walter Middleton, Sec/Treasurer Yvonne Bruhwiler and Comm.member Mark Krebsler. 11.11.: Folklore group event with Sepp Wolf

SWISS CLUB FAR NORTH

Paul Thomas, PO Box 148,
Makado 0920,
C 082 334 3187
Girardin T 015 556 3690

NAMIBIA

Hon. Consul K. Neuenschwander,
Veronica Strasse 22, Ludwigsdorf,
PO Box 9298, Eros/Windhoek,
T +264 61 225 116,
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T +264 61 252 943,
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LESOTHO

Sadly Rolf Herzig
passed away in July (see article).

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vertretung@har.rep.admin.ch

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Das Erste

Neben beliebten Unterhaltungsserien, attraktiven TV-Movies, Politikmagazinen und Dokumentationen, ist Information nach wie vor die Domäne der ARD. Allabendlich steht die Tagesschau auf dem Programm.



ZDF

Das öffentlich-rechtliche ZDF bietet neben beliebten Familienserien, Krimis und attraktiven TV-Movies, musikalische Unterhaltungssendungen, sowie Nachrichten und politische Magazine mit viel Hintergrundinformationen.



DW TV

Wer über Politik, Kultur und Wirtschaftsgeschehen bestens informiert sein möchte, ist hier goldrichtig. Deutsche Welle-TV liefert weltweit Informationen über aktuelle Ereignisse - in deutscher und englischer Sprache.



RTL

Der Sender für Sportfans: RTL bietet Formel 1, Wintersport und viele andere Sportarten. Bei Quiz- und Gameshows kommen die schnellen Denker auf ihre Kosten. Auch die Liebhaber von Soaps kommen nicht zu kurz.



SAT.1

Frühaufsteher können mit dem SAT.1 Frühstückfernsehen frisch und bestens informiert den Tag beginnen. Die Prime Time bietet beliebte deutsche Serien und internationale Spielfilme.



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Huge resort planned in Hazyview

Meadow Star Investments and US leisure giant Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide announced plans to build a R1,2bn resort in Hazyview, Mpumalanga, ahead of the 2010 World Cup.

Meadow Star Investments and US leisure giant Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide announced plans to build a R1,2bn resort in Hazyview, Mpumalanga, ahead of the 2010 World Cup. The local Meadow Star company is owned 25% by Swiss nationals residing in Switzerland and 35% by South African-Swiss residing in South Africa. According to Marcel Barlogis,



Partners: Marcel Barlogis, CEO of Meadow Star (left) and Hassan Abdab, Vice President of Starwood.

CEO and founder of Meadow Star, the development will include 180 suites in the hotel and more than 9000m2 of business facilities, an 18-hole golf course and a real estate component including 400 residential properties for private sale. □

Web site: History of the Swiss in SA

For more than 30 years various Swiss have been collecting information on the history of the Swiss in Southern Africa. The most notable of these have been Felix Ernst and Kurt Scheurer of Johannesburg, Adolphe Linder of Cape Town (Cape and Mozambique) and Oskar Berner of Switzerland (Rhodesia and South West Africa). Many have approached Adolphe Linder to publish a sequel to his book "The Swiss at the Cape of Good Hope 1652-1971".

A website will be established, and Swiss as well as Swiss Firms throughout Southern Africa will be invited to enter their own, or other relevant information regarding their historical background.

For input please contact Peter Muller, sargro@bluewin.ch, Tel : +41628932906 Fax : +41628932907 P O Box 123, 5103 Wildegg, Switzerland □

Trauer um Rolf Herzig

Rolf Herzig hatte sich in Lesotho dafür eingesetzt, die Schweizer Gemeinde zusammenzuführen. Am 14. Juli starb er, 38 Jahre alt, bei einem Autounfall. So behält ihn seine Verlobte, Kirsten Röttcher, in Erinnerung:

„Er hat geschafft was meines Erachtens fast niemand schafft: In zwei Kulturen gleichzeitig zu leben und eine Brücke zu bilden. Er hat akzeptiert und verstanden, wo andere aufzwingen und abschotten. Er stand für das Recht eines jeden Menschen auf Liebe, Respekt, Gerechtigkeit und Freude. Rolf hatte Werte. Als Thabang Mohasoa (Happiness / Rejoice Mohasoa) wird er noch lange in den Herzen seiner Basotho Schwestern und Brüder weiterleben. Als Fernandez, bei seinem Torhüterfanclub. Er hat in gleichem Masse die Basotho geliebt, Lesotho, seine Eltern, die Schweiz, seine Freunde, mich, das Bier Black Label, Billiard, Fussball, seine Katze Lady, Musik.“

Unsere Beileidsbezeugung gilt Rolfs Eltern und Kirsten.



IMPRESSUM

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News from the Swiss

Parents

During the October vacation, the new music centre system at the German School Pretoria will be installed and opened during an official function at a date and time to be agreed upon. This will depend on the schedule of the invited dignitaries. For further information and if you would like to contribute to our future projects, please write to Hans-Georg Bosch spa@hbosch.com. □

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