



# The Irish Economic Update

*Good start to year by the Irish economy*

May 2019

Oliver Mangan  
Chief Economist  
AIB

# Strong growth by Irish economy in 2013-2018 period

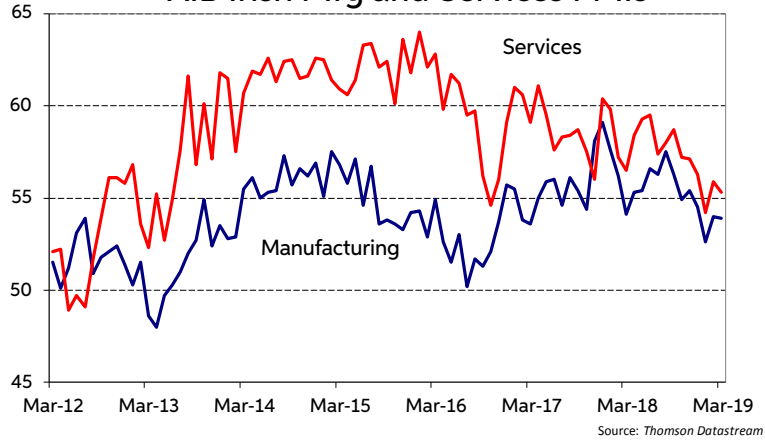


- Irish economy boomed from 1993 to 2007 with GDP up by over 250% – Celtic Tiger
- Very severe recession in Ireland in 2008-2009. GDP fell by 8.5% and GNP down 11%
- Collapse in construction activity and banking system, severe fiscal tightening, high unemployment. Ireland entered a 3 year EU/IMF assistance programme from 2010-2013
- GDP at end of 2008-09 recession was still over 25% higher than in 2001, highlighting that the economic crash came after a long period of very strong growth
- Ireland tackled its problems aggressively in the public finances, banking sector and property market. Imbalances in economy unwound – housing, debt levels, competitiveness, BoP
- Ireland focused on generating growth via its large export base as the route to recovery
- Economy grew very strongly over 2013-18 – underlying growth averaged 4.5% for the period
- Domestic economy has recovered strongly, led by rebound in investment and retail spending
- Strong jobs growth. Unemployment rate fell from 16% in early 2012 to circa 5.5% in Q1 2019
- Budget deficit eliminated at a quicker than expected pace. Small surplus recorded in 2018

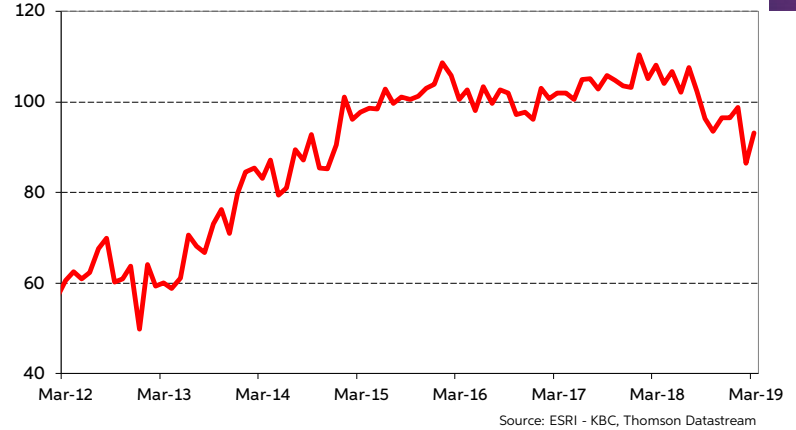
# Survey indicators suggest activity may have peaked



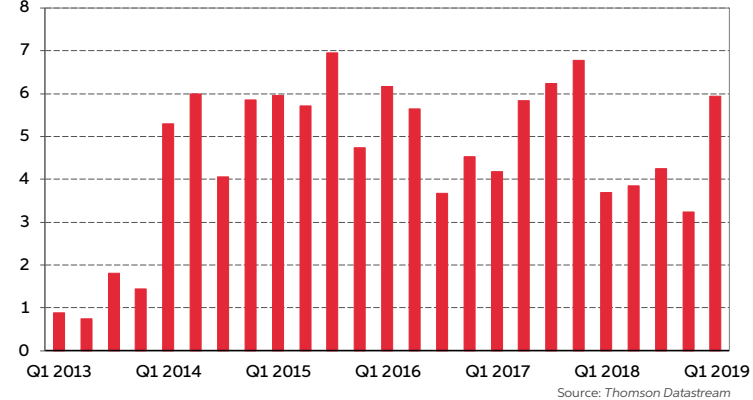
## AIB Irish Mfg and Services PMIs



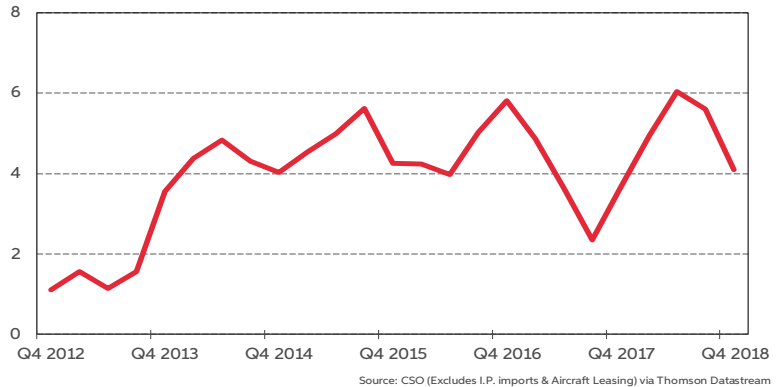
## Consumer Confidence (ESRI - KBC)



## Retail Sales (ex-autos) - Volume, YoY, %



## Modified Final Domestic Demand (3 Qtr MA, % Yr-on-Yr)



# Signs growth is starting to moderate somewhat



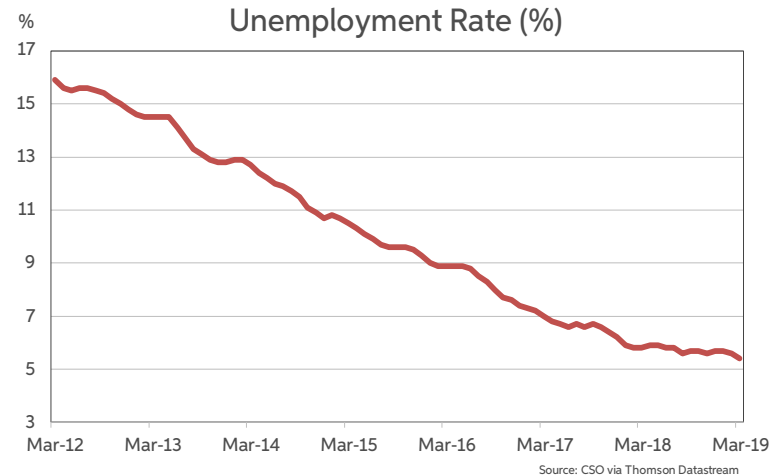
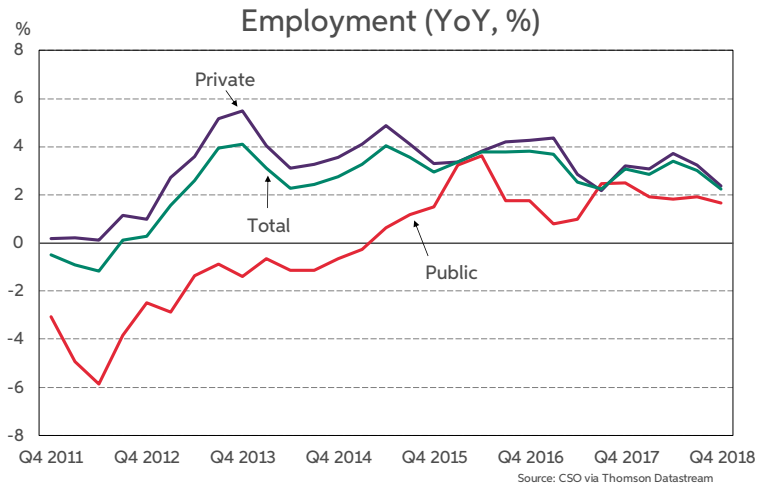
- Modified final domestic demand grew by 4.5% in 2018, though slowed in H2 of the year
- Continuing strong job growth last year – employment rose by 2.9% in 2018, but slowed in H2
- Further strong rise in housing completions in 2018– increased by 25% to over 18,000 units
- Mortgage lending up 20% in 2018. Growth slowed to 10.5% in Q1 19, but approvals picking up again
- Retail sales (ex-motor trade) rose by a strong 2.4% in Q1 2019, up 6% yoy
- Total car registrations (new + second hand imports) down circa 7% yoy in Q1
- Mfg PMI averages 53.5 in Q1, down from 55.8 in 2018 – still consistent with solid growth in sector
- Services PMI also falls in Q1 to 55.0 from average of 58.0 in 2018, but still points to strong growth
- Increase in the housing sub-index sees construction PMI move up to 57.0 in Q1, from 54.9 in Q4 '18
- Consumer confidence well off last summer's highs. At four year low recently, though still good level
- Unemployment rate falls to circa 5.5% in Feb/Mar 2019. Live Register continued to decline in Q1
- Good growth of 7% in tax receipts in Q1 2019, while budget balance shows further improvement

# Strong jobs growth; unemployment rate down to 5.4%



Year Average	2015	2016	2017	2018(f)	2019(f)	2020(f)
<b>Unemployment Rate %</b>	10.0	8.4	6.8	5.8	5.3	5.1
<b>Labour Force Growth %</b>	1.2	1.9	1.1	1.8	1.9	1.7
<b>Employment Growth %</b>	3.5	3.7	2.9	2.9	2.3	2.0
<b>Net Migration : Year to April ('000)</b>	5.9	16.2	19.8	34.0	38.0	40.0

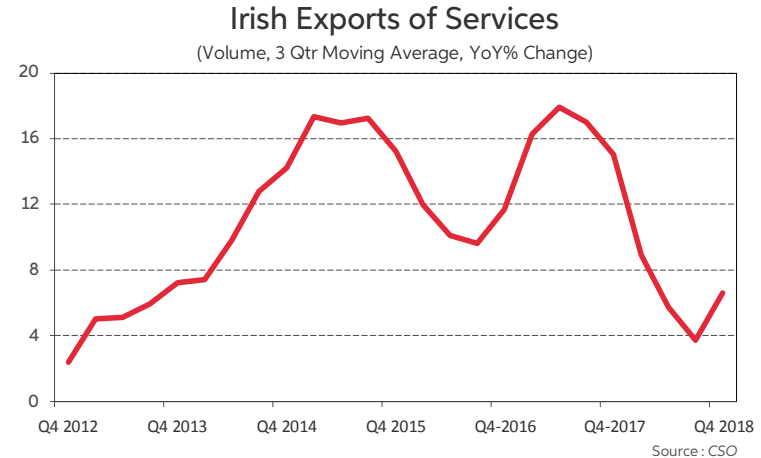
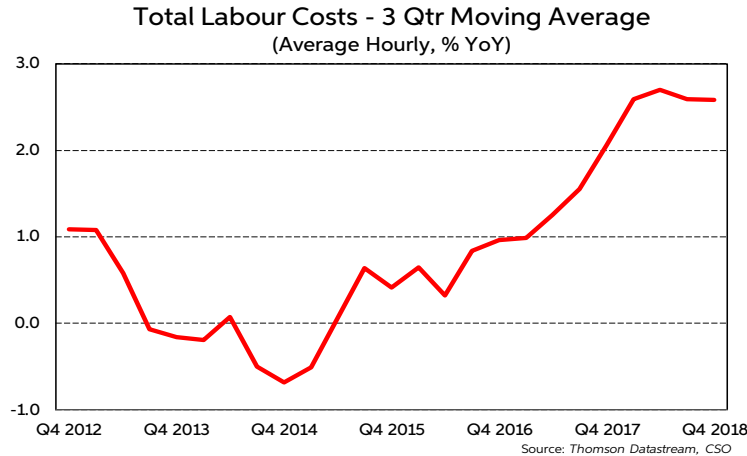
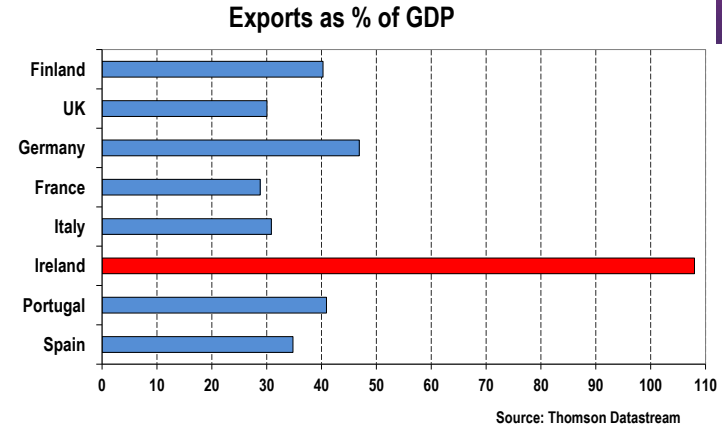
Source: CSO and AIB ERU forecasts



# Large Irish export base performing very well



- Ireland a very open economy – exports, driven by enormous FDI, equate to well over 100% of GDP
- Major gains in Irish competitiveness earlier in decade - weakening of euro in 2014/15 helpful
- Exports have risen strongly, helped by large FDI inflows and recovery in global economy
- Total exports up by 9% in 2018 and very strong rise in goods exports in Jan/Feb 2019



# FDI and the Irish economy



## WHAT ATTRACTS FDI TO IRELAND?

- Access to European markets
- Low corporate tax rate of 12.5%
- English speaking country
- Well educated, flexible workforce
- Common law legal system
- Stable political framework
- Long history of successful FDI
- Access to decision makers

## KEY FDI IMPACTS ON THE IRISH ECONOMY

- Some 1,200 multinational companies
- €189bn in Exports
- 230,000 Jobs in FDI, 390,000 in total
- €7bn in Corporation Tax ( 67% of total )
- 33% of State's income tax/PRSI/USC
- €13.2bn Spending on Irish services/materials
- €11.7bn in Payroll
- 67% of Business R&D expenditure

## WORLD LEADERS CHOOSE IRELAND

- 17 of the top 20 in ICT
- 10 of the top 10 in Pharmaceuticals
- 14 of the top 15 in Medical Devices
- 8 of the top 10 Industrial Automation
- 10 of the 'top born on the Internet' firms
- 20 of the top 25 Financial Services firms
- UK becoming less attractive for FDI owing to Brexit

## US TAX CHANGES SHOULD NOT HIT FDI

- US firms have well established operations here
- Need highly skilled, multi-lingual workforce
- Firms do not move Ireland to avoid US tax
- Ireland is base to service their European markets
- Easier to operate in local rather than US time zone
- Still wide gap between US & Irish corporate tax rates
- Very strong year for FDI in 2018

# Many top global companies have big operations in Ireland

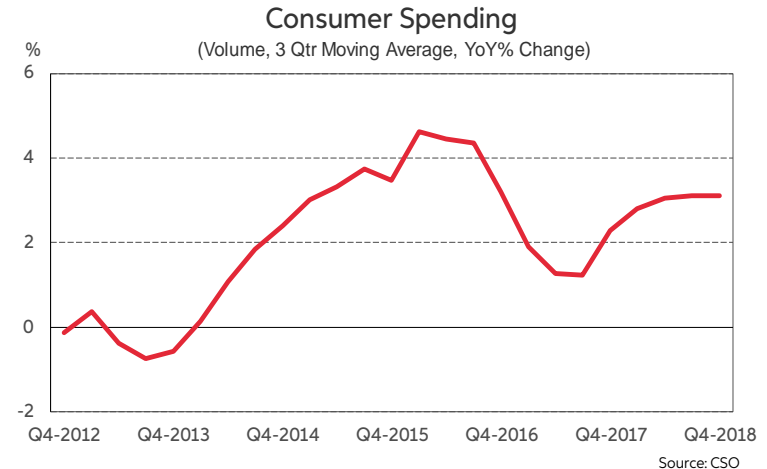
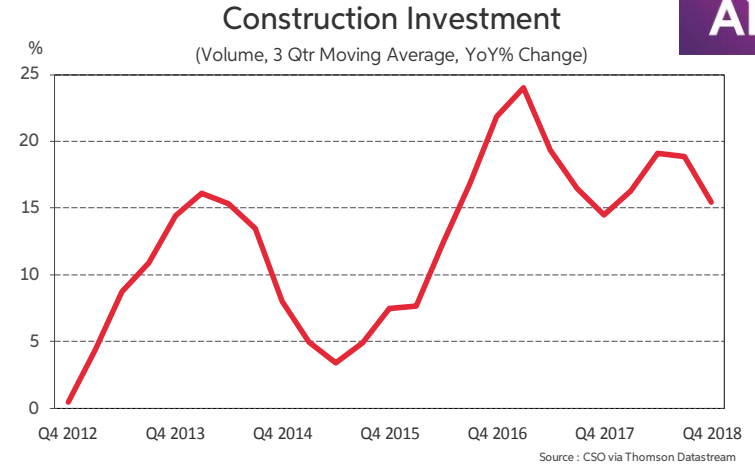




# Strong performances across domestic economy



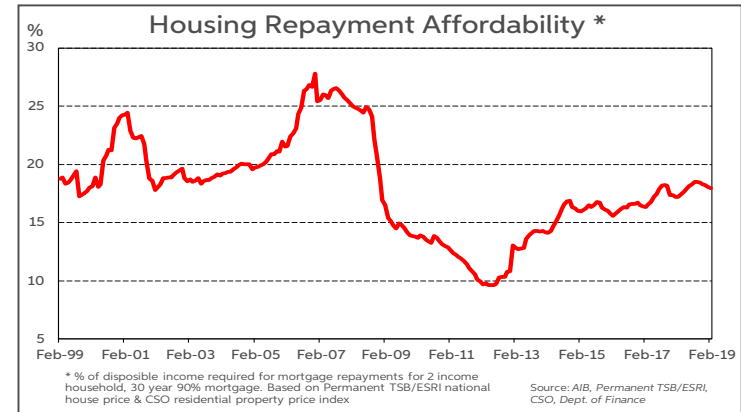
- Domestic economy contracted by 20% in period from 2008-2012, with particularly big fall in construction
- Construction sees strong recovery since 2013. Output up by over 15% in each of the last three years
- Difficult year for agricultural sector in 2018, but comes after very strong growth in 2014-17 period
- Modified final domestic demand up by 4.5% in 2018, after averaging growth of 4.4% in 2014-17 period
- Core business investment (ex aircraft/intangibles) up by 11.5% in 2018
- Consumer spending grew by close to 3% on average over 2014-2017 period. Rose by 3% in 2018 also
- Core retail sales rose by a strong 3.9% in 2018, and were up by 6% yoy in Q1 2019
- Total car regs (new + used imports) remained at very high level in 2018, but down circa 7% yoy in Q1 2019



# House building rising steadily, but still at quite low level

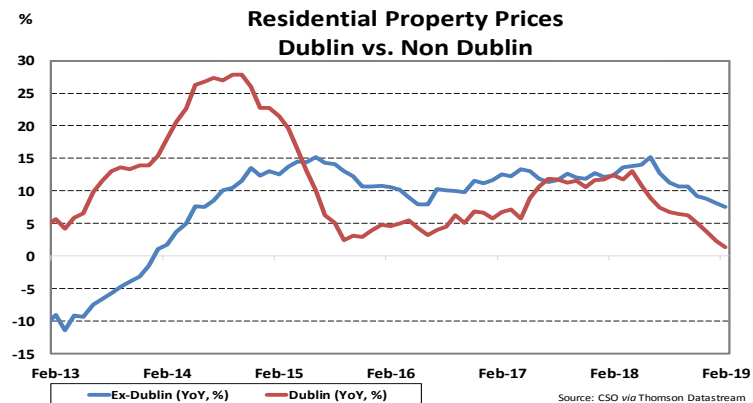
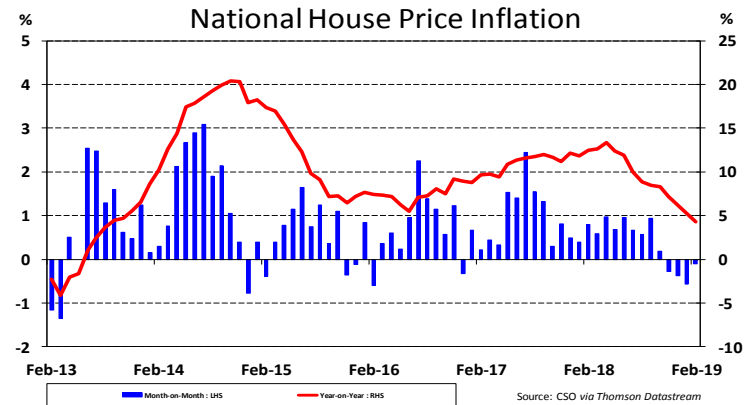


- Housing completions rose by 25% to over 18,000 in 2018, having increased by 45% to 14,400 in 2017
- Housing commencements on rising trend: up by 29% to 22,500 in 2018 and 30% yoy in Jan-Feb 2019
- Very big jump of 40% in planning permissions in 2018
- Housing output still running well below annual new housing demand, estimated at 35,000 units
- Measures put in place to boost new house building. More Local Authority and NAMA building
- Mortgage lending +20% in 2018, but slowed to 10.5% in Q1 '19. Mortgage approvals picked up in Q1
- Housing affordability hit by rising house prices, especially Dublin, but helped by low mortgage rates
- Could be 2022 before housing output rises to 35,000 units – around level of estimated annual demand



# House price inflation slows sharply in past year

- House prices declined by a very sharp 55% between their peak in late 2007 and early 2013
- House prices have since rebounded as big housing shortage emerged after 90% fall in house building
- Small stock for sale, house building still at low level
- Prices up 81% by Feb 2019 from low in March 2013 –Dublin prices up by 93%, non-Dublin rise 78%
- But house prices still nearly 20% below 2007 peak
- House price inflation has moderated as Central Bank lending rules and affordability impact in past year
- Prices up 4.3% yoy nationally in February 2019, down from recent high of 13.3% in April 2018
- Dublin up 1.4% yoy in Feb, down from 13% in April; non-Dublin slows to 7.5% in Jan from 15.2% in June
- Rents have also rebounded strongly – are now 27% above previous peak reached in 2008 per CSO data



# AIB Model of Estimated Housing Demand



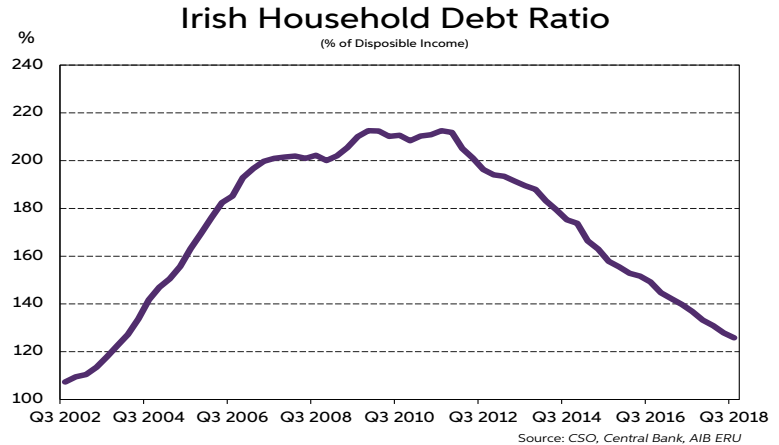
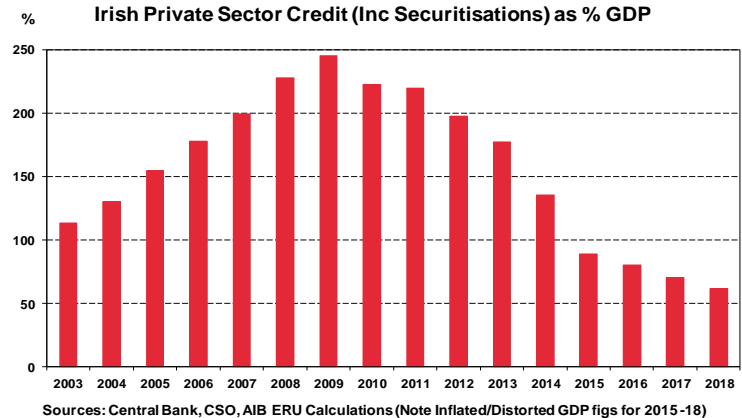
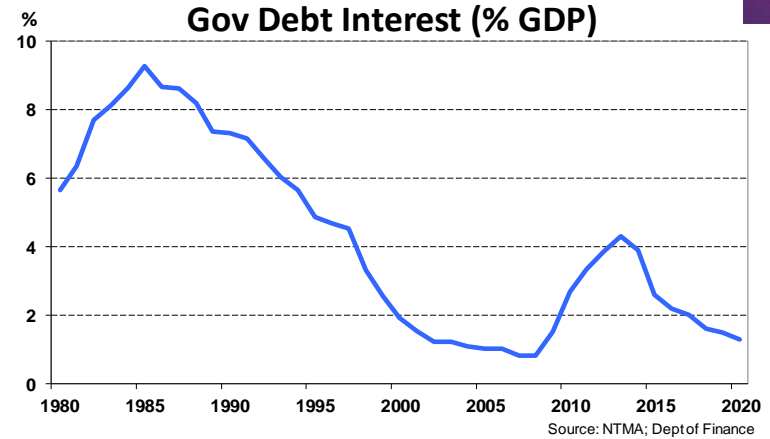
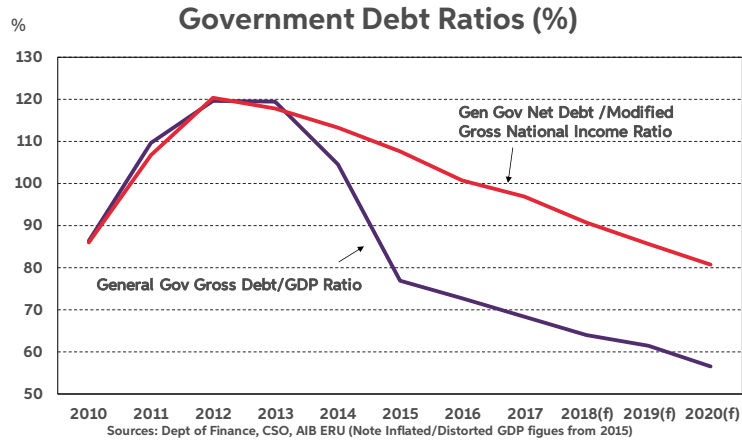
- Rising headship rates added circa 8,000 per year to housing demand in 2002-2011 period
- Shortage of housing, high rents, tighter lending rules saw average household size rise in 2011-16. Thus, headship fell – was a drag of circa 10,000 p.a. on housing demand
- Assume no change in headship in 2016-2020 – note long-term trend is upwards, adding to demand
- Pent-up demand has also built up in recent years from lack of supply
- Thus, forecast table may be under-estimating actual real level of housing demand
- Shortfall in supply met from run down of vacant stock and demand being reduced by fall in headship rate. Both factors very evident in 2011-16 and most likely in 2016-20

Calendar Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Household Formation</b>	26,500	26,500	26,500	27,500	27,500
<i>of which</i>					
<b>Indigenous Population Growth</b>	18,000	18,500	17,500	16,500	14,500
<b>Migration Flows</b>	8,500	9,500	12,000	13,000	13,000
<b>Headship Change*</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Second Homes</b>	500	500	500	500	500
<b>Replacement of Obsolete Units</b>	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
<b>Estimated Demand</b>	<b>32,000</b>	<b>33,500</b>	<b>35,000</b>	<b>35,000</b>	<b>33,000</b>
<b>Completions</b>	<b>9,900</b>	<b>14,400</b>	<b>18,100</b>	<b>22,500</b>	<b>27,000</b>
<b>Shortfall in Supply</b>	<b>-22,100</b>	<b>-19,100</b>	<b>-16,900</b>	<b>-12,500</b>	<b>-6,000</b>

\*Headship is % of population that are heads of households.

Sources: CSO, DoECLG, AIB ERU

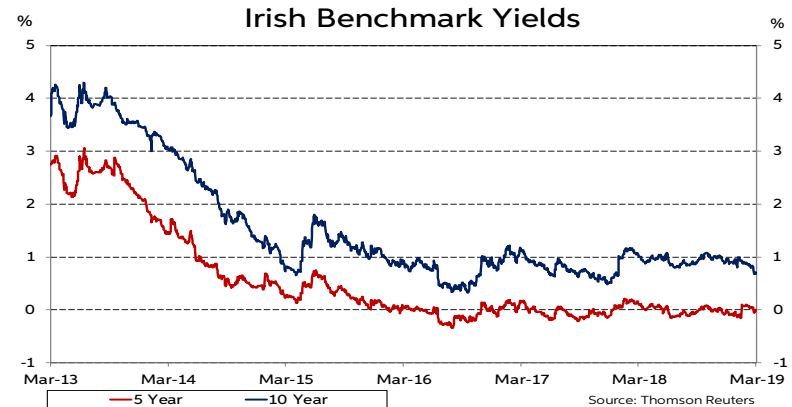
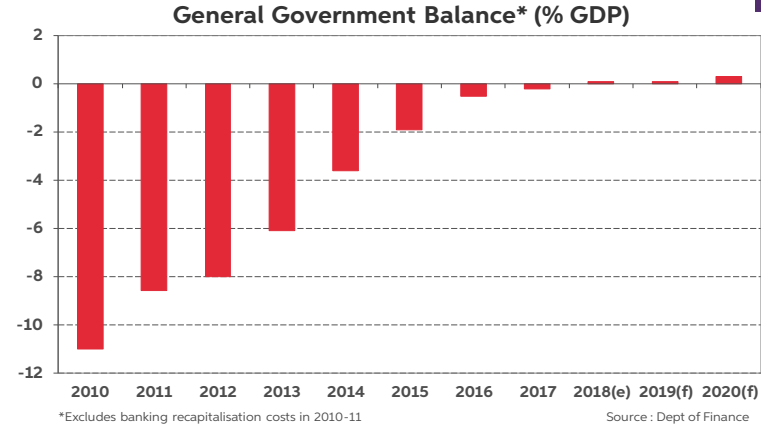
# Govt debt ratios fall, private sector deleverages



# Government finances back in surplus



- Some €30bn (18% of GDP) of fiscal tightening implemented in 2008-2014 period
- Budget deficit has fallen sharply over past decade. Fell to 0.2% of GDP in 2017
- A small surplus was recorded in 2018, estimated at 0.1% of GDP
- Primary budget surplus (i.e. excluding debt interest) of 1.5% of GDP in 2018
- Debt interest costs low – at 1.5% of GDP
- Government aims to maintain the budget in surplus in coming years
- Public finances close to target in first three months of 2019 – tax receipts up by 7%
- Gross Gov Debt/GDP ratio has fallen sharply
- Irish bonds yields at very low levels
- Sovereign debt ratings upgraded; S&P have Ireland at A+, Fitch at A+, Moody's A2



# Brexit expected to lower growth rate of Irish economy

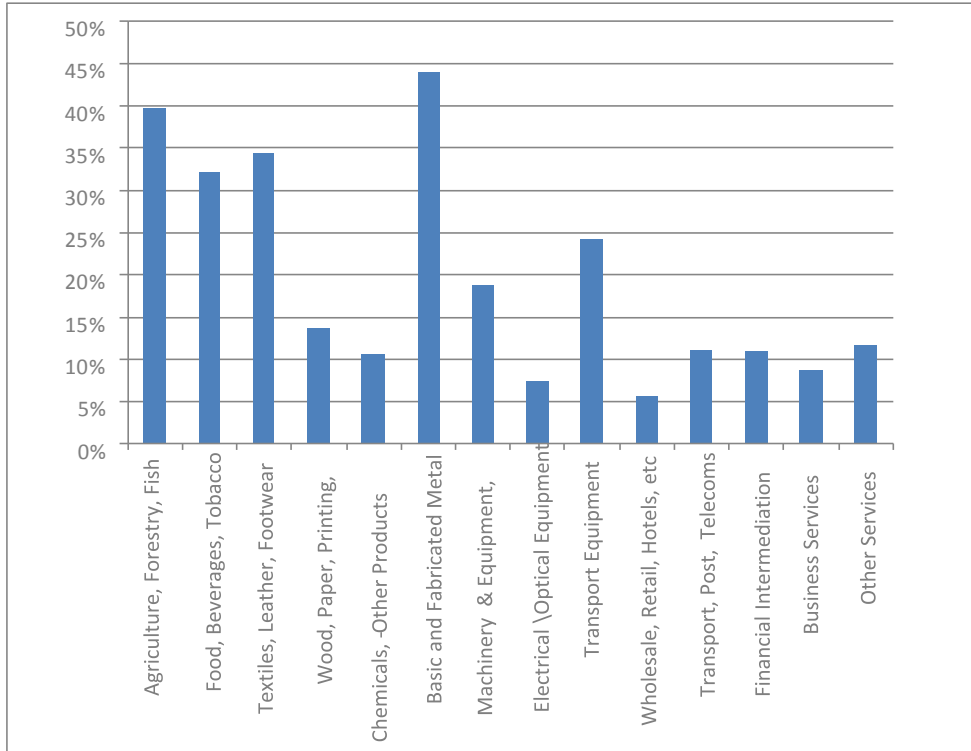


- **ESRI** estimate that Irish output would be reduced over time by **2.6% under a 'deal' scenario** in the long run (i.e. after 10 years). Unemployment rate is 1 percentage point higher
  - In a '**disorderly no deal**' scenario, ESRI estimates that GDP would be **5% lower** after 10 years Unemployment rate would be 2 percentage points higher
  - Sharp fall-off in trade with UK likely on a no-deal Brexit, with this **shock front loaded**, with around half of the impact on trade taking place in the two years
  - **Central Bank** say a disorderly hard Brexit could reduce Irish growth by 4% in first year and 6% in long run
- **Copenhagen Economics** Report considered costs of regulatory divergence for goods and services and of border checks, as well as tariffs in assessing impact of Brexit
  - Estimates impact by 2030 is to reduce Irish GDP by 2.8% under a soft Brexit (EEA), 4.3% in a FTA and 7% in a no-deal, hard Brexit WTO scenario

# Agri. sector would be severely impacted by hard Brexit

- Main EU tariffs relate to food products, keeping prices high. UK may not maintain these post Brexit
- Food and Beverages account for 25% of total Irish exports to UK
- Around 40% of Irish food exports go to the UK
- Other sectors very dependent on UK market include machinery and transport, metal products, textiles
- Some 40% of indigenous Irish exports go to UK compared to 10% for foreign owned companies

Share of Exports by Industry Destined for the UK (ESRI)

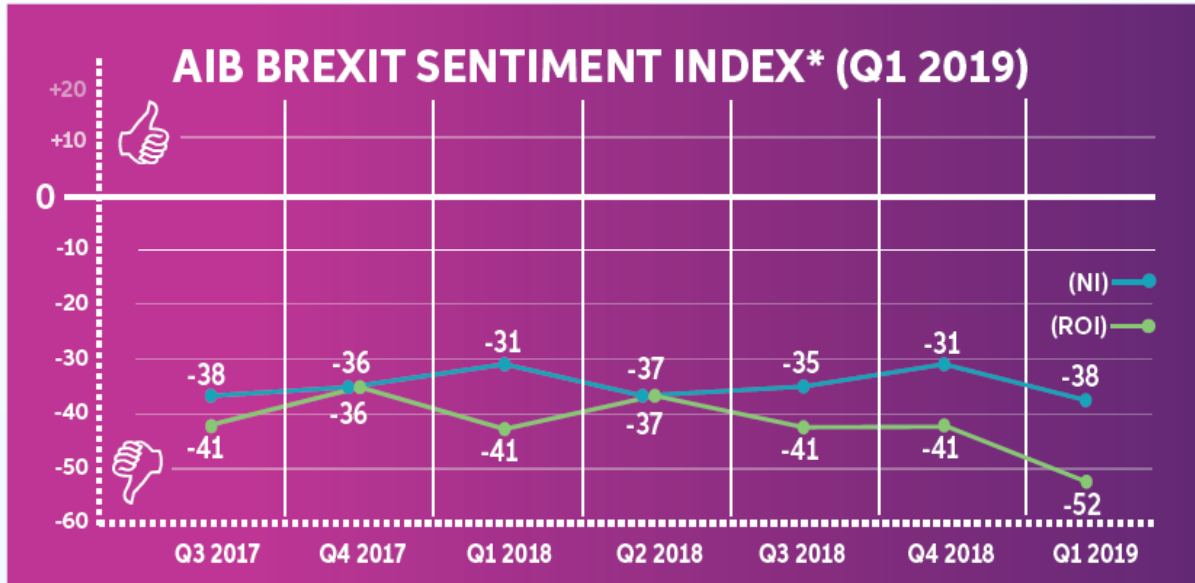




# AIB Brexit Sentiment Index – Q1 2019



- A total of **700 SME's (with up to 250 employees)** across the island of Ireland



Source: Ipsos MRBI

\*The Index reflects and measures the sentiment of Irish SMEs in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland towards Brexit, summarised as a single number, with a potential range from +100 to -100. It takes the difference between the positive and negative responses across four key measures: Impact on business now, Impact on future business (next 5 years), Level of visibility and, finally, the Wider economic Impact of Brexit.

- Consistently very negative sentiment readings, with marked fall in Q1 2019 in ROI as firms say Brexit now starting to impact their businesses
- SMEs also very concerned about Brexit's impact in the future, both on their own business & the wider economy
- Manufacturing, Food & Drink, Tourism and Retail sectors most concerned about Brexit
- 36% of ROI and 57% of NI firms who had investment plans say they have been cancelled or postponed owing to Brexit.

# Still much uncertainty about Brexit

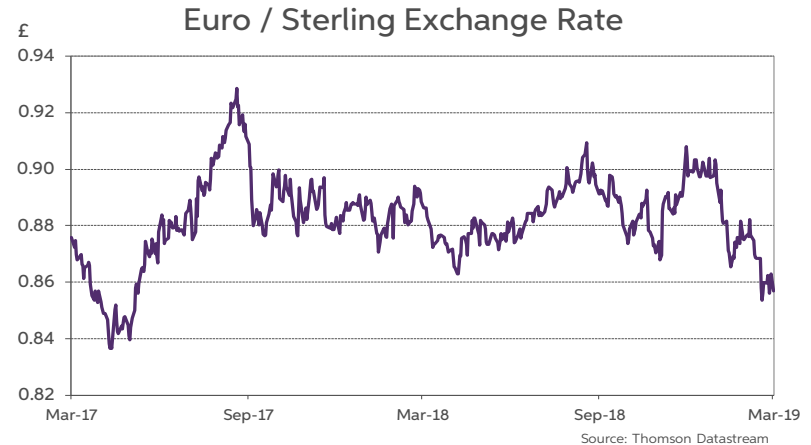
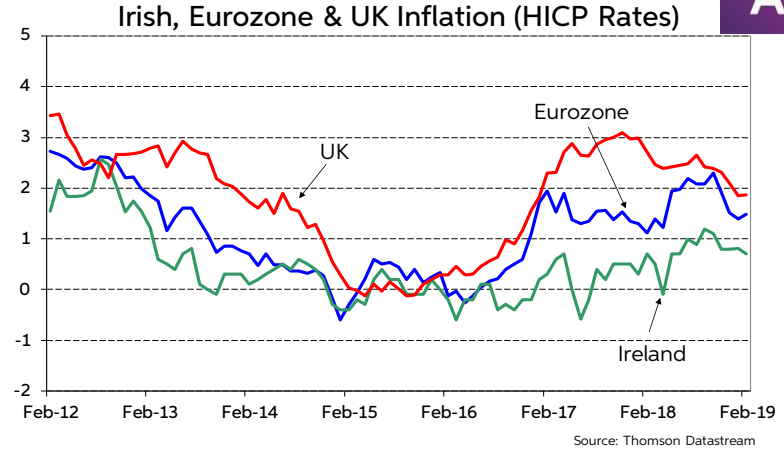


- Departure date delayed as UK Parliament cannot agree on an exit deal
- The Withdrawal Agreement (WA) reached between UK and EU, that allowed for orderly UK departure from EU, has been rejected by the UK Parliament on three occasions
- UK Parliament voted by large majority against leaving EU without a deal – i.e. ruled out a no-deal hard Brexit.
- Log jam in Parliament, but it is leaning towards a soft Brexit
- EU grants extension to Article 50 up to end October – UK can leave before this date
- Appear to be 4 options (1) No deal exit (2) Remain (3) Ratify WA (4) Extend again
- Other possibilities: general election, new referendum, revoke Article 50
- EU likely to need solid grounds to give UK further extension e.g. new referendum
- WA only sets the departure terms. Difficult talks on future trade relationship to follow after UK has left the EU. No clear idea what future trade relationship will look like

# Good Irish growth to continue if external risks avoided



- Irish economy should continue to grow at impressive pace, but not as strongly as in recent years
- Construction picking up from still low output levels
- Public spending on the rise
- Activity supported by low interest rate environment
- Continuing strong inflows of FDI
- Low Irish inflation still low, well below that of the Eurozone, UK and US
- However, Brexit is a challenge for the economy
- Important also that global economy avoids downturn given importance of exports to Ireland
- GDP growth forecast at 4.0% for 2019 and 3.5% in 2020, assuming hard Brexit/global downturn avoided
- ESRI estimates medium-term growth rate of economy at around 3.25% in the period 2020-2025



# AIB Irish Economic Forecasts



<i>% change in real terms unless stated</i>	2016	2017	2018	2019 (f)	2020 (f)
<b>GDP</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>GNP</b>	11.5	4.4	5.9	3.7	3.2
<b>Personal Consumption</b>	4.0	1.6	3.0	2.5	2.5
<b>Government Spending</b>	3.5	3.9	6.4	4.0	3.0
<b>Fixed Investment</b>	51.7	-31.0	9.8	7.0	6.0
<b>Modified Final Domestic Demand*</b>	5.6	3.2	4.5	4.0	3.8
<b>Exports</b>	4.4	7.8	8.9	4.5	4.3
<b>Imports</b>	18.5	-9.4	7.0	4.5	4.5
<b>HICP Inflation (%)</b>	-0.2	0.3	0.7	1.1	1.3
<b>Unemployment Rate (%)</b>	8.4	6.8	5.8	5.3	5.1
<b>Budget Balance (% GDP)</b>	-0.5	-0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3
<b>Gross General Gov Debt (% GDP)</b>	72.8	68.0	64.0	61.0	56.5

\*Excludes investment in aircraft and intangibles

Source: CSO, AIB ERU Forecasts

# Risks to the Irish economy



- Main risks to Irish recovery no longer internal but external, in particular Brexit
- Brexit major issue for Ireland given its strong trading links with UK and sharp fall by sterling
- Slowing external environment with growing downside risks to global growth from increasing protectionism/tariffs, problems in some emerging economies, weaker EU economy
- Questions around Irish corporation tax regime (Apple ruling, moves on tax harmonisation in EU, cuts in US/UK rates) could impact FDI. Note that Ireland has the right to set its own tax rates
- Supply constraints in new house building activity, which is recovering at a slow pace with output still at very low levels
- Competitiveness issues - high Dublin house prices, high rents, high personal taxes, rising wages
- Credit constraints – tightening of lending rules, on-going deleveraging

Note: All Irish data in tables are sourced from the CSO unless otherwise stated. Non-Irish data are from the IMF, OECD and Thomson Financial. Irish forecasts are from AIB Economic Research Unit. This presentation is for information purposes and is not an invitation to deal. The information is believed to be reliable but is not guaranteed. Any expressions of opinions are subject to change without notice. This presentation is not to be reproduced in whole or in part without prior permission. In the Republic of Ireland it is distributed by Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c. In the UK it is distributed by Allied Irish Banks, plc and Allied Irish Banks (GB). In Northern Ireland it is distributed by First Trust Bank. In the United States of America it is distributed by Allied Irish Banks, plc. Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c. is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Allied Irish Bank (GB) and First Trust Bank are trade marks used under licence by AIB Group (UK) p.l.c. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c.), incorporated in Northern Ireland. Registered Office 92 Ann Street, Belfast BT1 3HH. Registered Number NI 018800. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. In the United States of America, Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c., New York Branch, is a branch licensed by the New York State Department of Financial Services. Deposits and other investment products are not FDIC insured, they are not guaranteed by any bank and they may lose value. Please note that telephone calls may be recorded in line with market practice.