

## Irish Exporters Association appoints first female president

Nicola Byrne has founded 11890 Directory Inquiries, Cloud90 and RiskEye

Colin Gleeson

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The [Irish Exporters Association](#) (IEA) has appointed the founder of 11890 Directory Inquiries as its first female president.

[Nicola Byrne](#), who has also founded Cloud90 and RiskEye, takes over the role from Paschal McCarthy who has served as president since January 2016.

Ms Byrne is the organisation's first female president since its establishment in 1951.

IEA chief executive Simon McKeever said the appointment was of "great significance".

"Nicola's experience in founding and developing her own businesses puts her at the forefront of exporting and entrepreneurship," he said.

“An insights guru, Nicola has a wealth of international experience seizing business opportunities, overcoming barriers and developing contacts.

“Nicola’s dedication and support on the council to date has been considerable and we look forward to working with her as she goes from strength to strength, shaping the organisation’s future in her presidency.”

Mr McKeever thanked Mr McCarthy for his service. “Over the last 18 months Paschal has driven the IEA’s Regional Member Development Strategy and was fundamental to the establishment of the Cork and West Regional Council’s respectively,” he said.

“The IEA will continue to benefit from Paschal’s experience and contribution to the organisation as he remains on the IEA’s Executive Council.”

Ms Byrne, said Britain’s impending EU exit would be her biggest challenge as she takes up her new role.

“Being President during this year of Brexit is challenging,” she said. “The association will need to offer our members and the Government our fullest support and best advice - as well as opening doors and minds among our clients and colleagues across Europe.

“This year, of all years, the association must defend our country’s economic life’s blood.”

Among the challenges that could hinder the development of exporters, Ms Byrne cited the “war for talent”, cost competitiveness, entrepreneurship, and diversification of export markets.

“The IEA has the experience and contacts in Ireland and in overseas markets to support Irish exporters with their challenges and assist them to grow their exports to world markets,” she added.