



**An Roinn Coimirce Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection**

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**Burton in London to promote Ireland for business
and tourism as the London Eye goes Green**

Minister for Social Protection, Ms Joan Burton T.D., travels to London today (*Wednesday, 16th March 2011*) for the start of a three day visit to engage in an intensive round of engagements to promote Ireland as a leading tourist and business destination.

“Over 2.7 million visitors travelled to Ireland from Britain in 2010 and we want to build on that for 2011 and beyond. Tourism Ireland is investing €17million in a campaign to restore the British tourism market to growth and the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Ireland in 2011 will provide the opportunity to show the world how welcoming and vibrant Ireland is.”

Minister Burton continued, “British visitor satisfaction with Ireland increased last year in the area of value for money. This is a good foundation on which to build and reflects the fact that there’s never been a better time to visit Ireland”.

Over the course of her visit, Minister Burton’s engagements will include visits to the Best of Britain and Ireland Tourism Expo in Birmingham and the Greening of the London Eye. The Minister will also promote Ireland as a modern and dynamic destination for business and investment at a number of events and receptions attended by Irish, British and foreign media as well as business and economic contacts, government officials and members of the diplomatic community.

Commenting on the importance of promoting Ireland abroad, Minister Burton said, “Irish companies have had continuous export growth for 20 months in a



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row and Ireland's indigenous exports for 2010 were an estimated €13.7billion. The Programme for Government is clear that Ireland's economic recovery must be export-led and it sets out a number of actions to support growth in exports and the development of new markets.

"Britain continues to be Ireland's largest trading partner and our most important export market. For Britain too, Ireland is a vital export market and a significant source in inward investment. As our two economies return to growth, we will continue to build on the longstanding ties of trade and investment between Ireland and the UK to further develop and strengthen our bilateral economic relationship".

Minister Burton will also visit Irish Centres in London and Birmingham to see at first hand the work done by Department of Foreign Affairs funded organisations to support older and vulnerable members of the Irish community.

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