



Newsletter

Chairman's notes on Opportunities Beyond Brexit

We hope this newsletter finds you all well? It was a perfect storm that hit us here in Ireland at the beginning of the Year! As the ports were introducing new red tape the virus caused the Governments on both sides of the Irish Sea to ramp up restrictions. Whilst businesses are familiarising with the Harmonised Code and getting their paperwork in order the hauliers are finding new routes to avoid the hassle.

The Guardian just wrote that the traffic volume from Dublin to Holyhead has been reduced by 50% and how lorries are now crossing the Irish Sea from Scotland to Belfast. The capacity of direct shipping from Rosslare to Cherbourg and Dunkirk has been increased, and despite the higher cost and longer time to reach Europe than via UK land bridge, all crossings are fully booked. No doubt most issues will eventually be sorted out by the authorities and companies will adapt. The interesting question is what opportunities lie beyond once the dust has settled and after the pandemic is over?

Perhaps more companies will decide to set up operations in Ireland rather than import from the UK? Amazon for one has decided to build a distribution centre here, and one would like to think that this should benefit the consumer and create new opportunities for businesses. Many predictions were made during the Years leading to Brexit how professional services, banking, and insurance will reorganise themselves after the UK has left the common market. **The Finnish Business Club** will focus on monitoring the change and plan to arrange opportunities for its' members and partners to network around of topical issues.

Administration Matters and Dates for the Diary

Subscriptions 2021

It is that time of the year again when we ask members to renew their subscriptions. While the FBC is not able to host live events' we still have ongoing commitments like insurances and other fixed costs and would encourage all members to renew as soon as possible. Subscriptions remain unchanged, Corporate €200, Single €50, and joint IFS Members €25. Please make payment to the FBC at BIC BOFIE2DXXX, IBAN IE50 BOFI 9014 9089 63 44 71, or if by cheque to the address below. Your continued loyal support is very much appreciated.

AGM 2021

This Year's AGM will be held on **Friday 28th May at 12.30** as a zoom meeting. If you wish to table an item for the meeting please email to our Secretary at ferguskehily@hotmail.com before the end of April. We will have a guest speaker at the event and will be providing further information on this in due course.

60th Anniversary

In November 2021 Ireland and Finland will be celebrating 60 years of formal diplomatic relations during which time more experiences have been shared and relationships strengthened between two countries with many similarities and still both with their own unique traits and characteristics. We will keep FBC members informed of any planned events where they might be able to participate.



FBC In Action –

Linking potential partners and sharing learning opportunities

By Edward O’Loughlin, MBA



One of the many attributes I like about the Finnish Business Club is its’ practical value for linking potential like-minded business partners. For example, late last year the Finnish Embassy reached out for advice on behalf of a Finnish software company trying to find a suitable Irish partner for a significant public sector tender they were engaging in. I clarified more what the needs of the company were, and I was happy to facilitate their connection with a potential suitable partner. On another occasion I was approached through a colleague by an Irish technology researcher who wished to develop a relationship with a software company with a very particular specialisation. All this was with a view to possible collaboration on a Horizon 2020 application. Having met with a Finnish company with such a specialisation at a previous Finnish Business Club event, I was able to link the two together to explore possibilities. Similarly, I have reached out to members of the FBC myself for advice on different matters over the years and found people to be very forthcoming.

With the practical implications of Brexit very much a reality now for businesses engaged in importing and exporting goods with or via the UK, I just wanted to share a few learning opportunities and supports on this. Over the past few weeks, I have been doing a course called Clear Customs which is facilitated by the Irish Government’s business support agency called Skillnet Ireland. This is an online course and is available to eligible businesses involved in exporting and importing with the UK, who want to boost their in-house customs capacity and better clarify our new trading relationship with the UK as a third country outside the EU. Members should note that there are also several other related financial supports available to businesses to help them with the increased complications and costs around customs as a result of Brexit. Details on applying for the Clear Customs course are available at www.skillnetireland.ie, and details on financial supports concerning customs and Brexit are on an Enterprise Ireland website: www.prepareforbrexit.ie.

Finally, on further learning matters I did an executive MBA in Trinity Business School 2018-20 and found it very insightful and worthwhile. I am happy to discuss it further with any members who may have some questions if they are thinking of undertaking a similar course. Along with the Trinity MBA, there are a range of other excellent MBA courses provided in Ireland including through UCD Smurfit Business School, at DCU, Cork University, NUI Galway and at the University of Limerick, to name a few.

Brexit –

A slimmed down brief outline of what went wrong!

By Richard Redmond



Imagine what would happen if every Man , Women and Child travelling through Dublin Airport had to individually complete a very complicated form detailing everything about their origin and produce a certification of Health and safety etc. Full detailed luggage search and finally a very intrusive body search !!!!! Welcome to Brexit.

There are two levels of customs control, one when leaving a country and the other is the most challenging when arriving at the destination. Many UK companies were slow to realise that completing the UK exit forms/rules was not enough. They need someone to do the clearance at the Irish frontier, this also was the case the other way around, Ireland to UK! The same was happening for UK in not only Ireland but for all trade with the 28 EU countries.



Every day large UK retailers load lorries in the UK and ferry the truck to Ireland, thousands of lorries cross the Irish sea every year. The lorries cross through the night uninterrupted directly to their stores in Ireland. The rules changed when HARD Brexit arrived with the requirement to pay duty and VAT at point of entry arrived, or no it didn't !!! At the last minute the UK and the EU made an agreement where there would be no Duty (but lots of paperwork) but VAT would apply (more paperwork).

Hallelujah, Brexit never happened! >>>>>>>>> Wrong !!!!!!!!!!!

All traffic at all ports and airports were required to be stopped and checked for county of origin etc. The paperwork should declare country of origin. The shippers sometimes referred to goods of UK origin as GB instead of UK !!!! *Rejected and sent to back of the queue*. A lorry might have 20 items, 19 of which are real UK origin goods. One item could be Avocados packed in UK but not of UK origin ! *Rejected and sent to the back of the queue*.

The Consequences: A lot of time wasted plus extra costs for customs filings and agents. Cargo stranded waiting for corrected documents or reloading. Fresh food potentially spoiling. Drivers having to be replaced when they go over max driving hours. Holding areas at ports, road leading to ports blockaded with lorries. A serious shortage of drivers and lorries and containers because so many were locked in queues. We now must live with a longer supply chain and more costs for customs clearances. We won't even think about the complication of the NI .

Final note, there were lots of pre warnings to "be prepared". Many people did but many did not and one, bad apple, pallet not cleared could delay the full lorry. For Irish cargo Finnish Companies generally did prepare: There are no direct sailings Finland to Ireland but there are options to ship via Rotterdam or France to arrive Ireland by not entering UK at all.

For UK Cargo many Finnish Companies, where possible shipped and preloaded to warehouses in UK to have cargo already in UK before Brexit kicked in. It's been a long 6 weeks learning curve but looks like we are getting there.



A special thank you to Ed and Richard for sharing their valuable insights, if you would like to make a contribution to our next or a future Newsletter, please email ferguskehily@hotmail.com and we will be delighted to include it.

We look forward to meeting you all again soon virtually and hopefully in a not too distant future in person.

Please stay safe and all the best!

The Committee, The Finnish Business Club

February 2021