

IEA Brexit survey finds rise in exports and businesses looking to diversify

The Irish Exporters Association (IEA) has released its latest figures from its member survey which show that exports to the UK have risen since the Brexit vote.

The 'IEA Export Eye,' with members in January 2018 regarding Irish exporters' sentiments on issues that impact on business, focused on Brexit and the skills shortage in Ireland.

Simon McKeever, Chief Executive of the Irish Exporters Association, said: "In the days following the UK Referendum in June 2016, the Irish Exporters Association surveyed our members on Brexit's impact on their business and their biggest concerns.



"In January this year, we performed the same survey and compared the two snapshots to see changes and trends over the last year and a half. What our analysis shows is the resilience of the Irish export industry.

"Exports to the UK have actually increased. In June 2016, 32% of our members surveyed exported more than a quarter to the UK, this has increased to 44%. And 41% are planning to increase their level of trade with the UK in the next 6 months, this has increased from 31% in 2016.

Mr McKeever also said that Irish exporters are also increasingly looking to new markets and to diversify their exports away from the UK market.

The survey found that 66% are planning to diversify their export markets in the next six months, up from 54% directly after the referendum.

Irish export figures for 2017 were the highest on record, up 2% on last year. Exports to the EU and USA both increased by 4% and exports to the UK were up 9%.

The IEA are seeing an increasing interest in Germany with 29% of members looking to diversify there as an export market in the next six months.

There is also a growing interest in English speaking further flung markets with the USA (27%), Australia (17%) and Canada (16%) all gaining popularity.

IEA members are looking more towards high growth markets like China (10%), Japan (8%) and ASEAN nations (8%).

The survey also found that an area of major concern for members is the current skills shortage in Ireland, with 62% having experienced difficulty in recruitment in the last six months.

The most prominent deficiency is in sales and marketing (31%), transport logistics (23%), operations (20%) and supply chain (19%).

The skills shortage in the logistics sector has been a major concern for some time and approximately a third of members in this sector are experiencing difficulty finding HGV drivers, managers and directors in storage and warehousing, customs expertise and fork-lift truck drivers.