



# Ecco Chamber

FORTNIGHTLY ITALIAN NEWS MADE IN  
SOUTH AFRICA

## State Of The Nation

- **Chamber's Note**
- **BITC Webinar**
- **AEI Conference**



# Chamber's Note

## State of the Nation

Last week South Africa's president addressed the country. The purpose of the State of the Nation Address is not just to provide a laundry list of good and the bad within the country, it is to contribute to a national narrative that situates the nation's current (dire) state within a historical context and within a certain vision for the future. We feel the need to elaborate on the small section of the country that we occupy and ask what is the state of the Italian-South African community in 2021 and where is it headed?

The Italian-South African community is evidently different from what it was 50 years ago. Back then it was made up of largely first or second-generation immigrants from Italy, many of whom primarily spoke Italian and thus had much more of a will to associate primarily with other Italian people. Today many South African Italians have never been to Italy and don't know much Italian outside of knowing their favorite items at the pizzeria. Many Italians have married people from other backgrounds and had children who inherit other cultures alongside the Italian one.

Institutions like the Chamber need to adapt to these kinds of natural changes in a cultural group. Initially, the Chamber was a small club of Italian business owners operating in South Africa. In the 2000s it adapted to accommodate the high levels of foreign direct investment, including that from Italy. Today the role that the Chamber plays in the community is two-pronged. For one we are the destination for new Italian businesses wishing to invest in SA or enter the market through local partners or distribution channels. Secondly, we aim to be a hub for local Italian entrepreneurs and for South Africans who in some way have a business connection with Italy.

This is evidently a broad net to cast but given our close connections with strong organizations within our membership list as well as the Italian Club, the Embassy, the Istituto di Cultura, the Giovani Italiani, COMITES, Dante Alighieri, and the Consulate, we believe that our Italian-South African community is well poised to constantly rejuvenate itself.

There are however some weaknesses – not least an Italian community that is sometimes fractious or unwilling to see eye to eye. Another issue is of course the difficult business climate that ends up punishing some of the most innovative members of our community. At the Chamber, we aim to play a role of collaboration within the South African community, too. Very soon we will kick off the SMILE Project which will canvass all Italian businesses and professionals in our country using a single directory.

In his introduction to the State of the Nation speech, the president mentioned the metaphor of the protea, the country's national flower, to explain South Africa's character. The flower of many layers is a variation on a common metaphor that is used to explain South Africa's pluralist society which consists of multiple language groups, cultures, income levels, etc. The reason this kind of metaphor is so common is that if it were not used, it would be impossible to ascribe any coherent state to our diverse, often fractious, nation. We hope, however, that the same metaphor of complexity need not forever apply to the Italian community itself and better cooperation will soon become the norm.

*Italcham!*





**BOTSWANA**  
INVESTMENT  
& TRADE CENTRE



EU CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE  
AND INDUSTRY IN  
SOUTHERN AFRICA

# Botswana Investment & Trade Centre Webinar

**Date: 3 March 2021**

**Time: 10:00 - 11:35**

- Discover investment opportunities and understand what it means to do business in Botswana by attending a Webinar on Doing Business with Botswana which will be held on the 3rd March 2021 targeting EU companies in RSA, drawn from the following sectors: Agriculture, ICT, Mining, Health, Manufacturing (Including Automotive component manufacturing), and Financial Services.
- Botswana offers several FDI opportunities with corporate tax due to be reduced to 15 % for manufacturing, financial services, and innovation-led services and 22% for other businesses such as dairy farming. In Botswana, there are no exchange controls so profits /dividends can be repatriated with no authorization required, no limitations on foreign ownership, and duty-free importation of machinery to be used in production.

## PROGRAMME:

10:00 WELCOME ADDRESS

10:10 PRESENTATION: DOING BUSINESS IN BOTSWANA

10:35 INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MINERALS AND ENERGY SECTORS IN BOTSWANA

10:50 OVERVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN UNION ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

11:05 OVERVIEW OF ADVOCACY

11:15 Q & A SESSION

11:25 FINAL REMARKS

11:30 VOTE OF THANKS



 **SPANISH CHAMBER**  
OF COMMERCE IN SOUTH AFRICA



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## 1-5 March 2021



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