

MEDIA RELEASE PSA welcomes Department of Home Affairs' digital border transformation: Calls for investment in employees

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), the majority Union at the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), welcomes the introduction of the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) system at South Africa's ports of entry.

The ETA system is expected to improve the processing of travellers entering South Africa by replacing manual procedures with a secure and reliable digital platform. The system combines advance biometric verification with an upgraded Electronic Movement Control system, forming part of a modern immigration management framework that strengthens border security. Its introduction marks a significant milestone in the digital transformation of the DHA and is expected to make travel to South Africa faster, simpler, and more secure for legitimate travellers.

The PSA supports this initiative as it has the potential to strengthen border security whilst improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. The successful implementation of the ETA will, however, depend on adequate investment in technology, cybersecurity, infrastructure, training, and ongoing support for frontline public servants who will be responsible for operating the system. Digital transformation should complement rather than replace the valuable role played by skilled and experienced immigration officials. Government must ensure that public servants are adequately capacitated to deliver high-quality services whilst safeguarding the integrity of South Africa's borders.

The PSA is committed to working constructively with the DHA and engaging meaningfully in the Departmental Bargaining Chamber to ensure that modernisation initiatives strengthen service delivery and advance the interests of the people of South Africa. Consultation processes are already underway in the relevant bargaining structures. The PSA maintains that the implementation of the DHA's digital transformation strategy should not result in job losses. Instead, it should create opportunities for the reskilling and repurposing of employees to enhance service delivery and support successful modernisation.

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