



Short Term Tourist Letting Registration System

**Joint Oireachtas Committee on Media, Tourism, Arts,
Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht**

Opening Statement - Jenny De Saulles

Director of Sector Development

Fáilte Ireland

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Cathaoirleach, Members thank you for your invitation.

Fáilte Ireland was tasked by government to develop an efficient and effective registration system for Short-Term Tourist Lettings in Ireland. Based on international best practice, the system we have developed will allow us to have an accurate, comprehensive and up to date register of all short-term tourist properties across the country. We estimate there are at least 30,000 short-term letting properties currently being advertised online.

To create, launch and manage this register, a new division within Fáilte Ireland was established. This division has been working over the last year to ensure all registration processes and procedures are in place in advance of the legislation being enacted.

When the legislation is passed, property owners advertising short-term tourism accommodation for periods up to and including 21-nights will have a statutory obligation to register their property with Fáilte Ireland. Property owners will be provided with a unique registration number for each property registered. This number will need to be used on all booking platforms and advertisements. Subject to the passing of legislation, the Short-Term Tourist Letting Registration System will be ready to launch in April 2023.

In relation to the impact of the register on the tourism sector, tourism cannot and does not exist in isolation of local communities. Fáilte Ireland works to develop tourism in a way that is consistent and complimentary to the needs of host communities economically and socially. For communities to thrive, there must be a balanced mix of long-term private rental and short-term letting accommodation for tourists. Therefore, both in the context of long-term sustainable development of tourism and short-term tourism staff accommodation challenges, we believe this initiative is not just good for housing but is also good news for tourism.

The register will also allow Fáilte Ireland to have a full picture of the stock of tourist accommodation across the State for the first time. This will significantly enhance Fáilte Ireland's ability to promote and drive tourism investment.

To minimise disruption to the tourism industry, there will be a 6-month clarification period. This will allow those property owners operating in the sector to clarify their position in relation to relevant planning regulations, or for those to apply for change of use planning permission to continue offering their accommodation as tourist accommodation while their application is being considered and processed. It is important to note that the introduction of the new register will not alter or impact upon planning permission requirements.

As short-term letting accommodation is vital for the tourism industry, Fáilte Ireland will also continue to work with Local Authorities to ensure any housing stock that is not suitable for private housing may continue to be used for tourism purposes.

Since the draft legislation was published in December, Fáilte Ireland has conducted information sessions with over 30 industry stakeholders, including representative groups, booking platforms and property owners, to outline how the register will work and what impact it may have them on their business. The issues raised mostly concern planning permission and the time it will take to update websites and bookings sites. In relation to planning permission, I have already spoken about the clarification period. In relation to updating websites we will work with booking platforms on a technical solution to automate the verification of registration numbers to ensure that the process of getting a property uploaded is quick and straight forward.

In conclusion, Fáilte Ireland welcomes the progress of the Short-Term Tourist Letting Bill and we look forward to launching the register as soon as legislation is enacted.

In the meantime, we will continue to engage with stakeholders to ensure that everyone is in a position to understand the new requirements.

Thank you.