

Bank of America Corp**Bank of America chooses Dublin as EU base after Brexit**

First global lender to pick Irish capital as its European HQ once UK leaves single market



Bank of America will look for new office space in Dublin in addition to the two sites it has now © Reuters

JULY 21, 2017 by: Laura Noonan in New York

[Bank of America](#) has picked Dublin as the main base for its EU investment banking and markets operations after Brexit, chief executive Brian Moynihan told the Financial Times.

Mr Moynihan, who met Irish prime minister Leo Varadkar in [Dublin](#) on Friday, said it was too soon to say how many employees the businesses would need in Ireland, but that the bank would definitely have “more” people in the Irish city than the 700 it has now.

The increase will come from a combination of new hires and moving staff from the bank’s London office, which employs about 4,500. BofA will also look for new office space in addition to the two “very good” Dublin sites it has now, said Alex Wilmot-Sitwell, the bank’s head of Europe, Middle East and Africa.

Global banks are setting up new EU headquarters to make sure they can continue to service clients once the UK leaves the single market.

BofA is, to date, the only major bank to publicly choose Dublin. JPMorgan bought a [big new building](#) in the Irish capital earlier this year — with room for an extra 500 staff — but has insisted the move is mainly to expand its custody and funds business.

BofA's announcement comes a day after Citigroup and Deutsche Bank each told staff of plans to expand their [Frankfurt operations](#). Earlier this week, it also emerged that Morgan Stanley has picked the German financial capital as the legal headquarters for its EU markets business.

Mr Moynihan said Ireland's 12.5 per cent corporate tax rate "wasn't really a consideration" in BofA's decision, and that the bank was getting no support from the Irish state "other than the government trying to help us to get through the regulatory process".

"We've been in the country for 49 years, heading to 50 years," he said. "It was that natural choice for us to locate here . . . We've been working with the CBI [Central Bank of Ireland] to get it all set up and it's been a very smooth process so far."

The bank will use a combination of an existing Dublin banking licence and a newly created investment firm to run its EU business once the UK leaves the bloc. Mr Wilmot-Sitwell said that while the regulatory process was at an "early stage", the bank is "making good progress" and is "confident" it will conclude talks with the CBI in plenty of time to implement the plans ahead of Brexit.

While Dublin will be the main base, Mr Moynihan said BofA's "entire EU footprint will get bigger", with extra staff in Madrid, Milan, Frankfurt, Paris, Amsterdam and other places where the bank has a critical mass of clients.

That strategy echoes comments from Morgan Stanley's chief financial officer Jonathan Pruzan who this week said the bank would increase headcount across its EU network after Brexit.

"Bank of America has a longstanding commitment to Ireland and I look forward to this relationship growing and deepening in the years ahead," said Mr Varadkar.

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