



5th June 2020

Ms Aileen Fallon
Clerk to the Committee
Special Committee on COVID-19 Response
Leinster House,
Dublin 2

Dear Ms Fallon,

Thank you for the invitation to provide a written statement to the Special Committee on Covid-19 on the topic of travel restrictions.

The emergence of COVID-19 as a global pandemic in the early months of 2020 has had unprecedented impacts on the travel, tourism and sport sectors. The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has worked consistently with stakeholders and colleagues in government, industry and community groups and organisations to manage and mitigate the impact of the restrictions on activity and movement that resulted from the crisis.

Ireland's economic wellbeing is fundamentally tied to the success of both the transport and tourism sectors. As an island, we rely on our international connectivity for exporting businesses, importing essential supplies, supporting Foreign Direct Investment, our diaspora, and particularly supporting the Irish tourism industry, which provides employment in communities all across the country.

The impact of COVID-19 has been overwhelming in particular for the international travel and tourist sectors, with an absence to date of certainty about when international travel can safely reopen from a health perspective. Our remit is to advise Government as it seeks to balance the health concerns with the economic and social issues.

Much of the work in early stages of this crisis was focussed on ensuring the safe and continued operation of essential transport services. Along with most other sectors and businesses in the country, the Government's announcement on March 24 led to the shutdown of the rest of our sectors.

With the publication of the roadmap for re-opening the economy on May 1, DTTAS has been focussed on assisting our sectors in recommencing operations safely and in line with public health guidance.



Our first priority is, in working with our key stakeholders, to develop guidance and protocols that will assist these sectors in re-opening as early as possible. We are working with colleagues in other Government Departments around the safe resumption of international travel to enable further decisions to be taken by Government around the existing restrictions so that the Irish tourism sector can once again welcome overseas visitors to Ireland and to enable connectivity for the wider business community.

The statement that follows is, as requested, presented as concisely as possible. Should the Committee require further data or information, I, and my colleagues in the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will be very happy to provide this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Graham Doyle', is located below the closing 'Yours sincerely,'.

Graham Doyle
Secretary General

1 Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Sectoral Challenges and Actions	5
2.1 Public Transport	5
2.2 Aviation	7
2.3 Maritime & Shipping	9
2.4 Road Haulage	11
2.5 Tourism	13
3. COVID-19 Public Health Measures on International Travel	15
4. Conclusion.....	18

1. Introduction

1. The emergence of COVID-19 as a global pandemic in the early months of 2020 has had unprecedented impacts on both the travel and tourism sectors.
2. Internationally and domestically, both personal and business travel have massively reduced. Tourism has effectively stopped.
3. DTTAS has worked since the outset of this crisis with partners across the public and the private sectors to ensure the continuity of essential transport and supply chains, and the safe operation of these services, providing for the ongoing provision of vital health and food supplies to Ireland, and guaranteeing access to public transport for key workers.
4. Ireland's economic wellbeing is fundamentally tied to the survival of both the transport and tourism sectors. As an island, we rely on our international connectivity for exporting businesses, importing essential supplies, supporting Foreign Direct Investment, our diaspora, and particularly supporting the Irish tourism industry, which provides employment in communities all across the country.
5. The Government has been clear that continued operation of the public transport sector is important, and it has been designated among the essential services that have continued to operate during the pandemic. The National Transport Authority (NTA) has been working with all transport operators to ensure service continuity, and in this they continue to be guided by the public health advice, including in relation to enhanced cleaning regimes and social distancing measures across the network.
6. Our aviation agencies and private sector stakeholders have been instrumental in bringing much needed PPE and medical supplies to Ireland, to assist our health services in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. We have worked with ports, shipping companies and hauliers to ensure the viability and ongoing operation of essential maritime and freight supply routes.
8. And we have engaged with our colleagues in governments in Northern Ireland, the UK, and the EU to ensure where possible a shared understanding and consistency of approach in tackling the challenges facing our sectors.
9. Much of the work in early weeks of this crisis was focussed on ensuring the safe and continued operation of essential transport services. Along with most other sectors and businesses in the country, the Government's announcement on 24 March led to shutdown across the rest of our sectors.
10. With the publication of the Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business on 1 May, we are now working as a Department to assist our sectors in recommencing operations safely and in line with public health guidance.

11. For our international transport and tourism sectors, the impact of COVID-19 has been overwhelming. Passenger numbers at Dublin Airport are down 99% for April and May year on year. Aviation carriers' and shipping companies' forward bookings have plummeted.
12. High profile sporting events, such as the four Euro 2020 matches due to be held in June, and the American Football match between Notre Dame and Navy, due to be held in August, have been impacted. As well as significant sporting events in their own right, these matches would have provided a huge economic boost to the economy, and showcased our capital city and country on the world stage.
13. Hotels and other accommodation providers have been shut since March. The sector will have the opportunity to recover some of the peak summer season with the expected bringing forward of decisions regarding the re-opening of hotels and attractions from Phase 4 to Phase 3 of the Roadmap. This will help somewhat to ease the real concern that the 2020 tourism season would pass us by completely in Ireland, which would have hugely negative repercussions in communities, towns and rural areas all around the country.
14. Our remit is to advise Government as it seeks to balance the health concerns with the economic and social issues fundamentally tied to both the transport and tourism sectors.
15. Our first priority is, in working with our key stakeholders, to develop guidance and protocols that will assist these sectors in re-opening as early as possible. We are engaging with colleagues in other Departments to develop proposals for the safe resumption of international travel, taking account of EU guidance. This will enable further decisions to be taken by Government around the existing restrictions, so that the Irish tourism sector can once again welcome overseas visitors to Ireland and to enable connectivity for the wider business community.
16. As we emerge from the initial stage of the COVID-19 crisis it is essential that the transport and tourism sectors re-open, allowing people a chance to reconnect physically with close family and friends around the country, or just take a much needed break. This in turn will stimulate economic activity in all parts of the country, creating employment and enabling businesses to survive.
17. In the letter inviting this submission, the Committee requested that the following issues be considered:
 - Regulations/Protocol for self-isolation for travellers entering Ireland and enforcement of restrictions;
 - Travel restrictions for Irish passengers exiting Ireland;
 - Provisions and measures at airports/airplanes/ports/ferries; with specific regard to testing;
 - Cross Border Travel in Ireland and Travel between Ireland and UK (Common Travel Area);
 - Removing restrictions/Co-ordination with other EU member states;

- Facilitating people getting to work using public transport.
18. The first four of these are issues which heavily impact on our sectors but where the policy lead lies with another Department, and so we are consistently engaging with these Departments to provide advice and analysis to assist policy making.
 19. Some of the measures introduced to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus have had a profound impact on our international travel arrangements and on businesses within our sectors. However, we recognise the greater need to ensure public health and safety through the series of measure introduced and both the Department and its agencies follow fully the public health advice on these matters.
 20. Matters relating to public health regulations for self-isolation and travel restrictions as well as health measures at points of entry come under the remit of the Department of Health. The role for DTTAS on these issues is to engage with the Department of Health to provide advice and insight as to the wider impacts of these measures and to work with our stakeholders in airports, ports and the carriers to facilitate the implementation of public health guidelines and protocols.
 21. DTTAS has to date worked with colleagues across government, in our agencies and the private sector carriers to arrange for information announcements to be made by ships masters and air pilots; for official air traffic notifications to be made to all carriers operating into Ireland; for a marine notice to be issued; forms to be distributed and emailed by carriers to passengers; and for provision of information and forms for passengers arriving in airports. We have ensured that communications to arriving passengers on the locator form and health advice is as clear as possible.
 22. The Common Travel Area (CTA) and health advice on travel on the island of Ireland and within the rest of the CTA are matters where the policy lead is with the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Health. Again, the DTTAS role is to engage with these Departments to provide advice in relation to the development of policy and to work through our stakeholders to facilitate the implementation and communication of public health advice.
 23. This statement therefore focusses more fully in broader terms on the impact that COVID-19 and the related restrictions on movement have had on the transport and travel sectors, and the work that is ongoing by DTTAS to mitigate this. We also address in detail the other issues specified in the invitation (removing restrictions and co-ordination with other EU states, and facilitating people getting to work with public transport).
 24. The Committee has requested that we keep this statement concise and to the point, and so what follows is a briefing of the key points arising in each sector, along with an outline of the actions undertaken or underway to address the challenges.

2. Sectoral Challenges and Actions

2.1 Public Transport

Impact on passenger numbers

- 2.1.1 The National Transport Authority (NTA) has been working with all transport operators to ensure service continuity, and in this they continue to be guided by the public health advice, including in relation to enhanced cleaning regimes and social distancing measures across the network.
- 2.1.2 On average, daily passenger numbers on the Irish public transport network fell to less than 10% of equivalent levels in 2019 across all operators from mid-March to mid-May.
- 2.1.3 Although demand remains very low, some recovery in passenger numbers has been apparent since the implementation of Phase 1 of the Government's Roadmap to Recovery.
- 2.1.4 Daily demand is now typically between 10% and 20% of what it was prior to mid-March.
- 2.1.5 A small number of commercial bus services are still operating and these have also reported an increase in passenger numbers since some restrictions were eased on 18 May.

Economic impacts - Exchequer-funded Services

- 2.1.6 Following engagement with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), it was agreed that the 2020 Public Service Obligation (PSO) allocation could be utilised to fund the operators' revenue shortfall arising from the reduction in passengers owing to the COVID-19 public health crisis.
- 2.1.7 Under the 2020 Estimates, the National Transport Authority (NTA) has been allocated approximately €300 million from the Transport, Tourism and Sport Vote for PSO and Locallink purposes for the full year. It was expected that this subsidy, together with the c.€100 million State payment for Free Travel, would meet the difference between the c.€600 million fare revenues annually from passengers, and the costs of actually providing the bus and rail services.
- 2.1.8 The financial impact of the reduction in passenger numbers has placed significant additional pressure on the Exchequer-funded PSO arrangements so that the full 2020 allocation will now be exhausted in June. The Department is working closely with the NTA to quantify the additional funding requirements for the coming months and we are engaging positively with relevant Departments on this matter.

Economic Impacts - Commercial Services

- 2.1.9 While the vast majority of the CIÉ Groups transport operations are part of the PSO, Bus Éireann's Expressway business is operated on a fully commercially basis and does not receive State subvention.
- 2.1.10 Expressway has continued to operate throughout the crisis, albeit with a reduced service and in a loss-making situation, in order to continue providing a public transport service across the country for those undertaking essential travel. The Department continues to engage extensively with CIÉ and BÉ in relation to Expressway.
- 2.1.11 Most other commercial bus operators have suspended their businesses with only approximately 10% of operators continuing to operate.
- 2.1.12 The Government has introduced a wide programme of Government supports for impacted businesses including the commercial operators, including new schemes of wage subsidies, rates waivers, re-start grants, lending facilities, equity injection, and business advisory supports for example. The Minister is engaging with his colleague the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation about these matters and is raising with her the concerns and situation of the commercial operators.

Response to the Crisis - Ensuring people can get to work

- 2.1.13 Measures have been introduced across the public transport system, guided by the National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHE) and the advice of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), to assist with ensuring the continued operation of public transport services during the pandemic. As part of this process, signs have been placed in carriages and vehicles to indicate safe two-metre social distancing for passengers (reducing carrying capacity by at least 80%) and enhanced cleaning regimes have been introduced (costing c. €½ million per week on PSO services).
- 2.1.14 On 15 May, public health advice also recommended the use of face coverings by passengers on "busy public transport". Measures have been introduced to promote the use of face coverings.
- 2.1.15 Public transport is a key facilitator of the Government's Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business. Since the implementation of Phase 1 of the Roadmap, operators have reported a notable increase in passenger numbers across the public transport system. Dublin Bus have reported a doubling in passenger numbers, returning to c.20% of their pre-COVID 19 passenger numbers. Commercial operators have also reported an increase in passenger numbers since some restrictions were eased on 18 May. In some cases additional buses had to be deployed to provide additional capacity on the public transport network. Demand will continue to rise in the coming weeks as the country progressively eases restrictions on business activity and access to other facilities. The challenges of this are being actively managed and are being kept under close review as the Roadmap progresses.

- 2.1.16 The current two metre social distancing advice inevitably constrains the carrying capacity of the public transport fleet; buses/coaches are limited to a maximum of one-fifth of their normal passenger capacity, and the reduction for trains and trams is even greater.
- 2.1.17 Moderate increases in the PSO system's overall capacity can be achieved by returning to normal timetables. While working from home is not possible for everybody, the more people who continue to do so, the less pressure there will be on our buses, trains and trams in the weeks ahead. This means that more of those who have to travel to their workplace, will be able to do so on public transport.
- 2.1.18 The NTA continues to liaise closely with PSO transport operators and will monitor passenger trends and emerging service capacity constraints, and identify actions which can be taken to address these constraints.
- 2.1.19 The NTA has made extensive contacts with employer, industry and retail bodies as well as larger third level institutions to ascertain the manner in which various sectors expect to phase their reopening in keeping with the Roadmap. These contacts will continue through the reopening phases.
- 2.1.20 The NTA has been engaging with An Garda Síochána Gardaí, Dublin City Council and Dublin City Centre Business Association regarding the re-opening of retail on 8th June. The NTA has emphasised the importance of staggered and later opening hours by retailers to minimise significant expected pressures at peak times from the return of retail workers and shoppers and strong messaging encouraging people to cycle or walk to shops wherever possible.
- 2.1.21 The Government also emphasises the need for public transport to continue to be used for essential journeys and avoided during peak-times, with people walking or cycling if possible. Furthermore organisations are also strongly encouraged to continue to facilitate working from home, remote learning, online shopping and online appointments where possible.

2.2 Aviation

Impact on passenger numbers/freight

- 2.2.1 Airline traffic has now fallen by 90% across Europe, bringing activity and associated revenue to an all-time low. Passenger numbers have declined rapidly in recent weeks, with most airports seeing reductions of 99% or more.
- 2.2.2 Passenger operations have scaled back at Dublin and Cork airports. daa continue to keep the airports operational and runways open to maintain Ireland's vital supply chain. Essential flight operations for cargo will continue. Shannon airport remains open with restricted hours to facilitate passengers, cargo and businesses.
- 2.2.3 Donegal and Kerry airports remain open to facilitate the Government funded PSO air service between those airports and Dublin. The PSO service allows Donegal and Kerry to maintain a

basic level of operations and to safeguard connectivity. As well as supporting essential travel, they also provide support to air medical and rescue services.

- 2.2.4 Knock Airport took the difficult decision to shut down operations on 30 March. However, the airport has indicated that it hopes to re-start its business from July subject to the lifting of Government restrictions.

Economic impacts

- 2.2.5 COVID-19 has had a profound and unparalleled impact on the aviation industry. With the imposition of travel restrictions and loss of flights, our airports are also facing significant financial challenges.
- 2.2.6 Aviation is crucial to Ireland's connectivity, competitiveness and economic recovery. The air transport sector, including airlines and its supply chain, supports over 140,000 jobs and accounted for c.6.8% of GDP in 2018. The air transport industry is estimated to support €8.9 billion of GDP and 143,000 jobs in Ireland. Ireland's aircraft leasing industry contributes a further €541 million to the Irish economy, supporting nearly 5,000 jobs.
- 2.2.7 daa announced on 19 May that in the context of expected significantly reduced passenger traffic for several years, the company must adjust the business to match the number of passengers that are likely to use Cork and Dublin airports in the medium term. To achieve this, a number of options are being considered, including a Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS). All staff are currently on a 4 day week and the company has indicated that it will review this position on 20 June.
- 2.2.8 Shannon Group has also been severely hit by the crisis and has introduced a range of cost cutting measures. 240 employees are currently on a reduced 3 day working week and 219 employees are on temporary layoff. This position is being kept under review by the company.
- 2.2.9 In relation to the regional airports, many staff have taken cuts to pay and working hours. In the case of Knock, approximately 150 staff were temporarily laid off from 30 March. However, in anticipation of a prolonged period of reduced flight services and passenger demand, the airport has since advised that they need to resize their business and adapt to new ways of working. As a result, staff were notified last week that this will lead to a reduction in employee numbers effective from the re-opening date of 1 July. The airport has initiated a period of consultation with staff and their union representatives - a first meeting with staff to discuss the airport's action was due to take place 3rd June.
- 2.2.10 Irish airlines are also fully exposed to the dramatic downturn in activity. Ryanair report a very significant decline in activity and has indicated that they are planning to reduce its workforce by over 3000 across a number of European bases (total workforce in Ryanair approx 18,500). Aer Lingus also announced plans on 1 May to discuss significant cuts in jobs with their employee representative organisations. It is understood that a 20% reduction in

head count (900 jobs) will be required as the company seeks to adjust to the changed market conditions.

Response to the Crisis

- 2.2.11 Both daa and Shannon Group are availing of the Government's Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme and the Department continues to engage with daa and Shannon Group on the financial position of these companies.
- 2.2.12 On 20 May, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) jointly published guidance on measures to assure the health safety of air travellers and aviation personnel once airlines resume regular flight schedules.
- 2.2.13 The Department, through the National Air Transport Facilitation Committee, is coordinating the implementation of the guidelines by industry to promote health and virus control in aviation, with due regard to the maintenance of aviation safety and security standards. A code of practice should be finalised and published in the coming weeks.
- 2.2.14 The European Guidance aims to ensure that the air journey is safe, in preparation for a resumption of international air travel. This resumption depends upon the phased lifting of travel restrictions, nationally and internationally, and the public health authority response to the evolving epidemiological conditions for COVID-19.
- 2.2.15 With the objective of developing a National Framework for restarting aviation, the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport has proposed the establishment of a Task Force for Aviation Recovery, to be made up of key stakeholders from the industry. The Task Force will be appointed within the next week and will report back to the Minister within four weeks with a plan to relaunch the aviation industry in Ireland.
- 2.2.16 The Department continues to engage with colleagues in other Government Departments to develop proposals for Government on easing the restrictions on international travel, and this is outlined in more detail in Section 3 below.

2.3 Maritime & Shipping

Impact on passenger numbers/freight

- 2.3.1 The Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO) figures suggest a significant downturn in maritime freight volumes of up to 40% (although there has been some improvement on that figure in recent weeks) on the maritime corridors to Great Britain and Continental Europe, with passenger numbers down by 95% on figures last year.
- 2.3.2 Overall, maritime freight represents above 90% of Ireland's international merchandise trade. As such, declines in this sector are an indicator of the overall downturn in economic activity

nationally and internationally, and reflective of the near total collapse in visitor/tourism numbers by sea and by air.

Economic impacts – International Services

- 2.3.3 The viability of ROPAX (combined roll on/roll off and passenger) services on five Southern and Continental maritime routes (Dublin/Cherbourg and Rosslare/Fishguard, Pembroke, Cherbourg and Bilbao) has been disproportionately impacted by the collapse in both passenger and freight numbers. A larger reliance on tourism passenger revenue, combined with smaller volumes of freight carryings compared to the Central corridor has impacted upon this viability.
- 2.3.4 In order to maintain continuity of services, the Government agreed to the emergency provision of a maximum contribution of €15m towards the costs involved in the continued operation of ROPAX ferry services on these routes. The support package is available to the service providers for the continued operation of services on the routes over a three month period.
- 2.3.5 Tourism demand is critical to the viability of the combined passenger and freight services. Re-emergence of tourism from Great Britain and Continental Europe will be gradual, based on the willingness of tourists to travel this year, phased with the lifting of travel restrictions from source markets and also in Ireland.
- 2.3.6 This inevitably creates some uncertainty for shipping companies in terms of scheduling and service offering. The Department is working with stakeholders to conduct an assessment on the viability of current shipping services in the longer term in the light of COVID-19.

Economic impacts – Domestic Services

- 2.3.7 The domestic maritime transport sector involves a significant number of tourist and excursion vessels throughout the state and on inland waters. These vessels make a key contribution to the economic sustainability of small coastal communities. Domestic marine tourism, including island ferry business etc., is vital to local economies and it is critical that such services remain viable when this market returns, in the later phases of the Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business.

Response to the Crisis

- 2.3.8 The maritime sector as a whole has shown strong resilience in continuing to operate and facilitate the ongoing supply of goods in and out of the country during this crisis. Considerable work has been done across the sector to implement measures to ensure that any risks to workers are kept to an absolute minimum.
- 2.3.9 A number of measures have been introduced by the Department to support the continued fluid operation of Ireland's maritime supply chain including:

- The emergency provision of a maximum contribution of €15m towards the costs involved in the continued operation of ROPAX ferry services on five Southern and Continental maritime routes;
- the establishment of a forum for regular engagement with port and shipping stakeholders;
- the development of tailored guidance setting out risk mitigation measures for operators and their essential workers in the maritime supply chain;
- ensuring seafarers' and vessel certification remains valid throughout the crisis;
- facilitation of crew changes at Irish Ports for Irish registered ships; and
- the establishment of a National Logistics Forum to deal with storage congestion issues arising in the ports.

2.3.10 DTTAS is also working with maritime stakeholders with regard to the measures that can be put in place to ensure the safety of workers and passengers to allow for recommencement of international travel at the appropriate stage. The ferry companies in particular are very anxious to see some visibility on the opening up of international travel and the criteria that will be used.

2.3.11 In this regard, the four main passenger ferry companies have made a joint submission to the Department setting out a protocol they propose to put in place in order to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 and to allow for a safe ramping up of passenger services. This includes operating at 50% capacity in the initial phases, extensive and continuous cleaning of public areas and contactless payments. This will feed into the proposals for Government on the overall international travel restrictions.

2.4 Road Haulage

Impact on volume/number of freight movements

2.4.1. Employment in the international road haulage sector is inherently linked to demand for imports and exports, as such, employment levels in the sector are strongly correlated to economic activity. In parallel, other sectors (and subsequently employment in these sectors) are reliant on the movement of goods. Every link in the supply chain must operate to maintain a functioning economy.

2.4.2. Inevitably, the on-going COVID-19 pandemic is negatively impacting on global supply chains, with freight activity levels across land, sea and air all being affected. The road haulage sector, like many industries, has been negatively affected as a consequence. Despite this, critical supply chains including international road transport have functioned well throughout the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and road hauliers continue to play a pivotal role in keeping goods and medicines on our shelves, as well as facilitating the movement of our indigenous exports. There have however been reports of hauliers finding it increasingly difficult to fill backloads to Ireland (or vice versa) given the reduction in overall economic activity both here and abroad, taking into account also the temporary closure of many retail

outlets. As sectors begin to re-open here (with Phase One of the Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business already underway) and across Europe, the demand for goods may begin to rebound also. Phase Two of the Roadmap should see further commercial ventures returning to operation. As a consequence, business for haulage operators should begin to increase.

- 2.4.3. There are some very early signs of a rebound in freight activity with a slow return to more heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on Irish roads and some increases in freight passing through our ports.
- 2.4.4. Domestic HGV traffic volumes on the Irish road network have also seen a rebound in activity recently; according to vehicle counts (Transport Infrastructure Ireland), the week beginning 18 May saw 10-20% less HGV traffic when compared to the equivalent days in 2019. Since 15 May there has been a notable increase in HGV volumes in the Dublin port tunnel with a week-on-week increase of approximately 15% in HGV traffic volumes; HGV volumes in the tunnel during the week beginning 18 May were approximately 30% below volumes on the equivalent days in 2019.

Response to the Crisis

- 2.4.5. DTTAS implemented a number measures to support the continued functioning of the road haulage sector, including:
- a temporary derogation from certain provisions of the EU drivers' hours rules, which expired at end May;
 - the extension of expiry dates on driver Certificate of Professional Competence cards;
 - the extension of validity periods for driver licenses due to expire between 1 March and 30 June 2020 inclusive having their date of expiry extended by 4 months.
 - a three month extension to vehicles with a Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness (CVR) Test due on or after 28 March 2020;
 - in addition, a communication regarding access to sanitary facilities and motorway services was published, as well as guidance to all supply chain workers, a summary of motorway service area facilities, and guidelines for cleaning HGVs; and
 - Commercial Vehicle Testing resumed on a phased basis from 18 May following a period of suspension.
- 2.4.6. Plans have been prepared by the Road Safety Authority and their contracted service providers, in consultation with the Department and taking account of the National Return to Work Safely Protocol, for the resumption of a number of other services in Phase 2 of the Roadmap. It is intended that the service operations will recommence on a phased basis, taking account of priority users, the different characteristics of different workplaces and also allowing for experience gained in the early stages to be applied as the resumption is extended. These services include the National Driver Licensing Service (NDLS). If it is apparent that the NDLS is unable to meet demand in the short term within the public health

requirements of the Protocol, given that a backlog is likely to have built up, the possibility of a further extension of validity periods for licenses will be examined.

2.5 Tourism

- 2.5.1 Tourism is one of Ireland's most important economic sectors and plays a pivotal role particularly in rural and regional Ireland, with most earnings retained within Ireland. In 2019 Tourism was responsible for earnings of €7.5 billion (excluding airfares and carrier costs). Tourism and hospitality supported 260,000 jobs in 2019. Tourism accounts for 11% of total employment - our largest indigenous sector¹.
- 2.5.2 Tourism is a significant exporting sector. In 2019, overseas tourists spent €5.2bn in Ireland with an additional €2.4bn spent by the residents of Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- 2.5.3 International tourist numbers have collapsed owing to COVID-19. The European Commission's communication *Tourism and Transport in 2020 and Beyond* estimates that tourism could see a 70% drop in turnover in Q2 2020². Ireland is no exception. Ireland's tourism sector is deeply dependent on overseas visitors - accounting for 75% of overall tourism revenue. Although Irish tourists are also less likely to travel overseas this summer, domestic tourism will not fill the gap created through the absence of overseas visitors.
- 2.5.4 Fáilte Ireland research shows that domestic consumers' levels of intent for both a long break and a short break in Ireland in 2020 is down 20% versus the same time last year. Assuming there are no international tourists coming into Ireland for the remainder of 2020 in addition to a decline of 20% in domestic tourism – a scenario along these lines could lead to an overall loss to the economy of €2.3bn and the loss of nearly 200,000 jobs.
- 2.5.5 Spending by foreign tourists supports €8.7 billion of the country's GDP. Out-of-state visitors spend their cash on a wide array of goods and services, many of which are not immediately identified with tourism e.g. shopping, internal transport, sightseeing and entertainment, thus tourist spending is important in supporting business activity levels amongst a wide range of retailers and service providers outside the traditional tourist industry domain.

Response to the Crisis

- 2.5.6 The Department continues to liaise with other Governments Departments and industry representative bodies, to align the economy wide COVID-19 supports and initiatives with tourism and hospitality needs. As a result, many tourism businesses are now availing of the various supports that the Government has already put in place.

¹ The 260,000 employment figure is 11% of the Central Statistic Office's Quarter 4 of 2019 Labour Force Survey total employment figure of 2,361,200

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-commission-tourism-transport-2020-and-beyond_en.pdf

- 2.5.7 A special Tourism Recovery Taskforce has been established and will prepare a Tourism Recovery Plan, which will include a set of recommendations on how best the Irish tourism sector can adapt and recover.
- 2.5.8 The Taskforce will engage with stakeholders in the tourism sector through a series of consultative meetings and written submissions, so that the views and experiences of all are taken into consideration.
- 2.5.9 Once international travel resumes, DTTAS will work with our partners in the travel and tourism sectors to ensure that foreign tourists are able to safely travel to Ireland and avail of the tourist offerings here.

3. COVID-19 Public Health Measures on International Travel

- 3.1.1. As part of the public health measures that assist in managing the spread COVID-19 in Ireland, the government is currently advising against all non-essential travel off the island of Ireland. Additionally, any arriving passengers are advised to self-isolate for 14 days on arrival, to ensure that COVID-19 is not introduced to the country by travel.
- 3.1.2. This advice has significant impacts on the international transport sectors, as well as potentially impacting tourism activity and elite sports in later phases of the Roadmap for Reopening Society & Business.
- 3.1.3. A number of steps have been taken to date to protect short-term risk of interrupting essential supply chains, working with other EU Member States and organisations, and within Ireland.
- 3.1.4. DTTAS will also work closely with the Department of Health and other relevant Departments to consider how proposals for Government on a phased approach to reopening might be developed, based on the criteria outlined by the European Commission.

EU Guidance to keep essential transport moving

- 3.1.5. In order to keep freight and supply chains moving across the EU on all transport modes during the pandemic, the European Commission issued practical advice through its Communication on the Implementation of Green Lanes³. This stated that transport workers, irrespective of their nationality and place of residence, should be allowed to cross internal borders. Travel restrictions and mandatory quarantine of transport workers should be waived, without prejudice for competent authorities to take proportionate and specifically adapted measures to minimise the risk of contagion.

Irish Government COVID-19 Guidance for Supply Chain Workers

- 3.1.6. DTTAS worked with the Departments of Health and of Business Enterprise and Innovation and transport stakeholders to develop Guidance for essential supply chain workers to follow when travelling internationally. This sets out good practice to adopt including when working abroad. The Guidance also confirms that the advice to restrict movement for anyone coming to our returning to Ireland does not apply if the person is an essential supply chain worker, thus keeping supply chains moving. This guidance was published on 26 March⁴.

EU Tourism and Travel Framework for easing restrictions

- 3.1.7. The EU has recently published a Tourism and Travel Framework which is based on advice from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and sets out a framework for facilitating a managed and safe return to international travel.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/legislation/2020-03-23-communication-green-lanes_en.pdf

⁴ <https://assets.gov.ie/71523/2151c443c92a45228cac4e1757770df.pdf>

- 3.1.8. The EU has recognised the importance of restoring connectivity and transport internationally, offering guidance and criteria through various communications to promote and facilitate this in a safe and coordinated way. To complement these national measures, the EU Commission has developed guidance, based on advice from the ECDC, to facilitate a managed and safe return to cross border, international travel.
- 3.1.9. The Commission's Tourism and Transport package includes:
- an overall strategy towards recovery in 2020 and beyond;
 - a common approach to restoring free movement and lifting restrictions at EU internal borders in a gradual and coordinated way;
 - a framework to support the gradual re-establishment of transport whilst ensuring the safety of passengers and personnel;
 - a recommendation which aims to make travel vouchers an attractive alternative to cash reimbursement for consumers; and
 - criteria for restoring tourism activities safely and gradually and for developing health protocols for hospitality establishments such as hotels.
- 3.1.10. In particular, the European Commission Communication “Towards a phased and coordinated approach for the lifting of internal border controls and restoring freedom of movement” invites Member States to engage in a process of re-opening unrestricted cross-border movement within the Union on the basis of 3 criteria:
- epidemiological, notably focusing on areas and Member States where the situation is improving, based on the regional map being developed by the ECDC;
 - the ability to apply containment measures (e.g. physical distancing, hygiene) throughout the whole journey, including at border crossings; and
 - economic and social considerations, prioritising cross-border movement in key areas of health, social and economic activity.
- 3.1.11. The approach set out by the Commission would facilitate the lifting of restrictions at borders in the first phase between regions or Member States with similar epidemiological situations. This does not only concern neighbouring Member States: when restrictions are lifted between two regions, the same treatment should be extended to all regions in Europe where the health situation is comparable. A further Commission Communication sets out very specific guidance on restoring transports services and connectivity across all modes. These guidelines provide a strong evidence base to support decisions in Ireland as to how and on which criteria we will ease travel restrictions and restore vital international connectivity.

Co-operation arrangements with other Member States

- 3.1.12. A Network of National Contact Points has been established across EU Member States to share any information relevant to the transport sector in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Information on measures taken by Member States regarding current travel

advice, border controls, suspensions of traffic, quarantine for travellers and restrictions to the freedom of movement is being collected by the European Commission and is updated regularly on their website.

- 3.1.13. The European Commission and the Integrated Political Crisis Response Group are currently reviewing the means by which coordination of the restoration measures can be best achieved across the transport, tourism and border management areas.
- 3.1.14. The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport has engaged with his EU Ministerial counterparts, most recently by way of an EU Tourism Council on 20 May, an EU Sports Council on 2 June, and an EU Transport Council on 4 June.
- 3.1.15. The Transport Council of 4 June recognised that the EU needs a coordinated and balanced recovery strategy, which combines the overarching protection of public health with operational and economic recovery. It also recognised that an efficient freight transport system is essential in supporting the recovery of the EU economy.
- 3.1.16. Ministers noted that the reduction in air and maritime passenger numbers has been severe and has impacted widely across both sectors. The Council welcomed the new European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) guidelines which will support the aviation sector in the recovery phase. On Shipping, Ministers urged that coordination take place at a global level, including for the need to facilitate crew changes and crew repatriations. While Ministers recognised that a key aspect of public transport will be restoring public confidence, they agreed that this should not restrict Member States from promoting more environmental-friendly public transport.
- 3.1.17. Ministers also agreed the need for EU investments in the transport sector, including in particular in environmentally friendly transport modes.

Co-operation with NI and UK Governments

- 3.1.18. As well as co-operation and engagement with our EU partners, we have had ongoing engagement with colleagues in Government in Northern Ireland and the UK on managing the transport response to COVID-19. The Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport has had a number of discussions with his counterpart in Northern Ireland, as well as engagement with the Secretary of State for Transport in the UK.
- 3.1.19. A joint statement was issued by the UK, Irish and French governments on 24 April, pledging to work together on temporary measures to ensure COVID-19 does not threaten vital freight routes between the countries. The statement said the nations are united by trade which has thrived through the most difficult of times, and that they will continue to engage closely to help keep freight moving between the nations.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1.1 DTTAS' immediate priority is to develop recovery plans with our sectors along with guidelines for the safe re-opening of activity where sectors have been closed or significantly reduced.
- 4.1.2 The Department is working intensively with colleagues across the civil service to develop proposals for Government, providing clear criteria for decision-making in relation to easing restrictions on international travel, recognising the fundamental value of international connectivity to the Irish economy. This will enable a proposed pathway for consideration by NPHET and Government for the gradual restoration of international travel in order to provide greater certainty and to assist the industry with planning over the period ahead.
- 4.1.3 If successful, this will bring much needed activity to the international travel and tourism sectors, restoring our connectivity and returning foreign tourists to Ireland.