

Brexit - European industry leaders say no to no-deal

Ahead of the European Council meeting on 17 and 18 October and with just 16 days to go until the United Kingdom is set to leave the European Union, industry leaders call on all parties involved to break the Brexit impasse and avoid a no-deal exit.

This message has been clearly outlined today, 16 October, by the industry chiefs within Ceemet representing the European Tech and Industry sector, comprising over 200,000 companies and providing 35 million direct and indirect jobs.

Continuity must be ensured in any Brexit deal

The European Union has done more to remove barriers to trade between its members than any other economic bloc in the world. This has facilitated the success of EU manufacturing, allowing highly integrated supply chains across Europe and beyond to develop in a common regulatory environment, with open borders, ease of mobility of workers, and a level playing field to ensure fair competition. As MET employers, we need a Brexit deal that delivers as much continuity as possible, respects the rights of citizens, ensures the payment of the 'Brexit bill' and guarantees an open border on the island of Ireland.

Manufacturing is a capital-intensive activity, which is uniquely exposed to the costs of border frictions, customs paperwork, tariffs and regulatory divergence. Our sector is already feeling the pinch, with the slowdown globally but particularly in the automotive sector which represents over 20% of our sector, the growing uncertainty of a possible no-deal Brexit only adds to this. A return to the borders and costs of the past would prove catastrophic and must be avoided in any instance.

A realistic transition period is needed

As MET employers we accept that some change in our trading relationship is inevitable. But given the cost and disruption that will inevitably be incurred we need a realistic transition period, including non-EU countries that are part of a Customs Union where European MET employers have trade partnerships. Firstly, to allow enough time for a new relationship to be negotiated and to come into force, so that our members only face one set of changes, rather than two. Secondly, to allow time to make the necessary investments and preparations to adapt to the new reality.

We hope that a deal on this basis can be done with the UK in the coming days. If it cannot, then we call for a further extension to allow both the EU and the UK to redouble their efforts to ensure we find a deal that works in the best interests of Europe's manufacturers and their trade partners.

ABOUT CEEMET

Ceemet represents the metal, engineering and technology-based industry employers in Europe, covering sectors such as metal goods, mechanical engineering, electronics, ICT, vehicle and transport manufacturing.

Member organisations represent 200,000 companies in Europe, providing over 17 million direct and 35 million indirect jobs.

Ceemet is a recognised European social partner at the industrial sector level, promoting global competitiveness for European industry through consultation and social dialogue.