

Committee for the Economy
Report on Committee Members Visit to Dublin
Wednesday 7th and Thursday 8 December 2016

Background

1. At its meeting on 5 October 2016 the Committee for the Economy agreed, as part of its external engagement with stakeholders, to meet informally with its counterpart Oireachtas Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to discuss issues of common interest. During the visit to Dublin the Committee also held a working dinner with Ibec and the IDA and visited the offices of Bord Bia.
2. The following Committee Members attended the visit to Dublin:
 - Conor Murphy MLA
 - Steve Aiken MLA
 - Mervyn Storey MLA
 - Sinead Bradley MLA
 - Caoimhe Archibald MLA
 - Alex Maskey MLA

Bord Bia: Visit and Tour

3. Bord Bia promotes, assists and develops the marketing of Irish food and livestock and the production, marketing and consumption of horticultural product in Ireland. The visit to Bord Bia was particularly opportune for Members in the context of the proposed setting up a new agri-food marketing board for Northern Ireland as recommended by the Agri-Food Strategy Board in its 2013 report: ***‘Going for Growth’*** and supported by the Economy and AERA Ministers.
4. Members met the following representatives of Bord Bia

Michael Carey	Chairman
Aidan Cotter	CEO, Bord Bia
Padraig Brennan	Director of Markets
Helen King	Director of Consumer Insight
5. The visit to Bord Bia allowed Members the opportunity to hear from Bord Bia directly on its current strategies and structures and how it provides support for agri-food businesses. The Committee received a presentation from Aidan Cotter, CEO which focused on the success of Bord Bia’s ‘Origin Green’ campaign which is a national initiative to promote sustainability for farmers and producers.
6. Members also had the opportunity to tour and meet with staff at its unique facility the ‘Thinking House’ which provides marketing support to small food businesses. Members received a demonstration from a researcher at Bord Bia on how it provides agri-food businesses with tailored market and consumer information and sector overviews. Members also viewed a display of food and drink products successfully branded and marketed with the support of Bord Bia.



Presentation from Aidan Cotter, CEO Bord Bia

Ibec, CBI NI and IDA: Informal Working Dinner

7. Ibec represents Irish business at home and abroad. It has over 180 professional services staff in seven locations and is the umbrella group of over 40 different sectoral industry associations. It has over 7,500 members: home grown, multinational, big and small, spanning all sectors of the economy. Ibec provides a wide range of professional direct services to its members including employer advice and representation on HR and industrial relations issues.
8. The IDA is Ireland's foreign direct investment promotion agency providing a range of support and services to help investors quickly establish and develop their operations in Ireland. The IDA supports potential and existing investors.
9. The following Members and staff of Ibec and IDA attended:

Fergal O'Brien	Director of Policy, Ibec
Arnold Dillon	Head of Press and Public Relations, Ibec
Michael D'Arcy	Ibec / CBI All-Ireland Investment Project
John Ahern	Managing Director Ireland/UK, Indaver
Leo Clancy	Global Head of Technology, IDA
Gabriel Darcy	Chief Executive, LacPatrick
Michael Hall	Managing Partner for Northern Ireland and Head of Markets for All Ireland, Ernst and Young
Michael Hanley	Chief Executive, Lakeland Dairies
Anne Randles	Secretary and Director of Administration, Ornuia
Elisabeth Rodriguez	Country Manager, UPS

10. The meeting allowed Members the opportunity to meet with Members of Ibec and representatives of industry including companies who operate globally and export businesses in Ireland. The discussion was focused on the common challenges faced by business and employers across both jurisdictions particularly in the context of the UK's withdrawal from the EU including issues affecting competitiveness and business development.
11. Representatives of Ibec and the IDA agreed, given the success of the meeting that a follow-up should be held in Northern Ireland with members and industry representatives of the CBI to be invited to attend.

Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

12. The Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation plays a key role in providing input into legislation and policy and informing debate on the creation and retention of jobs and promoting enterprise and innovation. The Joint Committee has also recently held a number of evidence sessions on the impact of Brexit.
13. The meeting with the Joint Committee was jointly chaired by Conor Murphy MLA and Mary Butler TD.
14. An informal agenda was agreed in advance of the meeting to cover the following issues:
 - Economic development
 - Brexit
 - Corporation tax
 - FDI
15. The informal discussion with the Joint Committee also focused on the challenges presented by the UK's withdrawal from the EU including issues relating to cross-border trade and the free movement of people and labour and the impact on border areas. There was also detailed discussion on the possible steps to mitigate the economic risks of Brexit.
16. Both Committees agreed on the need for continued dialogue as the process of withdrawal from the EU becomes clearer. Members agreed the following would be a useful follow-up to this meeting:
 - That a formal invitation would be extended to the Joint Committee to visit the NI Assembly for follow-up informal meeting with the Economy Committee.
 - That Committee staff would explore mechanisms for sharing useful research papers and relevant information in relation to Brexit.



Informal meeting of the Economy Committee and Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation