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Cross Border Studies

# MEDIA WATCH

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**27 April 2018 – 4 May 2018**

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## Border forklift maker plans to hire 200 more staff

A CO Monaghan manufacturer of forklifts - where one in 10 staff travels from Northern Ireland to work - has announced 200 new jobs.

The posts will be located at Combilift's new (EURO)50m global headquarters and manufacturing facility in Annahagh, close to the border.

The 40-hectare site houses a 46,500m sq m factory, a dedicated research and development and testing centre as well as extensive administrative and visitor facilities.

Irish jobs support agency Enterprise Ireland has part-funded the facility, which is occurring in the shadow of Brexit.

The border in Northern Ireland is only a few miles away from the new factory.

Combilift exports 98% of its products across the world, one quarter of which goes to the UK market.

In addition, one in 10 of Combilift's employees cross the border on a daily basis to work in its new factory.

Founded by a farmer, Martin McVicar, in 1998, the company has grown from a small operation with a handful of employees to become one of the biggest names in the material handling sector, with the 200 jobs adding to the company's existing workforce of around 550.

"We have employed an additional 230 people since we announced our plans for this factory in 2015 and we are planning to recruit an additional 200 in the next years," Mr McVicar said.

"The combination of this state of the art production plant and a skilled workforce will allow us to double production within the next five years."

The news was welcomed by Heather Humphreys TD, the Republic's Minister for Business, Enterprise, and Innovation, who said that the announcement pointed to the positive impact of Combilift on the border region.

She added: "Perhaps above all, the company is living proof that you don't have to be in a big city to achieve global success."

**Source: The Belfast Telegraph**

**27 April 2018**

## 'EU citizens will be majority in North'; Varadkar outlines future of post-Brexit six counties

NORTHERN Ireland will likely have an EU-citizen majority after Brexit, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar declared in Belgium last night.

He said that Northern Ireland will be outside the EU, and yet a majority of its people will likely be EU citizens, he told a student audience at the Catholic University in Louvain.

'The majority of people in Northern Ireland voted to remain in the EU.

'And it is likely that the majority of them will be EU citizens even after Brexit, because of their right, under the Good Friday Agreement, to be recognised as Irish or British or both,' the Taoiseach said.

'It will be a territory outside the EU in which the majority of residents are EU citizens or at least can be.' The EU has consistently recognised the unique position of Northern Ireland, and the 'unique situation in which it has been put by the British decision to leave', said Mr Varadkar.

And he warned that Northern Ireland could soon have a majority of EU citizens within its territory, making it even more of a contrast with the rest of the United Kingdom.

He said that, given that fact, there must not be a hard border between north and south.

'So, the United Kingdom has guaranteed that, whatever its future relationship with the European Union, there will be no hard border on the island of Ireland. This was agreed in a Joint Report between the EU and the UK last December.

'It is a political agreement and it is now imperative that these commitments are firmly enshrined in the legal text of the [EU-UK] Withdrawal Agreement, and embedded in the UK's future relationship with the EU, whatever shape that ultimately takes,' he said.

He said the only barrier to achieving a close EU-UK relationship after Brexit is Britain's own red lines.

If Britain's absolute positions change, 'Europe's position can evolve too.' 'It is essential that we see real and solid progress by June if the negotiations are to move forward,' Mr Varadkar said, referring to the need to draw up a withdrawal document that would ensure a soft border in Ireland.

'There is less than a year until the UK leaves, and without a solution to the Irish border there can be no withdrawal agreement. Let there be no doubt about that,' Mr Varadkar said, echoing comments yesterday by Irish Commissioner Phil Hogan in the Seanad.

The Council of European Leaders is closely following the ongoing negotiations and would return to the outstanding withdrawal issues when it met again in June, the Taoiseach said.

The outstanding questions 'include the Irish border, as well as the framework for the future relationship', Mr Varadkar said.

'From Ireland's perspective, we want the future relationship between the EU and the UK to be close, comprehensive and ambitious.

'That is very much in our interests and in the interests of the Union as a whole and most of all, in the interest of the UK,' he said.

**Source: The Irish Daily Mail**