

# IRELAND: TOURISM INDUSTRY CONFIDENT OF GROWTH



It is 2013 already and analysts are concerned about the state of tourism in Ireland following a low tourism turnout in 2012 that was termed as rather disappointing. However this year seems to be bright with the Irish Tourist Industry Confederation chief executive Eamonn McKeon stating that 'they believe the dip has passed'.

In 2012, visitors from Britain dropped by 4%, Britain accounts for approximately 45% of all tourists Ireland receives. However, there was a significant increase in visitors from North America and Europe accounting to up to 2% but this was insufficient to make up for all the drop in British visitors that make up to 100,000 visits, as per an annual review by the Confederation.

**To ensure what was experienced in 2012 never happens again, the confederation is looking forward to a prosperous 2013 by diaspora initiative Gathering and implementation of a fresh strategy specialized for the British market.** Mr. McKeon observed that although the levels experienced in the past years (2000s) would not be feasible, the growth will be 'solid and sustained'.

The industry is most concerned with United States and Canada's market with Mr. McKeon saying that the Confederation would be disappointed if growth by double digits from Canada and United States is not achieved.

2012's increase in US and Canada was due to the Navy-Notre games in the last quarter of the year which accounted for a fifth of the increase. The Gathering is estimated to bring additional visitors in excess of 325,000 from Canada and US alone.

'The Gathering has got US tour operators very enthused' stated John Healy, the Confederation chair, who is also the director of Abbey Travel. The industry is hopeful for a 5% increase in British tourists as per a joint state plan referred to as 'GB plan to Growth'. The industry's major target is to change the way Ireland is marketed.

Researchers are of the opinion that modern day tourists are different in that they want to engage on a one on one level with the local people and share their experiences hence marketing should be presented in a way that gears to selling this idea.

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