

Exporter forum kicks off as figures show value rise of 40%

Irish Exporters Association forum has more than 60 national and international speakers

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Exports: on the up. Photograph: EPA/Franck Robichon

Irish businesses ramped up the value of goods exported to the EU by more than 40 per cent last year, with Ireland now the fastest growing economy in the euro zone.

Against this backdrop, the [Irish Exporters Association](#) (IEA) is holding an export leadership forum in Dublin on Wednesday and Thursday, with more than 60 national and international speakers.

The speakers include Bord Bia chief executive Aidan Cotter, Airbnb head of global customer experience Aisling Hassell, [PM Group](#) managing director Allan Schouten, Horizon Pharma head of global supply chain Paul Condon, Danone Nutricia operations director Donal Dennehy, Bewley's managing director Jim Corbett, Aerogen chief executive Jim Power, [American Airlines](#) Cargo president Jim Power and [Boeing](#) vice-president of global trade controls Kathryn Greaney.

Ms Greaney will discuss future innovations within international trading routes and the impact of global trade controls on the export strategy.

IEA chief executive Simon McKeever said the forum will play a critical role in not only supporting and growing the industry but solidifying Ireland's position as a leading global player in export.

"The Boeing Company is the world's largest aerospace organisation and leading manufacturer of commercial jetliners and defence, space and security systems. As the top US exporter, the company supports customers in 150 countries, and we are delighted to have them on the agenda to share their in-depth knowledge with our market," he said.

Challenges

The forum will cover eight conference streams across two days, focusing on the biggest challenges exporters face in a globalised economy, as well as discussions on strategy and risk of exports. The streams will focus on Ireland's biggest export sectors: life-sciences, food and drink, and services; and on the key export competencies including supply chain management, economics, finance and risk. The life sciences stream will investigate the challenges and opportunities of transporting pharmaceutical and medical devices, including compliance and safety issues in the industry, while the service economy stream will cover best practice when it comes to standing out in a rapidly growing, fast-paced international business world.

There will be a particular spotlight on highlighting the essential stages of the export journey for SMEs, medium exporters and corporate exporters.

IEA president Hugh Kelly said the forum will also feature case studies, stories of successes and failures, of challenges and solutions.

"Exports have, and will continue to be vital to Ireland's economic recovery and growth," he said.