

IEA Regional Exporters Midlands Roundtable informed of strong growth



Speaking at the Irish Exporters Association (IEA) Supply Chain 2018 Series Roundtable meeting held in Athlone on 24 October last, Ulster Bank Chief Economist Simon Barry, stated that the Midlands Region had the country's second highest growth rate in employment since 2008.

"25,000 more people are now in employment in the Region, recording a growth of 25% in the period," he said. "This region, in common with the rest of Ireland, is now suffering from significant skill and housing shortages, while the overall rate of employment growth of 3% a year shows little sign of tapering off."

Looking to threats to the Irish economy, while the uncertainty about the exact shape of Brexit has made life difficult for exporters the more critical concern is that of retaining Irish competitiveness within the EU marketplace. While the impact of the reduction in value of Sterling has been most apparent in the drop in the UK visitor numbers to Ireland, other industries are also suffering from the increase in the competitiveness of British suppliers to the European markets.



The meeting, held at the Sheraton Hotel, Athlone also discussed questions raised about the appropriateness of use of the UK Landbridge to ship goods and services to and from Continental Europe. Issues raised included cost, driver shortages, environment and lack of information about direct services.

Many of these issues will be taken up again at two successive events, the IEA Supply Chain Series Exporters Roundtables on 8 November 2018 at Rosslare Europort, Wexford and in Dublin on 7 December.

Among the event sponsors included [Rhenus Logistics Ireland](#), [Ulster Bank](#), [Iarnród Éireann Irish Rail](#) and [Fleet Transport](#) as media partner.