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PRESS RELEASE

TOP EUROPEAN TOURISM RESEARCHERS GATHER IN DUBLIN

Visits to Europe grow in 2014 with Trend Expected to Continue

Brussels, 18th February 2015 - European tourism is estimated to have grown by 4% in 2014 and is projected to continue this upward trend in 2015. This finding was announced as Fáilte Ireland today welcomed the European Travel Commission's (ETC) Market Intelligence Group, some of Europe's top tourism research professionals, to the Grand Hotel, Malahide, Dublin for their Annual General Meeting (18th to 20th February 2015).

The 4% growth in tourism in Europe in 2014 was generated by an additional 22 million visitors last year bringing the number of visits to the continent to 588 million. Ireland reflected this trend with visitor numbers growing by almost 9% during the same period while foreign earnings were up an estimated 13%, an increase of approx. €400m. The ETC attributes growth in travel to Europe to a recovery in major source markets, marketing efforts in promoting travel outside the peak season and themed promotional activities.

The ETC's latest quarterly report can be found [here](#).

The ETC delegates are meeting in Ireland to develop their future research agenda to help European destinations increase their individual competitive advantages which underpin the position of Europe as the world's most popular tourism destination.

Mr Eduardo Santander, Executive Director of ETC, today said:

"It is highly important that National Tourism Organisations strengthen their collective work in order to be successful in promoting 'Destination Europe' to long-haul markets. Extensive market research as well as cooperation between public and public-private stakeholders is essential at the European, national, and regional level".

Welcoming the European delegates to Dublin, Caeman Wall, Head of Fáilte Ireland's Research Division, said:

"We are very pleased to welcome the ETC Market Intelligence Group back to Dublin - for the first time in 25 years - and we are looking forward to contributing to their deliberations and providing some insights from an Irish point of view. While Ireland has its own unique tourism characteristics and dynamics, we also share many of the challenges and opportunities which our European peers are facing and we can certainly benefit from the shared learning available at an event like this."

The topics to be discussed at this week's meeting are wide-ranging; including topics from Health Tourism (Medical & Wellness Tourism) to the decision-making process of conference organisers as well as exchanging best practice in tourism research.

Representatives from eighteen national tourism organisations will attend AGM in Dublin along with partners from UNWTO, the OECD, European Commission, European Tourism Association (ETOA), European Cities Marketing and the World Tourism and Travel Council.

Established in 1948 to leverage tourism as a contributor to the revitalisation of Europe's economy after World War II, the European Travel commission is a non-profit organisation responsible for the promotion of Europe as a tourist destination in long haul markets. The ETC Market Intelligence Group is Europe's leading tourism research network and is made up of research experts from thirty-three European national tourism organisations. This high level expert group meets annually to take stock of the latest trends in tourism and share knowledge on research-related aspects of tourism.

More information is available at ETC's corporate website under the following link: www.etc-corporate.org.

Note to editors:

The European Travel Commission is an association of National Tourism Organisations (NTOs). It was created in 1948 to promote Europe as a tourism destination to the long-haul markets outside Europe, originally in the USA and later in Canada, Latin America and Asia. It currently has 33 member NTOs, including 8 from outside the European Union.

Europe is the world's No. 1 tourist destination with 588 million international arrivals and more than 50% of the market share of worldwide tourism.

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For further information: the ETC's corporate website www.etc-corporate.org is aimed at industry, government and educational personnel interested in tourism to Europe.

Tourists seeking travel-specific information and ideas are directed to the ETC's consumer portal www.visiteurope.com.