

PROGRAMME

Unlocking EU–UK Potential: Trade, Skills and Competitiveness

As we celebrate Brexit's 10-year anniversary, it's time to take stock. There's now broad consensus that it has impacted UK's economy negatively (estimated 2–6% smaller than it would otherwise have been) with increased trading costs, shortfall of business investment and reduced UK GDP per capita. It has also negatively affected EU member States by creating new barriers to trade, labour mobility and cooperation with one of its largest economic and political partners.

However, the EU remains by far UK's largest trading partner, accounting for nearly 40% of total UK trade. The EU-UK TCA was a refreshing positive step forward which enabled pragmatic issue-by-issue cooperation on shared strategic challenges such as security, competitiveness or climate change.

The impact of Brexit on Ireland has been unique: being both a major economic disruptor and a powerful opportunity for growth: increased trade resulting from the Windsor framework, increased Foreign direct investments, new maritime routes...

Under the Irish presidency, the EESC Employers' Group is organizing an Extraordinary Group meeting in Dublin to explore how to unlock EU–UK Potential, Ireland being the perfect location for this debate as the primary laboratory where post-Brexit friction is being tested first-hand, managed and optimized.

The event will be the opportunity to take stock of the various options for future EU-UK relations and explore further how to unlock EU-UK trade, facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications and skills in order to lower operational costs for companies and boost competitiveness on both sides of the Channel.

30 October 2026 – Dublin	
10:45	<u>Coffee</u>
11:15	<u>Welcoming remarks</u> • Danny MCCOY, CEO, Ibec • Ian TALBOT, CEO, Chambers Ireland • Sandra PARTHIE, President, EESC Employers' Group
11:15	<u>Fireside chat</u> • Patrick REILLY, Deputy Ambassador, British Embassy Ireland
11:30	<u>Panel discussion</u> on <i>Unlocking EU–UK Potential: Trade, Skills and Competitiveness</i> Moderator: Tony Connelly , Europe Editor, RTÉ News (<i>Radio Television of Ireland</i>) • Patrick REILLY, Deputy Ambassador, British Embassy Ireland • Dominic BOUCSEIN, Head of International Trade and Foreign Policy, Eurochambres • David CHURCHILL, Chief People Officer, VERSION 1 • Anne RANGLES, Director of Corporate Affairs, ORNUA
12:20	<u>Q&A and debate</u>
12:55	<u>Conclusion</u> • Peter BYRNE, Chair, EESC EU-UK Follow-up Committee
13:00	<u>Networking Lunch</u>