

For release June 12th 2022

Industry body's monthly dashboard of tourism industry performance in association with AIB

- June data shows total arrivals down 13% and year-to-date down 26% compared to 2019
- 260,000 North American visitors came to Ireland in June while Continental European market was strongest performer
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- Shortage of accommodation, car hire and labour posing a risk to tourism recovery as ITIC warn *"Budget 2023 vital to support sector's competitiveness"*

Ireland – July 12th, 2022: The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC) has today issued its monthly tourism dashboard for June which shows that the sector's recovery continues to gather pace. However, given prevailing market turbulence and capacity constraints, there remains concern about the pace of recovery beyond the traditional summer season.

The Tourism Dashboard is published in association with AIB and compares each month to the same month in 2019, the last normal year for the Irish tourism industry. Using carrier and port data ITIC extrapolates inbound visitor numbers by market based on past performance.

June data shows total arrivals were down 13% compared to the same month in 2019, an improving trajectory with a 26% lag year to date. Last month arrivals from Continental Europe performed most strongly down just 9% on 2019 while the key North American market showed improvement with 260,000 arrivals.

In June inflation stood at 9.6% while the cost of oil – a key determinant of air fares – was double what it was pre-pandemic.

Elaina Fitzgerald Kane, Chairperson of ITIC, said *"Comparing tourism monthly data to 2019 we feel is the best comparison and will help track recovery. Pre-pandemic tourism was the country's largest indigenous industry, its biggest regional employer, and contributed €2 billion annually to the exchequer and it is vital that the sector returns to sustainable growth"*.

Eoghan O'Mara Walsh, CEO of ITIC, said *"We are now able to estimate for the first half of the year and momentum continues to build in terms of tourism's recovery. However it is apparent that supply shortages in accommodation, car hire and labour are likely to restrict growth over the coming months."*

ITIC highlight that emerging evidence points to a softer 2023 *"with cost inflation at an unprecedented level"*.

Fitzgerald Kane highlighted growing uncertainty within the industry: *"A myriad of factors are distorting the normal Irish tourism market, including deferred bookings, pent up demand, government contracts, the limited pipeline of accommodation, extraordinary inflationary pressures and capacity constraints"*

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especially around the availability of people. One thing that is for sure is that a much softer tourism market is expected in 2023”.

O’Mara Walsh urged the Government to maintain pro-tourism policies in Budget 2023: *“Irish tourism is the country’s largest indigenous industry and biggest regional employer and it is vital that the sector continues to rebuild. Government must maintain tourism investment and keep the Vat rate at 9% until full recovery is secured”.*

Latest ITIC estimates point to a full recovery not being achieved until 2026.

Mary Mackin, Hospitality Sector Strategist for AIB, said *“notwithstanding the post-Covid labour and inflationary challenges facing the industry, tourist numbers are recovering, albeit not yet at the levels we would like. However, AIB will continue to support the sector as it seeks to rebound”.*

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Notes to Editor

About the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation:

The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation was founded in 1984 and is the umbrella group representing the leading tourism interests in Ireland. Its members come from key tourism stakeholders across the public and private sector and include Aer Lingus, Irish Ferries, daa, Shannon Group, Irish Hotels Federation, Incoming Tour Operators Association, Guinness Storehouse, Restaurants Association of Ireland, Vintners Federation of Ireland and Association of Visitor Experiences & Attractions amongst others. A full list of member organizations can be seen on www.itic.ie.

Tourism is Ireland’s largest indigenous industries and is a critical component of the export economy. Key tourism facts in 2019:

- Worth €9.2 billion annually
- 9.68 million international staying visitors in 2019
- Tourism employed 265,000 nationally in 2019
- 1 in 9 jobs nationally are in tourism & hospitality sector
- According to Fáilte Ireland, for every euro spent by tourists 23c is generated in tax