

Irish Exporters Association & Freight Transport Association comment on Brexit

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The Irish Exporters Association (IEA) has stated that it will continue to fulfil its responsibilities to its members and support Irish exporters through the Brexit transitional period and will continue to work with the Irish Government to support business in Ireland. The importance of trade across the Border between Northern Ireland and the Republic must not be forgotten in negotiations for the UK's exit from the EU, according to the Freight Transport Association (FTA).

Simon McKeever, Chief Executive, Irish Exporters Association commented on the situation:

"The UK has made a decision to leave the European Union, this is not to be confused with them having left. We don't know yet what the end result will be, the UK will need to both negotiate its exit from the EU – the dissolution of its current relationship with the EU, and re-negotiate its future trade relationship with it.

The Irish Exporters Association campaigned hard for a 'remain' outcome. I am not going to downplay the serious implications this decision could have for Ireland. The UK is our single biggest trading partner and this is not the result that we had been hoping for but, with such a high voter turnout, we do respect the sovereign rights of a nation to make a democratic decision on its future.

Ireland has proved itself to be an adaptable nation with a strong open economy. Now is the time to take stock of the situation at hand and strategically put a plan in place to weather this storm. We have been trading with the UK for 1,000 years and we will continue to have a strong bi-lateral trade relationship with it, albeit with potentially more costs and complications.

The most immediate concern for Irish business will be the fluctuation of Sterling and its effect on Irish exporters' cost competitiveness. My advice to exporters dealing in trade with the UK is, talk to your local banks or financial service providers about viable opportunities to hedge your currency risk.

The long term effects of this seismic decision are yet to reveal themselves, a lot will depend on the exit that the UK negotiates with the EU, whether this will take the full two years allowed for under the Treaty on European Union or whether, as some exit campaigners would have it, begin the process now and the exit happens earlier. There is also the negotiation of a potential new trade agreement between the UK and Europe and all that this would entail. It is crucial that Ireland carves out a special status with regard to our relationship with the UK given the close bi-

lateral relationship between the two countries. It would also be important for the UK to have this special status.

The Irish Exporters Association will continue to lobby Government on a regional, national and international level on the issues that affect Irish exporters. The decision by the UK to leave the EU highlights more than ever the need to support Irish exporters in the diversification of its export markets so that an over-reliance on any particular single market does not have the potential to put our economy under a similar threat in the future.”



Following the ‘leave’ vote in the Referendum, FTA has said that coming out of the union risks new costs, restrictions and bureaucratic requirements being imposed on moving goods in and out of Europe – and that includes transport operations crossing the UK’s only land border with the Republic of Ireland.

Seamus Leheny, FTA’s Policy & Membership Manager for Northern Ireland, said: “Northern Ireland has enjoyed arrangements with its neighbour for almost 100 years for free movement, commercial, legal and social matters. The UK is Ireland’s largest mutual trading partner and this relationship must be maintained through the Brexit negotiations.”

Prime Minister David Cameron announced his intention to stand down in October after “steadying the ship” in the wake of the ‘leave’ vote. He said it would be up to his successor to invoke Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, and negotiate the UK exit from the EU. Once Article 50 is invoked, there will follow two years of negotiation between the remaining 27 countries and the UK about the totality of relations between the EU and UK.

FTA will be regularly updating its members on progress and pressing the Government to put freight transport at the top of the agenda.