

**Attendance of Principal Officer Bernard O'Shea at the
Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media
for Pre-Legislative Scrutiny on
the General Scheme of the
Registration of Short-Term Tourist Letting Bill 2022.
Wednesday 25th January 2023**

Opening Statement

I welcome this opportunity to discuss this Bill with the Committee and I am joined by Michelle O'Mahony, Assistant Principal, working with me on this legislation. On 7 December the Government approved the priority drafting of the Registration of Short-Term Tourist Letting Bill and publication of the General Scheme of the Bill.

It is useful to consider the background to the introduction of this proposed legislation. My Department's Statement of Strategy includes the goal of supporting the recovery and economic growth of a competitive tourism sector that is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. The Government's housing policy, "Housing for All", includes the objective of making more efficient use of existing housing. One of the actions to achieve this is the development of new regulatory controls requiring short-term and holiday lets to register with Fáilte Ireland with a view to ensuring that houses are used to best effect in areas of housing need.

The rapid growth of the Short Term Tourist Letting market is a worldwide trend. In this international context it is notable that, on 7 November last, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation to enhance transparency in the field of short-term accommodation rentals and to help public authorities ensure the balanced development of this sector as part of a sustainable wider tourism sector. The Commission stated that while short term accommodation bookings offer benefits for hosts and tourists, they can create concerns for local communities struggling, for instance, with a lack of affordable housing.

The main provisions of the Bill being considered here today are: the establishment of a Short-Term Tourist Letting (STTL) register; the provision that any party offering accommodation for periods of up to and including 21 nights will need to be registered with Fáilte Ireland; and an obligation on those advertising properties for short-term letting to ensure that the properties have a valid registration number. The Bill also provides for enforcement of the proposed regulations.

The introduction of the register will provide an accurate record of all short-term letting stock across the country. This will assist the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Local Authorities in ensuring proper planning and sustainable development. From a tourism perspective the proposed legislation will allow Fáilte Ireland, for the first time, to have a full picture of tourist accommodation across the State, significantly enhancing their ability to promote and drive tourism investment.

The Bill will be examined further during the drafting process taking into account the publication of the proposed EU Regulation along with the Digital Services Act which was signed into law on 27 October and came into force on 16 November 2022. In addition, the General Scheme has been notified to the EU Commission under the requirements of the EU Technical Regulation Information Society Directive.

Minister Martin looks forward to working with Oireachtas colleagues to progress this legislation in the interests of the sustainable development of tourism and contributing to the better use of existing housing for the common good. She hopes that the legislation can be passed and enacted as early as possible in 2023.

Míle buíochas, a Chathaoirligh.

ENDS.