

For release November 11th 2022

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

- **October data shows international visitor arrivals down 7% compared to October 2019 and down 19% year-to-date**
- **Key North American market performing well with 196,000 visitors to Ireland last month while Continental European market was strongest performer**
- **Significant industry concern for next year with twin obstacles to recovery: soaring cost inflation and over-dependence on tourism accommodation by Government for refugees**

Ireland – November 10th, 2022: The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (ITIC) has today issued its latest monthly tourism dashboard which shows a strong performance in October. However, soaring cost inflation and a deteriorating global economic outlook - allied with the limited tourism accommodation supply – means that there is significant concern for the year ahead.

ITIC's 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.

Nearly 900,000 international visitors came to Ireland during September, a recovery of 93% compared to the same month in 2019, an improving trajectory with a 19% lag year to date. Last month visitors from Continental Europe performed most strongly down 5% on 2019 while the key North American market returned just under 200,000 visitors.

Looking forward ITIC expressed significant concern that recovery would be threatened by soaring cost inflation, the energy crisis and the impact of Government contracts with tourism accommodation suppliers.

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"*.

Fitzgerald Kane added *"Tourism and hospitality businesses are very concerned that their recovery will be halted by soaring cost inflation and supply constraints."* She welcomed the Temporary Business Energy Support Scheme announced in last month's budget but argued that it needed to be *"more generous"* as energy bills for many hotels and restaurants had jumped *"to unsustainable and unprecedented levels"* warning that profit margins *"have come under serious pressure"*.

Fitzgerald Kane also said that it was vital that the 9% Vat rate for the sector is extended throughout next year.

Irish Tourism Industry Confederation

PRESS RELEASE

For release November 11th 2022

Referring to the impact of Government contracts on the availability of tourism accommodation Eoghan O'Mara Walsh, CEO of ITIC, expressed significant concern that supply would be restricted next year impacting on the broader tourism economy's recovery.

O'Mara Walsh said *"We now know from the Department of Children that 23%, or nearly 1 in 4 bedrooms, of tourism accommodation is occupied by Ukrainian refugees or asylum seekers and this number seems to be growing as each week goes by. While hotels and guesthouses are part of the solution to accommodate refugees, they cannot be the only solution. If this level of tourism accommodation stock is not available next year for international visitors it will have an enormous knock-on effect for the broader tourism economy and regional employment in particular"*.

ITIC will publish an analysis next week of the likely impact Government contracts on the broader tourism economy and will urge a more creative solution including modular housing, holiday homes, state buildings and vacant dwellings. *"The tourism industry cannot be asked, to its own detriment, to be the primary provider of accommodation"* said Fitzgerald Kane.

Jonathan Clarke, Head of Hospitality & Tourism Sector, for AIB Business Banking, said *"Notwithstanding the challenges facing the industry, tourist numbers are recovering which is good for industry and the national economy. AIB will continue to support the sector during these turbulent times"*.

ENDS

For further information contact:

Eoghan O'Mara Walsh, Chief Executive, ITIC: 086 6057909

Michael Moriarty, Fleishman Hillard: 087 2432550

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 industry 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

**Irish Tourism Industry Confederation
PRESS RELEASE**

For release November 11th 2022

- 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