

Note on 12th ENTERPRISE FORUM ON BREXIT AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Thursday, 19th September 2019

Attendees:

Minister Heather Humphreys TD	Minister for Business, Enterprise & Innovation
Dr Orlaigh Quinn	Secretary General – Dept of Business, Enterprise & Innovation
Rowena Dwyer	Enterprise Ireland
Kieran Donoghue	IDA Ireland
Aisling Carney	American Chamber of Commerce
Simon McKeever	Irish Exporters Association
Pascal Koenig	Irish Exporters Association
Neil Mc Donnell	ISME
Oliver O'Connor	Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association
Arnold Dillon	Ibec
Kathryn O'Donovan	Ibec
Thomas Burke	Retail Ireland
Linda Stuart Trainor	Food & Drink Industry Ireland
Ian Talbot	Chambers Ireland
Emma Kerins	Chambers Ireland
Philip Kelly	DBEI
Declan Hughes	DBEI
Anne Coleman Dunne	DBEI
John Hughes	DBEI
Andrew Colgan	DBEI
Tom McLoughlin	DBEI
Conor Hand	DBEI
Helen Pyke	DBEI
Sinead McDonnell	DBEI
Gearoid O'Keefe	DPER

Item 1: Minutes from 11th meeting

- The Minister welcomed all attendees & the minutes from meeting 11 were approved.

Item 2: State of Play on Brexit

- The Minister introduced this agenda item, highlighting that the UK PM has stated unequivocally that on 31 October, regardless of whether there is a deal or no deal, the UK will leave the EU.
- The EU's position throughout this whole process has remained clear and consistent. The ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement is the best way to ensure an orderly Brexit. The EU has yet to receive alternative proposals from the UK.
- The risk of a no-deal Brexit is high and therefore Government, businesses and citizens must seriously double down on efforts to be best prepared for a no deal Brexit.
- The Minister updated the group on recent and planned Brexit preparedness events, including the launch of the Government's "Getting Your Business Brexit Ready – Practical Steps" campaign and the regional DBEI Brexit Outreach events.
- The Minister informed the group that she has recently taken the initiative to make contact with over 200,000 companies through the Companies Registration office register to highlight to them the actions they should take and the supports available.

- Gearoid O’Keeffe (DPER) updated the group on DPER’s work to date in relation to physical infrastructure at the ports and airports.
- Initial planning began in the context of a central case scenario (where the EU and UK conclude a Withdrawal Agreement (including the Transition Period and the backstop for Northern Ireland) and the future EU-UK relationship will be based on a Free Trade Agreement).
- Government are preparing for two scenarios, orderly or disorderly Brexit, at three locations, Dublin Port, Rosslare, Dublin Airport.
- Gearoid informed the group that adequate temporary infrastructure was in place at these locations in March this year. Work is continuing to further enhance this infrastructure, with a view to installing permanent infrastructure in each location. The timetable for this process is unknown as it will depend on the outcome of the negotiations and whether there will be a transition period.

Item 3: Tour de Table

- The Minister invited the members to provide an update on their preparedness efforts and key challenges. She thanked the group for their cooperation and feedback to date and highlighted the necessity for this cooperation to continue.
- Principal challenges and suggestions include:
 - The challenges posed by stockpiling in Q3 due to Halloween and Christmas.
 - The financial capacity of vulnerable but viable firms post-Brexit and the need to educate firms about comprehensive guarantees and other financial elements of preparedness such as hedging.
 - Ensuring that Government Departments, Offices and Agencies who have contracts with firms, settle their invoices promptly.
 - The appropriateness of existing supports and interventions was also discussed, including State Aid.
 - The status of certified goods post-Brexit which were purchased by Irish importers before the withdrawal date.
 - The need for a transition period for companies to adjust to new regulatory requirements.
 - In addition, members noted issues around data flows, goods in transit, potential delays caused by logistical issues, VAT deferral as well as the need for clarity from Government to allay certain fears where possible.

Item 6: AOB

- No items were raised under Any Other Business
- It was agreed a further meeting would be scheduled before the end of October.