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Connecting People & Property, Perfectly.
A little over two years ago, the British people voted in favour of Brexit. Six months before the United Kingdom's official exit date from the European Union, it is still impossible to say how the divorce between the two sides will take place. The agreement continues to stumble on many points, some of which are highly sensitive, such as the issue of the Irish border.

Agriculture, transport, energy and defence, the pharmaceutical, automotive, aeronautical and food industries, football and horse racing... a large number of sectors of the economy, as well as British and European companies, are affected. But the stakes in terms of sovereignty and regulation, as well as access to financing, make Brexit a particularly hot topic for the European finance industry, as well as a major challenge for the City due to the loss of its financial passport. Whilst the vote in favour of Brexit was immediately followed by questions about the potential weakening of the London financial market, estimations about job relocations have been constantly revised downwards, from 100,000 jobs the day after the referendum, to the 5,000 to 10,000 jobs recently suggested by the Bank of England. A “Brexodus” has therefore not yet occurred, and whilst company move announcements have increased steadily, a large proportion are still only potential projects. Not enough to rattle the power of the City, for now. What seems to be happening instead is a rebalancing of the finance sector in favour of a complex and integrated network of continental markets.

This trend is confirmed by Knight Frank’s survey of company moves announced since the June 2016 referendum. Although the outcome of negotiations between London and Brussels is still very uncertain, the exercise helps to establish a hierarchy of the most popular European destinations, and provides an understanding of the advantages of each location. Dublin stands out and accounts for a quarter of all moves related to Brexit, ahead of Luxemburg, Frankfurt and Paris. Since the announcement that the EBA (European Banking Authority) will relocate to the city, Paris is capitalising on the country’s increased appeal since the election of Emmanuel Macron, as well as the new government’s strong commitment to reforms. Paris is consequently also a popular choice with companies.

A few days ahead of the European summit on the 18th and 19th October, which is meant to provide the framework for the future relationship between the UK and the EU, and a few months before 29th March 2019, the official exit date for the UK, this study focuses on the results of our survey, the change in Paris’ position and the impact of Brexit on the European corporate real estate market, the second in a series of studies launched by Knight Frank in 2017.
We can’t work it out

Divorce timeline

On the 23rd June 2016, the British people voted in a referendum, choosing to end 43 years of a sometimes complicated relationship with the EU. The decision was implemented on the 29th March 2017 by invoking article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, and will take effect on the 29th March 2019. The European summit that is taking place on the 18th and 19th October should, in the meantime, signal the end of negotiations between the UK and the EU.

Although some progress has been made, the timing is very tight and many questions remain unanswered. Moreover, summer 2018 rekindled fears of a no-deal Brexit, as it seems difficult to reconcile the demands of a highly divided British political class with those of Europeans determined to preserve the integrity of the single market.
British voters ended, by 51.9%, 43 years of European Union membership.

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, put the Frenchman Michel Barnier in charge of negotiations with the UK, pursuant to article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty on the EU.

The white paper published by the British government, setting out its plans for the post-Brexit period, is a failure. It is coldly received by the EU and also provokes displeasure in the City, as the paper waives the UK’s right to benefit from a financial passport.

The UK will officially leave the EU. Start of the transition period during which all of the European rules continue to apply.

A new European summit will theoretically signal the completion of negotiations between the UK and the EU. A withdrawal agreement must be finalised, formally validated by the Member States and then submitted to the European and British Parliaments for approval.

End of the transition period.
Should I stay or should I go?

An analysis of company moves related to Brexit

What is the true scale of the Brexit-related moves since the June 2016 referendum?
What types of activities and companies are involved?
Which cities have so far attracted the most people?

Our survey provides an initial response, despite much uncertainty surrounding the negotiations between the UK and the EU.
THE LOSS OF THE FINANCIAL PASSPORT

The European passport allows a company to carry out a whole range of financial activities such as deposit collection, trading in derivatives, issuing loans or bonds, portfolio management and insurance and mortgage brokerage throughout the EU, or in a State subject to the agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA). This includes banks, insurance companies, asset management companies, investment funds and financial start-ups (FinTech).

The passport is currently used by 5,500 companies based in the UK, including a number of American and Asian companies using London as a gateway to the EU. Its loss has therefore been a constant concern for the City since the vote in favour of Brexit, and it forces companies wishing to continue their activity throughout the Union to establish a truly capitalised subsidiary with a sufficient number of employees. These requirements cannot be satisfied using "empty shells", which ESMA and EIOPA\(^1\) reminded national regulators who will have to respond to approval requests from entities that are based in the UK and wish to continue to have access to the European market.

"The[se] principles […] will support the national supervisory authorities in securing sound and convergent practices linked with the authorisation and supervision of activities of insurers based in the United Kingdom and seeking relocation of their activities to the 27 European Union Member States. Sound supervision demands appropriate location of management and key functions. Empty shells or letter boxes are not acceptable"

**Gabriel Bernardino,**
**Chairman of EIOPA**

Arguing that it is in the interest of Europeans not to weaken the City – at the risk of benefitting major non-European financial centres such as New York, Hong Kong and Singapore – the UK still hopes to benefit from an equivalence regime. But the outlines of this regime, from which several outside countries already benefit (Switzerland, United States, Canada, etc.), are yet to be defined. It is the loss of the passport, as well as the uncertainty surrounding the obtaining and scope of this equivalence regime, that is the primary motivation for company moves related to Brexit.

\(^{1}\) ESMA: European Securities and Markets Authority.
EIOPA: European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority.
Since then, company move announcements have continued to increase. 84 projects have thus been recorded since the start of Q2 2018, a higher number than those recorded over the whole of 2017. This increase in projects says a lot about the environment in which companies operate. Indeed, without any certainty as to the outcome of the negotiations, the prospect of a hard Brexit or a no-deal Brexit has forced them to take steps to deal with all eventualities, so as to allow them to continue their activities beyond the transition period.

Simon Black, CEO of PPRO

It is difficult to predict what will happen next. The outcome of the negotiations, and the way in which future relations between the two sides are organised, will determine the extent of company relocation moves outside the UK. In the case of a no-deal or hard Brexit, nothing rules out a much larger second wave of relocations than the one we have seen to date, which has been quite modest. On the other hand, a soft Brexit, or at least an equivalence regime that is relatively favourable to the City, could just as easily push back this wave and call into question the pursuit of projects in which companies are engaged. Their implementation is indeed restrictive (human resources, administrative formalities, real estate, etc.) and their costs are far from negligible. In mid-2017, Standard Chartered estimated that it would cost $20 million to make Frankfurt their post-Brexit European headquarters, small change compared to the $100 million that Brexit and the transfer of its employees to the German city would cost UBS, or to the $200 to 300 million needed, according to Stuart Gulliver, HSBC’s CEO, to increase its Parisian workforce by a thousand positions!

**TRADITIONAL FINANCE... BUT OTHER SECTORS TOO**

Standard Chartered, UBS, HSBC: these few examples are sufficient to reflect the impact of Brexit on finance. Due to the loss of “passporting rights”, finance, in its various forms – asset and wealth management, investment banks, investment banking, etc.–, has accounted for the majority of moves recorded so far (around 70%). This figure includes not only front-office activities, but also support functions whose roles are essential in enabling companies to ensure their continued operations. Duco, a specialist in financial data reconciliation, has just announced the opening of an office in Wroclaw, Poland, and data centre development projects in Amsterdam and Frankfurt, to address the concerns of clients, including major names in the financial sector such as ING and Société Générale.

Other “FinTech” companies have also taken the plunge, including Equilend, who has just announced the opening of an office in Dublin, and Aquis Exchange, who recently filed an application to operate in Paris with the French Prudential Control and Resolution Authority (“Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel et de Résolution” - ACPR) and the Financial Markets Authority (“Autorité des Marchés Financiers” - AMF). FinTech? This term is a contraction of the terms “finance” and “technology”, and refers to companies using digital technology to design and offer innovative financial services. This phenomenon is not recent, dating back to the aftermath of the 2007 financial crisis, but it will undoubtedly continue to shake up traditional players in the financial industry. The proof? The substantial sums that FinTech continues to raise from investors. During the 1st half of 2018, 58 billion dollars were invested at a global level, of which 16 billion was in British FinTechs. London is home to some of the most successful Unicorns in a sector that employs almost 60,000 people in the UK, including Funding Circle, Revolut and TransferWise, and remains the capital of financial start-ups. However, this (almost) undivided domination could be undermined by Brexit. Beyond the loss of the financial passport, Brexit and possible restrictions on the movement of workers and labour laws raise the question of London’s ability to continue to attract the world’s best talent, particularly from the EU (the latter accounted for 12% of City employees at the end of 2016, compared to 6% four years earlier). The subject is an essential one for British FinTech companies, whose success and degree of innovation depend largely on their ability to attract a flexible and highly mobile workforce. European cities have understood this, and are intensifying their efforts to attract start-ups and create a “FinTech-friendly” environment.

The insurance sector accounts for almost 20% of all moves related to Brexit. The loss of the financial passport is also an issue, forcing companies in...
this sector to establish a subsidiary in an EU country in order to access the European market. Of the thirty or so actual or potential projects, more than half are located in Luxembourg (AIG, FM Global, CNA Hardy, etc.) and Dublin (Beazley, Royal London Group, Chaucer, etc.). France has a relatively small number of them, but can nevertheless pride themselves on having attracted one of the most iconic post-Brexit projects, with Chubb’s decision to relocate its European subsidiary to La Défense, in the Carpe Diem tower.

Whilst insurance and financial companies’ projects have continued to feature in recent news (Ashmore and Equilend in Dublin, Jane Street in Amsterdam, STM in Malta, etc.), other types of players have also stood out. The example of European agencies based in London, which has been widely reported in the media, is probably not the most significant as their relocation outside the United Kingdom was obvious. The EBA is in the process of finalising a lease on approximately 5,000 sq m within a tower in La Défense, while the EMA (European Medicines Agency) is waiting for the completion of a turnkey building in the Zuidas business district of Amsterdam.

Moves related to Brexit go well beyond the European agencies, and cover a very wide range of activities. Among these, lawyers and the advisory sector, which account for 6% of the total number of moves; a significant proportion which, as with the projects of Dentons or Fieldfisher in Frankfurt, Ashurst in Luxembourg and Odgers Berndtson in Dublin, illustrates the opportunities linked to the need to support financial companies in the fields of law and recruitment. Beyond the obvious tax reasons, the subject of recruitment is also a key criteria for online gambling companies (now based in Gibraltar, Bet365 and William Hill, for example, could potentially transfer some of their activities to Malta). As with FinTechs, it is essential for this booming and highly competitive sector to continue to recruit talent.
Finally, Brexit could take on a whole new dimension for companies in the industrial-distribution sector. For the moment, this sector, which provides a large number of jobs, is at the origin of a limited number of relocations. However, it could have to overcome, depending on the outcome of negotiations between the UK and the EU, significant obstacles in terms of taxation, regulation, supply chain and the movement of goods. Wait and see? Not exactly.

Such problems and a lack of visibility have already prompted Panasonic to move its European headquarters from London to Amsterdam. These reasons were also put forward by Muji, another Japanese company, to justify a possible relocation to Germany. Other companies are currently at the starting blocks. In the aeronautics (Airbus) and automotive sectors, several large companies (BMW, Jaguar, Ford, Nissan, etc.) have expressed their concerns.

MOVES THAT NEED TO BE PUT INTO PERSPECTIVE?

As we can see, Brexit poses a major challenge for a wide range of activities. Given the climate of uncertainty facing companies, many have been forced to fumble in the dark, and to consider various scenarios. While several of the company moves we identified have already taken place (staff have been transferred from the United Kingdom, profiles have been recruited locally, offices have been leased, etc.), most of them are still at the planning stages; some projects are more advanced than others, ranging between hypothetical movements and announcements that have not been acted on, to requests sent to local regulators for approval to operate in one of the EU countries.

Whilst a trend in itself, the large proportion of potential projects obviously limits the scope of our analysis. In addition, there are often fluctuating estimates of the number of positions involved in a company relocation. At the beginning of 2017, for example, UBS indicated that about one thousand of its UK-based jobs could be affected by Brexit, primarily moving to Frankfurt. A few months later, the bank mentioned only 250 positions. Moreover, the German city will also not host the thousands of jobs that Deutsche Bank had initially announced it wanted to transfer to the continent. Their relocations will in fact only involve a few hundred positions, spread over several European cities. These downward revisions may explain why Frankfurt has, over the months, moved down in the ranking of cities best placed to benefit from Brexit. According to Reuters forecasts, the city was in the lead in the fall of 2017, with an estimated gain of 5,150 jobs...with only just over 1,500 jobs expected after an update in the fall of 2018.

The case of Deutsche Bank is noteworthy: it confirms that the withdrawals made by some banks in the United Kingdom may have causes other than Brexit, and that they will therefore not necessarily result in the relocation of an equivalent number of jobs within the EU. To ignore this would be to forget the profound restructuring process in which banks have been engaged since the fall of Lehman Brothers and the sovereign debt crisis in Europe, which has led them to make major cuts to their staff numbers. For example, the Irish banking sector is estimated to have lost more than 26,000 jobs since 2008.

And this movement is far from over. Whilst not all types of positions or activities have been affected in the same way, banks continue to cut their staff. In addition to Deutsche Bank and its 7,000 job losses worldwide, there are also job losses of varying numbers from other banks that are well established in the British capital, such as Credit Suisse, Barclays, HSBC and RBS. The effects on the real estate market seem obvious. A source recently quoted by the Daily Telegraph has estimated that the total amount of office space vacated in the British capital by the banking sector would be close to 400,000 sq m within three to four years.

Within the current context, it therefore seems particularly difficult to isolate Brexit from other factors that are potentially destructive to financial jobs in the UK.

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3 The Daily Telegraph, January 2018.
Another key factor in particular results in the need to put the Brexit effect into perspective: that of the digital revolution, whose impact on the British financial workforce could be on a completely different scale to the result of the June 2016 referendum.

“It’s not just Brexit that’s shifting the tectonic plates under banking – digitalisation and regulation are two other key drivers of change”.

JOACHIM WUERMELING, MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE DEUTSCHE BUNDESBANK

Finance is not immune to the rise of digitalisation, robotization and artificial intelligence, which are all tools used by banks to improve their productivity. By allowing them to perform repetitive and time-consuming tasks that do not necessarily require significant skill, the impact of these technologies on back-office functions is considerable. Indeed, as new needs emerge, leading banks and insurance companies are increasing their efforts to secure the hiring of developers and data scientists, and this job revolution in the finance industry will lead to significant job losses in more traditional and less skilled roles. More complex roles are also affected by this fundamental change. As such, the use of artificial intelligence and the rapid expansion of algorithmic trading have profoundly transformed investment banks. In the early 2000s, Goldman Sachs’ cash equities trading desk in New York had 600 traders who bought and sold shares on behalf of the bank’s largest clients, compared to only 2 today*. In total, headcount reductions related to the digital revolution and automation are expected to continue, affecting several hundred thousand financial jobs worldwide. As an example, 33,000 jobs will in this way be lost over the next ten years from Japan’s largest banks (Mizuko Bank, Mitsubishi UFG and Sumitomo Mitsui).

In certain situations, Brexit is just one of many factors explaining the company relocations recorded by Knight Frank. Whilst it may not have been the original cause, Brexit may notably have accelerated a job transfer or creation project that was already in the pipeline before the June 2016 referendum. Several projects are therefore not directly related to the loss of the European passport, but rather the opportunity that Brexit may have created in certain cities.

“We have been evaluating Dublin for some time, and through consultation with our clients and our partners have decided now is the right time for DLA Piper to enter the Irish market. Dublin is an important legal market and a key global hub for the financial services and technology sectors [...] and will continue to be so, particularly in the context of Brexit, as we expect more institutions to have or develop a presence in the country”.

SIMON LEVINE, GLOBAL CO-CEO OF DLA PIPER

Positions are therefore far from being uniform, and are as diverse and complex as the reasons behind companies’ decisions as to their final destination: dynamism of the local market, regulatory context and sometimes also the nationality of senior managers who, if they are not British, will tend to favour their city or country of origin...

* MIT Technology Review, As Goldman Embraces Automation, Even the Masters of the Universe Are Threatened, 7th February 2017.
Heroes
AND THE WINNER IS...

NUMBER OF COMPANY MOVES RELATED TO BREXIT, BY CITY / BY COUNTRY

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A MULTIPOLAR SYSTEM

The breakdown of the 200 or so company moves recorded by Knight Frank does not show an upheaval of the European financial system. Our analysis is more in line with that of François Villeroy de Galhau, Governor of the Bank of France.

“Brexit will result in the reorganisation of the European financial system. There will not be a single continental “City”, but a polycentric integrated network, specialised by competencies.”

François Villeroy de Galhau,
Governor of the Bank of France

This polycentric network does not, however, suggest a breaking-up of the European financial system. The five cities that have accommodated, or are likely to accommodate, the most job creations or moves related to Brexit thus concentrate almost 80% of all recorded projects. Dublin and Luxembourg alone account for a little under half.

Companies tend to favour a limited number of European cities, chosen for the strength of their financial market (Paris, Frankfurt, Luxembourg), their status as a world city (Paris), a particularly attractive regulatory and fiscal framework (Luxembourg, Dublin, Amsterdam), recognised expertise in certain types of activity (Luxembourg and Dublin in the field of fund management) or their cultural proximity to the UK (Dublin). At a national level, this phenomenon is particularly pronounced. Whilst other cities have spared no effort – Lille, for example, applied to be home to the European Medicines Agency⁵ – only Paris has

Source: Knight Frank

⁵ In the end they chose Amsterdam.
so far benefitted from Brexit. Certainly fewer in number, some announcements of job creations or company expansions related to Brexit underline the advantages of other European cities such as Madrid, particularly sought-after for the access it offers to Latin American countries, or Malta, whose tax framework is particularly attractive to a certain number of activities, such as online gambling.

Some companies favour this creation of a multipolar European system and are disseminating their relocations and job creations in several cities, such as JP Morgan and Citigroup in Paris, Luxembourg, Frankfurt, Dublin, Amsterdam and Madrid. This “scattering” of jobs necessarily results in the need to put into perspective the idea of the weakening of London to the benefit of another European financial market. This is all the more true since a significant proportion of projects are not transfers of jobs that are today based in London, but rather involve hiring projects for roles that are often recruited locally; movements that, in any case, remain modest compared to the number of jobs that are today found in the UK. For example, the 150 or so jobs with Crédit Suisse that are being relocated to Europe need to be compared to the estimated 5,500 positions that the bank currently has in the City.

### SELECTION CRITERIA FOR A NEW COMPANY LOCATION, WITHIN A CONTEXT OF COMPETITION BETWEEN EUROPEAN FINANCIAL MARKETS TO ATTRACT COMPANIES

- A DIVERSE FINANCIAL ECOSYSTEM
- A RECRUITING GROUND FOR QUALIFIED TALENT
- APPROPRIATE LABOUR LAWS
- A STABLE TAX SYSTEM
- DYNAMIC REGULATORY AUTHORITIES
- A DESIRABLE REAL ESTATE SUPPLY
- A STRONG INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

Source: Institut Friedland
It is well documented that Ireland is likely to be the most negatively affected country by Brexit, with the Irish Central Bank recently estimating that it could cost the economy 40,000 jobs over the next ten years. However, while Brexit is set to represent a negative shock to the Irish economy as a whole, the Dublin office market is one of the few areas that stands to benefit due to relocation activity from London. So far, Dublin has been on the receiving end of 48 Brexit relocation announcements, 9 ahead of the next nearest city of Luxembourg which had 39.

JP Morgan have been among the more high-profile announcements, having paid €125 million for 200 Capital Dock, a new flagship development on Dublin’s south docklands that will extend to 128,000 sq ft when completed later this year. However, estimating how much of this space has been acquired as a result of Brexit is a difficult task. JP Morgan already has substantial operations in Dublin and it is believed that the majority of the new building will be utilised to consolidate and provide room for expansion of these existing functions. Indeed, many of the companies selecting Dublin for their post-Brexit base already have existing operations here. Barclays is another such example having elected Dublin as their main EU hub outside of London, with relocated staff joining the existing Dublin team at their new premises at One Molesworth Street.

Other major financial institutions that are expected, in varying scale, to move jobs to Dublin include Morgan Stanley, Wells Fargo, Bank of America and Goldman Sachs. All in all, however, Brexit relocation announcements from the financial industry have been modest in scale so far, with minimal transfers taking place at this stage until a clearer picture of Brexit emerges. In the event of a hard Brexit, we could see firms scale up these initial footholds to larger footprints.

In fact, we believe that the largest positive impact for the Dublin office market will be in the tech sector, with Brexit offering the opportunity for the city to further enhance its reputation as a global tech hub. For an industry that is reliant on drawing its workforce from a wide pool of international talent, we feel that the uncertainty regarding UK work visas post-Brexit is inducing tech companies to choose Dublin. Google are an example of a company in expansion mode in Dublin, having taken 380,000 sq ft across four deals this year alone to grow their presence to over 1 million sq ft. Whether or not this would have happened in the absence of Brexit is hard to say, but continued certainty of access to workers from across Europe is undoubtedly a factor that is playing in Dublin’s favour at the moment. Thus, while the relocation announcements by the big financial firms are grabbing all the headlines, we feel it is the tech industry that holds the greatest potential for a Brexit bounce.
A particularly attractive tax system, the highest average salaries in the OECD, a central geographic location and a high degree of political stability: Luxembourg has many advantages and logically takes second place with regard to company moves. The Grand Duchy closely follows Dublin with 39 installation projects, among which several company moves have already taken place, accounting for a total of several dozen jobs. At the beginning of 2018, STATEC\(^1\) indicated that Brexit was behind the creation of 250 jobs and, in 2017, Brexit was partly responsible for the 10% increase in the number of people working in the Luxembourg investment sector, as well as the arrival of new entities – last year, 15 investment fund managers received their accreditation to practise in Luxembourg\(^2\). Job creations and relocations related to Brexit are expected to increase in 2018 and 2019. A few months ago, Nicolas Mackel, General Manager of “Luxembourg for Finance”, predicted a total increase of 3,000 jobs, compared to the 46,000 or so people currently working in the finance and insurance sectors in Luxembourg. Certain features could, however, limit job gains potentially related to Brexit. These include a small local workforce and the lack of depth of the country’s real estate market. At the end of the 1st half 2018, the vacancy rate in Luxembourg was slightly below 4%, equating to an immediately available office supply of approximately 150,000 sq m.

Nevertheless, the Grand Duchy is a favourable breeding-ground for finance given its long tradition in wealth management, and its globally recognised expertise in asset management. Luxembourg therefore fully intends to capitalise on its historic relationship with London, as a large number of funds designed, registered and administered in the Grand Duchy are currently managed in the City. Asset management indeed accounts for a large share of company moves related to Brexit, including large companies who are already present but who want to consolidate or expand their activities there (M&G, Carlyle, Blackstone, MFS, etc.). Luxembourg is also sought-after by insurers who have, for a long time, made the country their focal point for distributing their products throughout the EU. Insurers thus account for a little more than a quarter of company moves related to Brexit in Luxembourg (AIG, Aiso Nissay Dowa, Hiscox, CNA Hardy, etc.).

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\(^1\) The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg’s National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies.
Wish you were here

Renewed appeal

Paris was recognised very early on as a destination of choice for jobs that were likely to be relocated or created as a result of Brexit. An international financial centre, the city has notably benefitted from the improvement in its image within the business community, attracted by the election of President Emmanuel Macron, as well as by the new government’s strong commitment to reform.

In November 2017, the choice of Paris for the new EBA headquarters embodied this return to the forefront and was followed by several other company announcements, enabling the French capital to be well placed in the rankings of the most sought-after European destinations, just behind Dublin and Luxembourg and neck and neck with Frankfurt.
Can we talk about a “Macron effect”?
Undoubtedly, given the media coverage of the presidential election in May 2017 and the increase in reforms aimed at fundamentally reforming the labour market and stimulating investment by reducing taxes (reduction of corporate income tax, the flat-rate capital gains tax (PFU), transformation of the job competitiveness tax deduction (CICE), Major Investment Plan etc.). The first few months of the President’s five-year term were also filled with hope because they coincided with the recovery of the French economy, as shown by the increase in GDP of 2.3% in 2017 and the creation of 330,000 jobs. Beyond this economic improvement, and the new government’s reform programme, the period was also characterised by the open discussions with foreign investors, highlighting the benefits of France and its ability to innovate. This seduction strategy peaked in January 2018: Emmanuel Macron took advantage of the “Choose France” summit held in Versailles to host 140 senior managers from large foreign companies, thus signalling the French economy’s return to favour.

These efforts seem to have paid off in recent months. According to the latest EY attractiveness survey on France, eight out of ten investors find France more attractive because it is more competitive. The pendulum swing is radical following years of “French bashing”, and this of course benefits Paris. In this same survey, and for the first time in the history of the publication which was launched in 2003, foreign decision-makers ranked Paris (38 %, +10 points year-on-year) ahead of London (34 %, +2 points) in the ranking of the most attractive European metropolitan areas. Finally, whilst foreign investment projects in France showed a strong increase of 31% year-on-year, Germany and the UK showed increases of 6%. France is particularly trying to assert itself in the digital economy and innovation sectors. Although the UK maintains a clear lead in Europe, France has serious advantages and shows a certain dynamism; this goes beyond the interest generated outside of its borders by Station F, the start-up incubator that opened in June 2017 in Paris’ 13th district, and is demonstrated by the strong increase in fund raising. This totalled 1.95 billion euros as at 1st half 2018, an increase of 61% year-on-year, partly due to the doubling of deals over 20 million euros.

The coming months will tell us whether the return of France to the forefront was a temporary phase or a fundamental trend whose effects will continue, allowing Paris to attract a new, maybe even larger, wave of company moves related to Brexit. It is still too early to say with certainty if this will happen, even if the recent deterioration in France’s economic conditions and business climate could jeopardise or weaken this recovery. Indeed, forecasts for GDP growth have been significantly decreased, with annual increases of 1.6 % between 2018 and 2020, and a smaller contribution to growth from global demand and household consumption. In spite of all this, the government has committed to continue with the pace of reforms, thus continuing their structural transformation of the French economy.
PARIS IS MAKING EYES AT THE FINANCE INDUSTRY

It was primarily to the finance world that the talks to promote the advantages of a regenerated “French model” were addressed, with a view to welcoming new jobs related to Brexit. Public and private players worked together, multiplying the initiatives through “Paris Europlace”, an organisation that promotes the Parisian financial market. Effective accompanying measures have also been announced: reform of the inpatriates system, simplification of accreditation procedures, removal of the upper marginal portion of income tax, opening of European schools, etc. In doing so, France is trying to improve its image and make its regulatory and fiscal framework more flexible, although it is still lagging behind its main German, Dutch, Irish and Luxembourg competitors with regard to this. The choice of Paris for the future EBA headquarters, and the announcement of other significant company moves (Bank of America, HSBC, etc.) seem to be good omens for the future of the Parisian financial market. But efforts to promote France are not just limited to “traditional” finance and the country is also betting on FinTech companies, determined to capitalise on the large number of start-ups and to build on the success of “French Tech”.

“France must be the first European country to create conditions for an open and secure European market for innovative FinTech companies. It is this vision that I share with Bruno Le Maire within the scope of the PACTE law, which will favour the development of ICOs and fund raising by start-ups. Finally, we are working on the introduction of open-banking standards which will enable third-party payment services to securely access account data via programming interfaces (API)”

DELPHINE GÉNY-STEPHANN, SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE

RESULTS ARE STILL LIMITED

Its status as a world city, its geographic proximity to London (at around 2 hours from Paris by Eurostar), the strength of its financial sector and the positive impact of the election of Emmanuel Macron have, without a doubt, worked in favour of the French capital. As such, almost 25 creation or relocation projects related to Brexit went to Paris, equating to 12% of all European movements recorded by Knight Frank. Whilst this share is lower than those of Dublin and Luxembourg, Paris appears to be ahead of these two cities in terms of potential job gains, with an estimation of new job creations ranging between 2,500 and 2,800. This estimation, higher than that complied by Reuters recently (2,308), remains below that of figures released a few weeks ago by Paris Europlace and Bruno Le Maire, the Minister of Economy and Finance. They maintained that Brexit could be behind the creation of 3,500 jobs – and even up to 20,000 taking into account the direct and indirect benefits of Brexit. Either way, these two figures only account for a very small part of the French finance industry’s total size (between 1 and 1.2 million jobs, and almost 5% of French GDP).

Other factors put this breakdown, which is particularly complicated given the
uncertainty that still surrounds some company’s plans, into perspective. It is worth noting that these figures include the 1,000 jobs that could potentially be created by the increased presence of HSBC in Paris, which is almost one third of all job gains related to Brexit. This project, that the bank recently confirmed at the same time as their decision to move almost all of their continental activities to France, is without doubt the most symbolic of all announcements to date. However, the project has not yet been fully implemented, like most other bank announcements. The example of HSBC shows another trend: projects that favour Paris are primarily consolidation or expansion projects of existing establishments (75% of the total number of movements), rather than the creation of new activities from scratch. Paris stands out from cities such as Luxembourg and Amsterdam in this sense, and is more in line with the situation seen in Frankfurt (79%).

This imbalance is not surprising: it reflects the maturity of the two main European financial markets and the strategy of companies who tend to favour markets in which they are already present. The impact of Brexit on the Parisian real estate market should, for the same reason, remain limited. With offices already in Paris, some companies are likely to be able to densify their office space to absorb additional personnel which, in most cases, will be quite modest in numbers. Indeed, take-up of offices by the financial sector has not yet recorded a sudden increase due to Brexit. Since the British vote, the financial sector “only” accounted for 9% of total take-up in Paris and the Western Crescent, the main locations of such companies. This share is not negligible, but needs to be put into perspective by taking into account the very large deal that was in no way related to Brexit: the letting to Natixis of 90,000 sq m in the Duo towers in Paris’ 13th district during 1Q 2017. The letting volume of this single deal was almost five times higher than that of all company movements related to Brexit, which to date total a little over 20,000 sq m, and are essentially comprised of the letting to Bank of America of 10,000 sq m at 49-51 rue La Boétie at the end of 2017, and the 4,400 sq m let to Chubb in Carpe Diem in La Défense during 1Q 2018.

What can be expected of the Parisian market in the coming months?
Ongoing negotiations indicate that other companies will soon finalise large rental movements, beginning with the expected installation of EBA on almost 5,000 sqm in Tour Euraloopla. It is also rumoured that a renowned bank, taking advantage of the impetus from Brexit, is about to consolidate its Parisian workforce and some new recruits within a refurbished building in the Paris CBD. However, finance is unlikely to become THE future driver of the Greater Paris Region office market due to Brexit. Firstly, because the sector remains subject to significant streamlining and downsizing requirements in France, as in the rest of the world and, secondly, because the 3,500 new jobs predicted by Paris Europlace, if they are finalised, would only account for a high estimate of between 50,000 to 60,000 sq m of office space, barely 5% of take-up in Paris and the Western Crescent during 1H 2018.
This volume is also 17% below that let to coworking players in the same period and geographic sectors. The comparison enables us to put into perspective the impact of Brexit on the Greater Paris Region office market, whose activity is depending more and more on sectors that are booming, such as coworking and tech companies.

However, Tech, coworking and Brexit are not unrelated. As previously stated, Brexit could promote the expansion of FinTech start-ups, which Paris has been courting for some time. It could also fuel demand for shared work spaces, perfectly suited to the flexibility requirements of companies forced to anticipate the effects of Brexit in a climate that remains very uncertain. The trend is not limited to the Parisian market. Regus, for example, announced that they want to accelerate their expansion in Frankfurt in order to anticipate the increase in demand from financial companies based in London.
BREXIT
UNDER PRESSURE
Good times
bad times

Brexit and the London real estate market

Since the UK voted to leave the EU in June 2016, there has been a significant gap between what was initially expected to occur in the Central London office market, and what we are seeing in the statistics. In the summer of 2016, the expectation was that demand for central London offices – from both occupiers and investors – would slump. However, the reality has been very different, indeed leasing demand is running ahead of the long-term average level, while the investment market has drawn billions of pounds from overseas.
Office market take-up in Central London weakened in the run up to the referendum and its immediate aftermath – the period that covered Q2 and Q3 2016. However, since then take-up has generally been above the long-term (ten years) average figure of 3.1 million sq ft per quarter. For Q1 2018, take-up stood at 3.7 million sq ft, while the Q2 2018 figure was 3.4 million sq ft.

**TECH REVOLUTION**

Three factors have supported occupier demand through the uncertain post-referendum period.

Firstly, technology firms have remained committed to London, with firms like Apple, Amazon, Google, Facebook, and LinkedIn, all signing large office deals since the vote to leave. Second, London has experienced the coworking revolution, which is connected to the rise of tech. This began pre-referendum with the arrival of US giant, WeWork, but has flowered to encompass a range of operators serving the growing army of start-up firms.

Third, and most surprising, has been the relatively low number of jobs transferred from London due to Brexit. The expectation immediately after the referendum was that financial and insurance firms would move significant parts of their operations to cities in the EU. However, most of the major banks and insurers have now opened new post-Brexit trading hubs in Europe, but have generally only transferred dozens of jobs per institution. The Bank of England this year estimated that Brexit will cost the UK (not just London) 5,000-10,000 financial and insurance jobs. This is far lower than the 100,000 figure that some were predicting back in 2016.

**RENTS RISE AGAIN**

In the immediate aftermath of the referendum, some parts of central London, particularly those associated with the financial industry, saw office rents fall. Mayfair and St James’s, which is the centre of London’s hedge fund industry, recorded a 13% decline in prime rents. The neighbouring North of Mayfair sub-market saw an 8% fall in rents. Incentive packages also became more generous across all London’s districts.
However, more recently we have seen rents begin to rise in districts linked to the tech industry, with prime rents up 5% in Shoreditch, 6% in King’s Cross (where Google has offices) and 8% in Southbank. Paddington, which is on the new Crossrail train line, which begins services in 2019, has recorded a 15% increase in prime rents. Across London, incentive packages have stabilised.

A constrained development pipeline means that landlords are now optimistic rental growth will be recorded elsewhere in the future. While central London to the eye appears to be littered with cranes, in fact 42% of the space being developed is already let to tenants. There is currently 6.7 million sq ft of available space under construction, which will complete over the next three and a half years. In the last twelve months, take-up of newly built office space was 7.5 million sq ft.

**ASIAN INVESTMENT**

Global investors have been quick to notice the disparity between the gloomy expectations and the actual conditions in the market. While the investment transaction volume was weak in Q3 2016 at £2.3 billion – the long-term average figure is £3.5 billion – it then rebounded to £4.2 billion in Q4. In 2017 and 2018 only one calendar quarter has seen sales fall below the long-term average.

Interest has been particularly high from Asia, with investors from Hong Kong and China especially active in the market. **Investors from Hong Kong accounted for three of the five largest investment purchases in central London since the referendum; including two iconic towers, The Leadenhall Building and 20 Fenchurch Street. Hong Kong investors have a long-term track record in London, and the weaker pound has persuaded many to view Brexit as an opportunity to buy in.**

South Korean investors are also now active in the market, as shown by the recent purchase of the under construction Goldman Sachs headquarters for £1.2 bn by pension fund, NPS.

This is a reminder that London has a wide appeal that stretches beyond the European investment community. It has historic commercial links around the globe, and the similarity in business practices and legal system make London an attractive place for investors from many nations beyond Europe, especially the British Commonwealth.

**DEAL OR NO DEAL?**

Much will now depend on the outcome of the Brexit negotiations, and whether we are heading for a deal or no deal scenario. If a Withdrawal Agreement is brokered this year, the UK will then enter a transition period to December 2020, in which the country continues to operate in the EU’s single market and customs union. So, very little will initially change for the London economy. We would then expect a subsequent trade deal to maintain strong economic ties between the UK and the EU. In this scenario, London should continue to prosper, and draw large occupiers and investors to its real estate market.

A no deal scenario will mean greater volatility, particularly in the first half of 2019. Both occupier and investor demand will probably weaken during this period of maximum uncertainty. However, we believe that a further re-pricing of the pound could persuade overseas investors to buy in London again further down the line. We also view it as unlikely that the major tech firms would abandon London, which still offers a large, high-skill workforce to international firms.
Friends will be friends

Joint interview

William Beardmore-Gray
Global Head of Occupier Services and Commercial Agency, Knight Frank

Philippe Perello
Managing Partner, Knight Frank France

Elvin Durakovic
Managing Partner, Knight Frank Frankfurt
How has occupiers’ and investors’ perception of London’s financial centre and its real estate market changed since the vote in favour of Brexit?

William Beardmore-Gray: The main change has been that in 2015 it was taken for granted that London would always be one of the top three global financial centres; and the dominant city for Europe. Occupiers are now conscious of the need to have additional outposts to support EU business traffic; so London is now the leading rather than the dominant European centre. This does not diminish the need to have an office in London, and a large one at that. Investors are buying in London based on several motives, not just because of its financial cluster. Wider motives include: exposure to the tech action, diversifying portfolios, acquiring long and secure income streams, and creating a global platform. Therefore, Brexit is not undermining London, but encouraging occupiers and investors to think carefully about why they want to be here. The good news is that even after time for reflection, they are still finding reasons to want to be in London.

In what ways is uncertainty weighing on the London market, and what could the ultimate consequences of a hard Brexit or a no-deal scenario be?

William Beardmore-Gray: The recurring theme for both the occupier and investment markets is that deals are taking longer and require more due diligence. Everyone is advancing more cautiously, and by reducing deal velocity we are not seeing instances of occupiers or investors feeling panicked into gazumping. Without Brexit this would probably be happening now due to limited supply for both leasing and investment. A no-deal scenario will cause near-term volatility. It will encourage a pause in activity while occupiers wait to see how well the UK economy performs, and investors monitor sterling. In the medium-term, we would expect investors to re-enter the market once the pound stabilises. For the occupier market, we see London’s world class talent pool keeping global corporations based here.
What are the main advantages of your real estate market to attract companies?

Elvin Durakovic: Frankfurt is first and foremost a strong financial centre. The conurbation has a large number of institutions such as the ECB and the German Federal Bank, the headquarters of the German Stock Exchange, and several national and European regulatory authorities. Furthermore, its airport, the largest in Germany and the 4th largest in Europe, central geographic location, German political stability and the country's economic strength are also important advantages for Frankfurt. With regard to its real estate market, the vacancy rate remains high, at close to 9%, offering a wide range of options to occupiers looking for space. Occupiers further benefit from moderate levels of rent and lease terms that are quite favourable to tenants (fit-out works paid for by landlords, rent free periods, short-term leases of 5 years, etc).

Philippe Perello: The advantages of Paris are innumerable. The city is first and foremost, with London, Europe’s only “global city”, as evidenced by the influx of tourists from all over the world, the richness of its cultural offer and the strength of its financial market. Its education and health system, and the dynamism of “French Tech” are also noteworthy, as is its transport system that provides fast access to London by Eurostar. The Grand Paris Express will also eventually enable the Greater Paris Region to benefit from a transport network of unrivalled density and quality. With regards to real estate, Paris once more stands out, with one of the largest office stocks in the world totalling a little over 50 million sq m. This office space offers companies highly varied installation solutions in terms of building quality, location, rental level and lease commitment term.

Several studies indicate that the image of France and its capital among the foreign business community has improved considerably in recent months. What could still be needed to capitalise on this and further enhance the appeal of the Parisian market?

Philippe Perello: in January 2018, President Macron announced to the most important heads of French and foreign companies gathered in Versailles: “France is back”. This statement has been proved by the facts: according to the EY survey, and for the first time, Paris was awarded the honorary title of the most attractive European city, whilst there was a significant increase in the number of foreign investments in France. However, to become the “main port of entry to Europe”, Paris still has work to do with regard to fiscal competitiveness, administrative simplification and the reduction of labour costs.

In Paris, the share of grade A office space continues to decrease. Could this lack of supply, which results in upward pressure on market rents, limit Paris’ appeal in the post-Brexit context? What would you recommend to a company that wants to move its teams to Paris?

Philippe Perello: The lack of supply has indeed become more pronounced. At the end of Q2 2018, new space only accounted for 15% of available supply in the Greater Paris Region. However, it should be noted that construction activity remains fairly high, so that companies can find “a good fit” provided they anticipate their needs. Several recent transactions in Paris itself were thus for buildings that are due for completion in 2020. But we must also look outside of the capital, and notably to areas that are likely to benefit from the Grand Paris project with regards to access and the development of an office supply that is both qualitative and innovative, with values that remain competitive.

Frankfurt’s size, both in terms of the city and its real estate market, is much smaller than that of London and Paris. Is this an advantage or a weakness in attracting companies in the post-Brexit context?

Elvin Durakovic: It is undoubtedly an advantage for us. In Frankfurt, most large companies are located within a radius of 800 metres around the old opera house. The CBD extends over a relatively small area, which facilitates business relationships and reduces the amount of time that is potentially spent on journeys. Furthermore, the modest size of the city explains the proximity of residential areas, whether these be the highly qualitative supply in central areas or other areas of the conurbation that are more affordable.

The German market is less centralised than that of France or the UK. Could other large German cities benefit from a Brexit effect? Which ones, and what arguments do they have to make themselves stand out compared to Frankfurt?

Elvin Durakovic: In Germany, Frankfurt attracts almost all of the relocation projects related to Brexit, with the exception of a very limited number of company movements to Munich and Berlin. The competition is therefore really with Paris, Dublin, Luxembourg and Amsterdam.
BREXIT UNDER PRESSURE

Summary map

1. DUBLIN

48 COMPANY MOVES

25% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER

EXAMPLES OF MOVES

- Ashmore
- Azimo
- Bank of America
- Barclays
- Baillie Gifford
- Baring Asset Management
- Beazley
- Berkshire Hathaway
- Bre Global
- Chaucer
- Circle
- Cogentum & Burling
- Definition IP
- DLA Piper
- DTCC
- Equilend
- Equitable Life
- Euroclear
- Goldman Sachs
- JP Morgan
- Legg Mason
- Mirae Asset Daewoo
- Morgan Stanley
- North P&I
- Odgers Berndston
- Optal
- Pinsent Masons
- Royal London Group
- Simmons & Simmons
- Standard & Poors
- State Street Global Advisors
- TD Securities
- Thomson Reuters
- Wells Fargo
- XL Group
- (...)
**3 Paris**

- **24 Company Moves**
- **12% of the Total Number**

**Examples of Moves**
- Aquis Exchange
- Bank of America
- Blackrock
- Chubb
- Citigroup
- CNA Hardy
- Credit Suisse
- Autorité bancaire européenne
- Eleva Capital
- Global Aerospace
- Goldman Sachs
- HSBC
- H20 Asset Management
- JP Morgan
- Morgan Stanley
- Polar Capital
- SETL
- Standard Chartered
- TP ICAP
- Wells Fargo
- (...)

**4 Frankfurt**

- **24 Company Moves**
- **12% of the Total Number**

**Examples of Moves**
- Barclays
- Citigroup
- Crédit Suisse
- Daiwa Securities
- DBRS
- Dentons
- Deutsche Bank
- Fieldfisher
- Fitch
- Ford Credit Europe
- Goldman Sachs
- HSBC
- Iron Shore
- JP Morgan
- Lloyds Banking Group
- Mizuho
- Morgan Stanley
- Nomura
- Silicon Valley Bank
- Standard Chartered
- Sumitomo Mitsui
- UBS
- Woori Bank
- (...)

**5 Amsterdam**

- **18 Company Moves**
- **9% of the Total Number**

**Examples of Moves**
- CBOE
- Chesnara
- Citigroup
- Devere Group
- Diamond Biopharm
- Agence européenne des médicaments
- Ferrovial
- Jane Street
- MarketAxess
- Mizuho
- Panasonic
- Royal Bank of Scotland
- Tradeweb
- WYG
- (...)

**3** Paris

**4** Frankfurt

**5** Amsterdam