



An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí Department of Social Protection

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Minister Burton in New York to promote Ireland for business and tourism

Burton to meet with leading US political, media, business and investment figures

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD, will commence an intensive round of engagements to promote Ireland as a leading tourist and business destination in New York on Tuesday 13th March 2012.

“There is already an astonishing amount of business and tourism activity between Ireland and the US, for instance:

- **tourist numbers from North America increased last year and broke the 1 million mark in the period September 2010-September 2011,**
- **there are approximately 500, IDA supported, US companies operating in Ireland, employing over 100,000 people and**
- **merchandise trade in 2010 was valued at €27.2bn (+4.1% on 2009) while exports to the US were valued at €20.8bn (+13.6% on 2009).**

This is an excellent foundation on which to build and it reflects the fact that Ireland is an attractive destination for tourists and investors alike”, said Minister Burton.

Over the course of her visit, Minister Burton will address a number of groups and guests at events such as:

- the Irish Business Organisation, the largest business network of Irish and Irish-Americans in New York with over 350 members and a broader network of contacts who attend monthly events;
- a reception hosted by Matheson Ormsby Prentice, which will include a range of existing and potential investors in Ireland;
- the annual St Patrick’s Day event hosted by media consultant Terry Rooney, which is expected to be attended by over 100 media contacts (Minister Burton will also have a separate interview with NBC);
- the Ireland-US Council lunch which is an annual fixture on the New York calendar and a focal event for business promotion with strong support from Tourism Ireland, IDA, Enterprise Ireland and CIE Tours. Around 300 clients and business interests are expected to attend.
- the Irish America Hall of Fame, event which will honour five distinguished leaders – Dr John Lahey, Commissioner Ray Kelly, Loretta Brennan Glucksman, Tom Moran and Kevin Roche.

Commenting on the importance of promoting Ireland abroad, Minister Burton said, **“the Irish economy is growing again, although the level of that growth is low, and our public finances are under control. Export levels are at their highest level ever, we have restructured and recapitalised**



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our banking system, labour costs have improved and new initiatives have been launched to boost job creation.

Ireland ranks first worldwide in terms of the value of projects and investment it attracts, according to the IBM Global Location Trends Report. The World Bank's 'Doing Business' report for 2011 found Ireland to be the most supportive business environment in the euro area. Ireland is home to:

- 9 of the top 10 global pharmaceuticals corporations;
- over 50% of the world's leading financial services firms; and
- 10 of the top 'Born on the Internet' companies.

Recent investments include Abbott, Eli-Lilly, Mastercard, Hewlett Packard, Microsoft and PayPal.

"The Government is very actively using the unique opportunity of St. Patrick's Day celebrations across the globe to build on these positive points to deliver long-term sustainable growth to Ireland and for the benefit of its citizens. My message to American businesses and investors is: Ireland is a safe, secure and open place to do business and to invest. Now is the time to invest in – and benefit from – Ireland's recovery."

Minister Burton will also visit the Emerald Isle Immigration Centre, the New York Irish Centre and the Aisling Irish Centre. She will attend the St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee Reception, Mayor Bloomberg's breakfast reception, a lunch with the Knights of St. Patrick and a reception with the American Irish Historical Society. On her final day in New York, Minister Burton will speak at the Ireland Day event in the New York Stock Exchange.

During these visits and throughout her other engagements in New York, Minister Burton will also promote the major tourism focus next year, **The Gathering Ireland 2013**. The Gathering is a year-long celebration of everything good and unique about Ireland. It will be the biggest tourism initiative ever staged in Ireland and will consist of a year-long programme organised around a series of festivals, both existing and new. The Gathering is inviting Ireland's Diaspora from around the world to join and support Ireland in 2013 as well as anyone that has or feels a connection to Ireland through for example through business, education or a love of Irish culture or music.

The year-long event, which will be launched on 16th April, aims to attract as many as 325,000 extra visitors to Ireland. This significant increase in visitor numbers would generate €170 million in revenue to the Irish economy in 2013.

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