Dental leaders in the United Kingdom cautious in Brexit vote aftermath

By DTI

The majority of British voters in the referendum has decided to split from the European Union. The BDA did not take a position in the referendum. While no official statistics are available on the number of dentists in the UK who voted to remain or leave, a poll conducted by Dental Tribune online in March indicated that a slight majority of dental professionals would have preferred the country to stay in the EU.

UK dentistry is directly affected by EU legislation in a number of areas, including movement of labour. Last year alone saw more than 7,000 dentists from EU member countries seeking registration with the General Dental Council (GDC). Their future status remains uncertain after the decision—though unaffected in the interim—as does that of British dentists currently working in another EU member country.

Other areas that could be affected by the vote are health and safety legislation, as well as the import of dental equipment and materials.

In a statement on its website, the GDC said: “The Prime Minister made clear that the formal process for implementing the referendum result would be taken forward under a new leader, and that won’t happen immediately. We will communicate any changes to come. It’s far too soon to predict the long-term impact on our business, if any, from the vote in the UK,” a representative of Henry Schein, the UK’s and the world’s largest provider of dental products and services, told Dental Tribune. “Our focus remains serving as the trusted adviser to our customers, and any geopolitical event will change that.”

The result of the referendum has sparked economic uncertainty not only in Europe but also in markets around the world. As a direct result of the leave announcement, the pound hit a 31-year low.

“Brexit could certainly mean significant changes…”

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Share values too tumbled worldwide in response to the outcome, including those of major dental industry competitors, such as Henry Schein and Dentsply Sirona.

As a consequence of the outcome of the referendum, David Cameron announced that he would step down as Prime Minister. Former home secretary Theresa May has been meanwhile appointed as his successor.

Negotiations about a new agreement with the EU are expected to begin once a new government has put in place. Under Article 50 of the Treaty of Lisbon, Britain will then have two years to negotiate a new agreement with the EU.