



Minister Says Over 60,000 Irish Emigrants Have Returned Home In Recent Years

Brennan Launches Comprehensive Information Guide In London For Returning Emigrants

The Minister for social affairs, Séamus Brennan T.D., said today that Ireland's continuing economic success and increasing employment opportunities are attracting thousands of Irish people back to this country from abroad every year.

Minister Brennan disclosed that according to the latest statistics, between 2002 and 2004 more than 61,000 Irish emigrants returned to live in Ireland from locations around the world, and the trend is continuing in 2005. This contrasted with 1989 when a similar number left Ireland to find work and the hope of a better way of life.

The minister advised all those considering returning to Ireland to ensure that they explore all aspects of the proposed change so that they would be in a position to make informed decisions. "to do this it is essential that they have available to them good quality up-to-date information covering a wide range of topics such as social welfare, health, pensions, taxation, education and of course accommodation. It is important that people realise there are costs, as well as benefits, involved in deciding to come back to Ireland."

Minister Brennan was speaking in the Irish centre in London when launching a new edition of the comprehensive "***Returning To Ireland***" guide published by emigrant advice and funded by the department of social and family affairs.



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The guide, now in its 5th edition, includes information covering a wide range of topics such as social welfare, health, pensions, taxation, education and accommodation. The information is presented in a way that is tailored to the needs of targeted groups of people, for instance, the elderly coming home to retire, single people returning to Ireland to find work, and the particular needs of families hoping to start a new life in Ireland.

Emigrant advice is a project of Crosscare, the Dublin diocese social care agency. Since 1987, emigrant advice has been working with migrants in vulnerable situations. In recent years, clients include intending emigrants, immigrants, returnees and intending returnees. The Dion fund for Irish emigrant welfare in Britain, established by the Irish government, has funding this year of eur7 million. In addition, the department of social and family affairs information unit has allocated almost eur340,000 for emigrant advice projects.

Minister Brennan said: "many Irish emigrants naturally cherish a deep aspiration to return to the land of their birth to work or retire. However, the Ireland of today is often a very different country to the one they left, maybe decades ago. Ireland is now an attractive employment location, offering new opportunities and the prospect of a good quality of life for both returning emigrants and for others from all corners of the globe. However, it is critically important that before our emigrants make up their minds on whether returning to Ireland is the right option for them that they look in great detail at all of the options so that when they do make a decision it is a fully informed decision."

Minister Brennan said that he would like to see more and more of our emigrant's returning. "i am confident the opportunities to return will continue for many years to come. One has only to look to the estimate that Ireland will need up to 50,000 workers from outside the state each year for years to come to meet emerging employment needs to see the extent of the work opportunities that are constantly emerging as the economy continues to perform solidly."

The minister said that emigrant advice had identified and made a practical response to that need when they published their first "returning to Ireland" guide in 1997 and he now welcomed the publication of this 5th edition. "the guide is full of relevant information that i have no doubt will help smooth the pathway to a successful return to Ireland for our many returning emigrants and the others who decide that Ireland is where they wish to settle."

Minister Brennan added: "I applaud the production team on the new initiative they have taken in



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presenting this edition in folder format. The information is presented in a way that is tailored to the needs of targeted groups of people, for instance, the elderly coming home to retire, single people returning to Ireland to find work, and the particular needs of families hoping to start a new life in Ireland. Another advantage of this innovative new format is to allow specific information to be easily up-dated while the general narrative can remain unchanged, an example being increases in social welfare benefits announced in the budget.

The role of my department in the area of supporting emigrant groups has been built around providing good quality, clear and comprehensive information. We provide pre-departure information and advice to those who need it through supporting the various non-statutory agencies involved in this work. In this way my department is delighted to continue to fund emigrant advice to produce such a user friendly publication.”

Press Release Ends