

Speaking Notes for Ms. Catherine Martin, T.D.

Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media

2021 Further Revised Estimate – Wednesday 14th July 2021

Cuirim fáilte mhór roimh an deis labhairt leis an Roghchoiste um Thurasóireacht, Cultúr, na hEalaíona, Spórt agus na Meáin agus Meastachán Athbhreithnithe Breise **€1.092bn** do 2021 á mheas le haghaidh Vóta 33 do Réimsí Clár A, B, D agus E. Táim an-sásta glacadh leis an seans chun sonraí a sholáthar faoi na bearta suntasacha a n-éascaíonn an maoiniú méadaithe seo chun na hearnálacha a bhfuil freagracht orm ina leith a thacú agus a neartú. Cuireann sé áthas orm deis a fháil labhairt leis an gcoiste maidir le príomhthosaíochtaí mo Roinne agus an fhís a leagan amach do na hearnálacha luachmhara fairsinge seo. Cuireann na hearnálacha seo go mór le geilleagar na tíre, agus tacaíonn siad le folláine an duine aonair agus an phobail ar fud na hÉireann chomh maith.

The diverse range of sectors served by my Department have been amongst those most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Employing many hundreds of thousands, right across the country, these are the sectors that thrive when people congregate to enjoy time together, and when local communities and businesses flourish - all of which have been dreadfully impacted by the restrictions imposed on our society during the pandemic.

Large parts of these sectors will be among the last to return to full operations as the country reopens. Our Cultural Institutions and theatres, our tourism destinations, hospitality businesses, our sporting occasions, our Gaeltacht communities and local media have endured great challenges since March of last year. Yet these are the very sectors which have brought us light through the dark times and it has been demonstrated that, without question, they are essential for our physical, social and mental well-being.

I am deeply conscious of the effects that measures taken in the interests of public health have had on businesses, in particular the hundreds of thousands of workers whose ability to make a living has been excruciatingly curtailed, and for so long.

We should also recognise that these tough decisions have enabled all of us, through collective action, to protect the most vulnerable in our society, and with the ongoing rollout of the vaccination programme we now find ourselves positioned where we can start to move on from the pandemic and focus our efforts on economic and social recovery. Over the coming months, as the restrictions continue to ease and the vaccine programme continues its roll-out, we will see the safe and successful reopening of our society, and with it our Tourism sector, our Arts and Culture venues and events, and the eventual welcoming back of fans to our sportsgrounds.

The 2021 Further Revised Estimates for my Department have been informed by ongoing engagement with sectoral representatives. The

additional funding is providing for a strong suite of significant measures as a robust and targeted response to this crisis; it will support resilience and recovery, and will ensure that Ireland can prosper once more on the global stage in the fields of tourism, culture, sport and linguistic heritage.

These sectors, individually and cumulatively, are an integral part of the fabric of our society, most particularly in rural and regional areas where they support economic activity, physical and societal well-being. Well-being is a core principle underpinning the *Living with Covid Plan*, and it will be fundamental to public confidence and resilience as we emerge from, and manage, the crisis over the longer term.

Total 2021 funding for the sectors supported by my Department is as follows:

- **€220.9m** for **Tourism** services including a €55 million support fund for strategic tourism businesses and €5m for training and digitalisation support in the sector. These measures are complementary to the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme and Covid Restrictions Support Scheme schemes and the ReStart scheme
- So far three phases of the tourism business continuity schemes have been launched aimed at improving the competitiveness and viability of businesses in the sector. I also launched a €17 million Outdoor Dining Enhancement Scheme being delivered in partnership between Fáilte Ireland and Local Authorities across the country. This

scheme is providing funding for tourism and hospitality business to develop and increase their own outdoor seating capacity, and is also providing funding to local authorities to develop permanent outdoor public dining spaces in towns and urban centres, similar to those that exist in various European cities.

- In addition, the tourism sector has been able to avail of cross government supports including the reduction in the VAT rate (recently extended to September 2022), the Covid Restrictions Support Scheme and the Rates Waiver Extension representing a significant cross government response to the existential impact of COVID-19
- Total funding for the **Arts & Culture** sector in 2021 is **€341m**
 - an increase of **74%** compared with the initial 2020 allocation in Budget 2020.
- The additional funding provides for a 2021 allocation of **€130m** for the Arts Council, an increase of 24% on their 2020 allocation. This additional investment empowers the Arts Council to help artists, arts workers and arts organisations come through this crisis and play their part in the national recovery.
- Significant support is also being provided for live entertainment in the amount of €50m. This funding has allowed for €25m to fund a new Live Performance Support Scheme (LPSS); €14m for a new support scheme for live

entertainment businesses (MEBAS); €5m to support local authorities for outdoor live performances; €5m capital supports for the live entertainment sector as well as; €1m to fund the St. Patrick's Festival

- **€8m** has been provided to facilitate the transfer of the National Symphony Orchestra to the National Concert Hall. This will be a significant step towards the objective of enabling the orchestra to be established as a world class orchestra which will, with the NCH, provide a creative and imaginative programme strategy that will greatly enhance the offering of the combined organisation to the public.
- The audiovisual industry was been one of the success stories of 2020, with on-screen success in the form of *Normal People*, but also its track record in maintaining output in the face of COVID-19. I am therefore very pleased to be able to increase Screen Ireland's funding by €6m to €30.1m in 2021.
- Funding of **€280.5m** will be provided for **Media & Broadcasting** in 2021 in recognition of the critical communication role of this sector during the current crisis. An additional €3.5m is being provided to TG4 and the transfer of the NSO to the NCH outlined earlier will also have reciprocal benefits for RTÉ and is evidence of the synergies that can be brought to bear with the culture and broadcasting and media sectors now part of the same brief.

In conclusion, I am satisfied that the increased allocation for my Department in 2021 of **€1.092bn** allows for the continuation and enhancement of its very diverse but critical work programmes. As Minister, I intend to do everything possible to ensure that as we emerge from the shadow of Covid-19, we will have a world renowned tourism industry; a vibrant arts and culture sector; a dynamic sports and media sector and a landscape in which our language and our engagement with it can continue to grow.

Thank you and I will now hand over to my colleague Minister of State Chambers to speak to you about the Further Revised Estimate for 2021 as it relates to Sport.