

## **When Sterling plummeted, Irish exporters went bust first**

A BAD outcome for the UK in its future relationship with the EU will be a bad outcome for Ireland with trade between the countries at almost €70 billion a year supporting more than 400,000 jobs across both islands, the Killarney Economic Conference was told.

John McGrane, Director General of the British Irish Chamber of Commerce, said his organisation campaigned for the UK to remain in the EU and while respecting the democratically expressed will of the people, there is now a need for real, practical, implementable solutions that can bring about the least-worst type of Brexit.

“The atmosphere in Brussels towards the UK is now toxic and if you cut through the tabloid bravado, the fact is that the UK has won nothing in any round of its discussions with the EU since the Referendum, whereas the EU has set the agenda and has upheld its position 100% of the way so far, and there's no sign that this is going to change,” he said.

“The problem with that is what the UK is taking back control of is which foot to shoot itself in and ending up shooting itself in ours,” Mr McGrane added.

“We're very clear about this. The UK economy will be weaker as a result of Brexit. Add in the fact that the UK is £2 trillion in debt and consumer borrowing is out of control and you've got a good chancellor with a bad hand. He can't afford to subsidise any part of the economy without hurting something else,” he said.

Mr McGrane said when Sterling plummeted, it was Irish exporters who went bust first.

“Now even the benefit of weaker Sterling for Irish imports from the UK is seeing inflationary pressure as UK manufacturers' real input costs are rising and

remember we import a higher percentage of our goods imports from the UK than the percentage we export,” he stated.