

## Government urged to publish no-deal Brexit contingency plans

Business groups including Ibec want detailed plans in light of UK political turmoil

The Government must set out in detail its plans to cope with a potential crash-out exit by the [United Kingdom](#) from the [European Union](#), business representative groups have said. Ibec, the country's largest business group, has called for special measures including a new fund to help businesses worst affected by a disorderly [Brexit](#).

The [Irish Exporters Association](#) (IEA), whose members face heavy losses from declines in the value of sterling from a disorderly Brexit, has called on the Government to publish and implement the no-deal contingency plans that departments have privately been working on for months.

The call comes as political divisions in London over the draft EU-UK divorce deal culminated this week in UK prime minister [Theresa May](#) pulling a parliamentary vote on the deal and rebel MPs triggering a leadership challenge against her.

"The [Irish Government](#) and the EU must now set out in detail their plans for a possible disorderly UK exit," said Arnold Dillon, head of strategic campaigns at Ibec. "The majority of Ibec members have contingency plans in place, but companies need more information." The group said that a "co-ordinated and assertive response" would be required in the case of a no-deal result.

### Short-term financing

Among the suggested measures the Government should introduce are a new "enterprise stabilisation fund" to provide short-term financing to affected companies along with supports for direct capital, marketing and innovation to help companies target new markets beyond the UK. "Irish companies are acutely aware of the risks, even if some of these are very difficult to plan for, especially in the event of a 'no-deal' cliff edge," said Mr Dillon.

The IEA wants the Government to release details of its plans "to mitigate its worst impacts and ensure basic continuity of trade at a minimum". "Between now and Christmas they need to sit down and meet with us and other stakeholder groups and lay out the actual plans that they have in place," said Simon McKeever, the group's chief executive. "This is not just about putting customs officials at ports and airports; we need to find out what they are doing to make sure that trade keeps moving. We need to know what those plans are. Let's be having them."

### Alternatives

Among the measures the exporters are calling is a possible strategic review to consider alternatives to the UK landbridge, the route that two-thirds of Irish goods exporters use to deliver goods to the EU, given the likely disruptions if there is no deal and customs checks are imposed at Border crossings. The Cabinet this week prioritised work on a no-deal Brexit across every department. Minister for Foreign Affairs [Simon Coveney](#), who is managing the State's response to Brexit, briefed the Cabinet on the plans. EU leaders will discuss no-deal plans at the [European Council](#) summit in [Brussels](#) on Thursday and Friday.

A spokesman for Mr Coveney said that further no-deal contingency plans will be published in due course by the Government and the EU. "Some details are not being published at this time as it is not strategic or in the national interest," he said. The Government had put "tangible and concrete supports in place for business on a scale that other member states are using as a model for their own preparations", he added.