

Companies moving out as Brexit looms

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It's bye bye Britain for many companies

As Britain's March 29 departure from the European Union looms, several major companies have announced they are downsizing their operations in the UK or completely shipping out. A panorama:

Industry hit hard

Amid Brexit jitters as the deadline approaches, Japanese car maker Honda announced Tuesday it will close in 2021 its plant in the southwestern English town of Swindon, putting 3,500 jobs at risk.

Honda said Brexit was not a factor but the announcement comes after its competitor Nissan decided in February to ditch plans to build its X-Trail SUV at its plant in northeastern England due to Britain's departure.

The new line would have created about 740 jobs.

Jaguar Land Rover said in January it would axe around 4,500 mostly UK jobs, one-tenth of its global workforce.

It put the move down to a slump in Chinese sales, buyers dumping diesel cars for [electric vehicles](#), as well as uncertainties linked to Brexit.

Also in January Dutch multinational Philips announced the closure in 2020 of a factory in eastern England making baby bottles, threatening 430 jobs.

It cited "ongoing geopolitical challenges", months after warning about Brexit, and said it would transfer work back to its Dutch base.

Schaeffler, a German maker of parts for cars and industrial products, is also planning to shut two UK sites, with Brexit cited for axing up to a reported 500 jobs.

Banks reorganise

Major financial players based in Britain are also worried: should the UK leave the European single market, banks based there will lose the "passporting rights" that allow them to do business with clients across the

other 27 member states of the bloc.

To continue operating in Europe, many [financial firms](#) will have to set up new business units in EU countries and some are already boosting their operations there, mainly in Paris and Frankfurt.

Bank of America and HSBC are among those that plan to reduce their activities in London in favour of Paris, while US firms Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley and Citigroup are eyeing Frankfurt.

Japan's Sumitomo, Mitsui Financial Group, Daiwa Securities and Nomura, and Britain's Standard Chartered have also chosen the German financial hub.

Headquarters moving out

The European Union's various agencies are not allowed to be based outside the union.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA)—one of the world's most powerful drugs watchdogs which employs 900 pharmaceutical experts, biologists and doctors—has chosen to relocate to Amsterdam.

Based in 1995 in London's Canary Wharf business district, it is in a court battle to break its lease which runs until 2039.

The European Banking Authority and its nearly 200 staff will leave London for Paris.

The monitoring base for the bloc's Galileo satnav system will quit Swanwick in southern England for Madrid, and the EU's anti-piracy forces will move their headquarters to Spain and France.

Several major multinationals have also chosen to shift their headquarters from Britain amid the Brexit uncertainties.

Japanese electronics giant Sony announced it will transfer its European headquarters from Britain to The Netherlands by the end of March to avoid Brexit-related customs issues.

British electric appliance pioneer Dyson will switch headquarters to Singapore this year, saying though that this was due to booming Asian demand and not because of Brexit.

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