

Hard Brexit could cost Irish tourism €390 million ITIC warns

Tourism Industry can add 80,000 more jobs nationwide by 2025 if right policies are pursued

“Tourism sector at a key juncture” says incoming Chair Ruth Andrews of industry group

4,670 new hotel rooms currently under construction in Dublin

April 11, 2019: The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation has today warned that a hard Brexit could cost Irish tourism €390 million as competitiveness weakens. Speaking at the ITIC AGM, incoming Chairperson, Ruth Andrews, highlighted the confederations’ concerns. The new Chairperson of the sector’s representative group urged Government and state agencies to be ambitious for tourism and warned that a hard Brexit would be very damaging for Ireland’s largest indigenous sector.

Ruth Andrews, who replaces Maurice Pratt as Chairperson of ITIC, welcomed the significant investment in new tourism products including nearly 5,000 hotel bedrooms currently under construction in Dublin. She added that it was time that the Government took the potential of tourism in Ireland much more seriously: *“The national tourism targets for 2025 have already been met as the industry has delivered really strong growth in recent years. It is high time that the Government matched the industry’s ambitions which estimate potential growth of 65% with 80,000 further jobs over the next seven years”*

Andrews stressed that 1 in 9 people in Ireland are employed in tourism and hospitality and it is one of the very few industries that can provide regional balance and economic activity: *“From Dublin right across to the Wild Atlantic Way, tourism can transform communities but enabling policies must be in place to allow the industry to prosper.”*

Andrews, who commences a two-year term as Chair of ITIC, alongside daa’s Cormac O’Connell who becomes Deputy Chair, said that tourism was at a key juncture and pro-tourism policies were vital including enhanced competitiveness and increased investment *“The extra investment in Budget 2019 only brought tourism budgets back to 2008 levels – that’s been a long decade of under-investment”*.

Addressing the AGM event, Chief Executive of ITIC, Eoghan O’Mara Walsh, said: *“Tourism is worth over €9 billion annually to the Irish economy and nearly 10 million international visitors came to our shores last year. The industry’s competitiveness though has been seriously weakened by the Government’s decision to hike the tourism Vat rate by 50% and unsustainable business costs increases for SMEs which are the backbone of the sector”*.

O’Mara Walsh pointed out that Brexit poses a real and substantial risk to Irish tourism and Fáilte Ireland, the state agency for tourism development, has already estimated a hard Brexit as costing Irish tourism

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€390 million and 10,700 jobs: *“Britain is Ireland’s largest source market for visitors and is in decline with hotel occupancy levels down and additional supports must be offered to exposed businesses”*

O’Mara Walsh urged the speedy lifting of two of the planning restrictions for the parallel runway at Dublin Airport which is the key gateway for tourism to the island. The delivery of North Runway is one of the 51 recommendations within ITIC’s *An Industry Strategy for Growth to 2025* that was published last year and sets out an ambitious roadmap for the sector’s success.

For more information on the Irish Tourism Industry Confederation and its 2025 strategy see www.itic.ie.

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Notes to Editors:

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, Restaurants Association of Ireland, Vintners Federation of Ireland and Association of Visitor Experiences & Attractions amongst others. Tourism state agencies, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Ireland, are also members and the full list can be seen on www.itic.ie.
