



Irish Tourism Industry Confederation Press Release

Cancellation of St Patrick's Day parade due to Coronavirus

9th March 2020 "The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC) said that the cancellation of the St Patrick's Day parade was disappointing but understandable. *"First and foremost Coronavirus is a public health issue but the economic and business implications are stark and tourism is in the front line"* said Eoghan O'Mara Walsh, CEO of ITIC, the umbrella group for the sector.

Coronavirus is having a real and material impact on the Irish tourism industry which is the country's largest indigenous industry and biggest regional employer with 265,000 jobs nationwide. Carriers, accommodation providers, tour operators, restaurants and attractions are reporting significant cancellations and deferrals and O'Mara Walsh noted that more worrying still is that the crisis coincides with the key booking period and new bookings from overseas markets for the peak summer season have dried up.

O'Mara Walsh urges immediate action from Government: *"Irish tourism is facing an unprecedented challenge and businesses and jobs are at stake. Government needs to treat this like it was treating a "no-deal" Brexit outcome and a fighting fund needs to be put in place now for tourism and hospitality businesses up and down the country. This should include Vat payment deferrals for the first half of the year, a reduction in the Vat rate for business back to 9%, interest free loans to businesses under significant cashflow pressures, and a waiving of local authority rates."* O'Mara Walsh said that Government and local authorities have to do all they can to support jobs and livelihoods that are at risk. He added *"Once this crisis passes an injection in tourism marketing budgets is needed so that we can aggressively advertise Ireland in overseas markets to try and recoup some of the lost business"*.

Although difficult to estimate the cost of Coronavirus at this point, ITIC said that just a 10% drop in the tourism economy would equate to over 20,000 jobs with 68% of tourism employment is in regional Ireland."

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For more information:

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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.
