

Note on 5th ENTERPRISE FORUM ON BREXIT AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Wednesday 20th December 2017

Attendees:

Minister Humphreys

DBEI: Dr Orlaigh Quinn, Philip Kelly, Dermot Mulligan, Declan Hughes, Pauline Mulligan, Gerry Wrynn, Cathal Fitzgerald, John Hughes, Conor Hand, Caoimhe Gavin, Sandra O'Reilly, Helen Pyke, Lucy Moylan, Pauric McPhlips

Rory Montgomery, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Kerry Curran, InterTrade Ireland (for item 5)

Kevin Sherry; Anne Lannigan, Enterprise Ireland

Niamh Roddy, IDA Ireland

Ruth Freeman, Science Foundation Ireland

Danny McCoy, Pat Ivory and Arnold Dillon - Ibec

Marc Coleman, Financial Services Ireland

Paul Kelly, FDII

Neil McDonnell, ISME

Mark Redmond, AmCham

Simon McKeever, Irish Exporters Association

Ian Talbot, Chambers Ireland

Thomas Burke, Retail Ireland

Tara Buckley, RGData

Item 1: Minutes from 4th meeting

- The minutes from meeting #4 were agreed.

Item 2: Opening remarks, Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Heather Humphreys TD

- Minister Humphreys welcomed the Forum members to the fifth meeting of the group and thanked them for their work to date. She noted that the forum has proven an effective mechanism for ensuring Business Representative Groups are feeding into the Department and Enterprise Agencies efforts to prepare firms for Brexit and for providing a two-channel for discussion of relevant issues.
- Minister Humphreys noted that, since the last meeting of the Forum, DBEI has released "Building Stronger Business" which sets the work underway and planned by the Department and its Agencies to support companies to respond to Brexit. Next year, the Minister will be prioritising implementation of the actions set out in the paper including the €300m Brexit Loan Scheme announced as part of Budget 2018.
- At the last meeting of the Forum, DBEI indicated the intention to share the key findings of the Copenhagen Economics study at a stakeholder event towards the end of this year. However, the work to conclude the study has taken longer than expected and is still being finalised. An event is now being planned for the 21st of February and officials will be in touch in due course with an invitation and agenda for the event.

Item 3: Update on EU/UK Negotiations from Department of Foreign Affairs

- Rory Montgomery, DFAT, provided the group with an update on the progress of the EU/UK negotiations to date and the next steps with regard to the timelines and structure for the second round of negotiations.

Item 4: Tour de Table – Forum members to provide latest brief overview of Brexit challenges facing their members and/or sector and mitigation activities underway or planned

- Following the presentations Forum members were invited to share their views and respond to the update from DFAT. These are summarised below;
 - The achievements from phase 1 of negotiations, in particular, the concrete commitments on the maintenance of the Common Travel Area and the agreement by the European Council to negotiate a transition period was highlighted and commended.
 - A strong focus is needed on the services sector given it accounts for more than half of our exports to the UK. It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum would focus on services including financial services.
 - The importance of training and upskilling companies regarding customs procedures as well as the need to build stronger alliances across the EU27 were noted.
 - Concerns around supply chains and the transit of goods across the UK Land bridge were also highlighted.
 - Members shared information about their latest activities supporting their sectors which included publications focussing on Brexit implications for the Technology Sector and Prepared Consumer Foods.
- The Enterprise Agencies continue to work with their clients and stakeholders to ensure they are Brexit-ready:
 - SFI is implementing the various strands of its mitigation strategy. The need for continued focus on the talent, innovation and skills will be essential going forward.
 - Enterprise Ireland is running a series of “Spotlight on Skills” tailored workshops for client companies, to enable them to strategically assess the skills they need to grow and develop their companies. A series of measures, including the Brexit Scorecard and Advisory clinics along with updated market diversification, innovation and competitiveness supports are being rolled out by EI.
 - IDA continues to work with clients to attract Brexit-related FDI. The Agency is currently working with a number of companies who are seeking to establish a base in Ireland in 2018.

Item 5: Presentation on DBEI Research

1. Firm-level Impacts on Enterprise: Most Exposed Sectors
 - Cathal Fitzgerald (DBEI) presented an overview of this research project which examines the implications at firm-level for Ireland’s most exposed enterprise sectors of the UK being outside of the European Single Market and Customs Union.
2. ITI/ ESRI Cross Border Study Phase 2
 - Kerry Curran of InterTrade Ireland presented an overview of this work. Phase 1 of this research has been published by ITI earlier this year. Phase 2 is almost complete and assesses aspects of how cross-border trade is structured at a firm level and how flexible firms are in the face of trade shocks. It also looks at the integration of supply chains.

Item 6: Any other business

- The Forum will meet again in 6-8 weeks.

Brexit Unit,

21 December 2017.