

US and Germany viewed as top destinations for market diversification

Survey highlights preferences of Irish exporters amid Brexit uncertainty

The [United States](#) and [Germany](#) are seen by Irish exporters as providing the best opportunity to diversify into new markets amid the uncertainty of Brexit.

According to the Irish Exporters' Association (IEA), they were among top five destinations for "further market diversification" in 2018 along with [France](#), [Italy](#) and [Belgium](#).

The IEA's findings were based on a survey on their members and their forthcoming business plans, and reveal a preference for English-speaking countries and for countries located closer to [Ireland](#).

The Government believes market diversification is the best response to the uncertainty of Brexit.

The IEA's survey also revealed that [China](#), [Russia](#), [India](#), [Saudi Arabia](#) and [Nigeria](#) were the top five states for visa applications made by Irish firms on behalf of their staff.

Mixed year

"2018 proved to be a mixed year for Irish exporters amidst the growing political uncertainty about Ireland's future trading relationship with the UK following Brexit," IEA chief executive Simon McKeever said.

"With the increasing political turbulence in the UK raising the likelihood of a no-deal Brexit on March 29th, the clock is ticking and the coming three months will be crucial to the continued prosperity of Ireland's economy," he said.

"All parties now have to take responsibility to prevent a far-reaching and harmful crash-out Brexit while speedily implementing no-deal contingency measures to prepare for any eventualities," Mr McKeever added.

The EU typically accounts for 50 per cent of Irish goods exports with the UK, Germany and Belgium accounting for the lion's share.

The US is the main non-EU destination, accounting for 25-30 per cent of total exports.