

94% of Irish exporters think Brexit will be harmful

By Peter McCann on 11 March 2017



Lobbying needs to focus on Irish exporters developing as close as possible trading relationship with the UK.

The complexities that Brexit will bring cannot be underestimated, CEO of the Irish Exporters Association Simon McKeever has said.

In a survey of the Irish Exporters Association, 94% of members said that Brexit will have a harmful effect on Irish exports and 88% said that it will be harmful to the wider Irish economy.

A third of exporters have not conducted an impact assessment of Brexit on their businesses yet but are planning to and a further third are not planning on assessing the impact of Brexit on their business at all.

“Indigenous Irish businesses are woefully unprepared for Brexit,” chief executive of the Irish Exporters Association Simon McKeever said.

He said that training and upskilling staff to deal with customs procedures should begin now for businesses that have only ever exported to the UK and have not had to deal with these procedures before.

On Brexit's impact in Northern Ireland, 83% of survey respondents thought that it would have a harmful effect to the NI economy.

"The complexities that Brexit brings to Northern Ireland and all Ireland society and economy cannot be underestimated," McKeever said.

Lobbying

He said lobbying needs to focus on Irish exporters developing as close as possible trading relationship with the UK, particularly for agri-food businesses.

"It is not just our exports to the UK that will be affected but our exports that transit through the UK to get to intercontinental Europe and further," McKeever said.

The survey showed two-thirds IEA members make use of the UK land-bridge to access continental markets and 40% said that use of a slower direct route would adversely impact the quality of their product.

"We need to focus more of our attention on high growth markets like China, India, ASEAN, Africa, and South America and become less dependent on our trade relationships with the EU, USA and UK," McKeever added.