

# Newsletter

## Minister Shatter announces extension of Irish Short-stay Visa Waiver Programme

The Ireland India Council (IIC) today welcomed Irish Governments decision for the extension of the Irish Short-stay Visa Waiver Programme for a further period of four years. This initiative, introduced for the first time last year, was welcomed as a very positive step in encouraging Indian visitors to Ireland.

The Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, Mr. Alan Shatter, T.D., announced this today. The Minister stated that he was delighted that the Government had agreed to the extension of the Programme. "There has been unanimous welcome for this initiative from the tourism promotion bodies and the tourism industry. The initial indications of the impact of the Programme are very positive. It was originally intended that the review of the Programme would follow the London Olympics period but on strong representations from the tourism industry I brought forward the review which was completed in recent weeks.

Today's announcement will facilitate preparations for the 2013 tourist

season during which I am confident the industry will maximise the potential of the Visa Waiver Programme", the Minister said.

This scheme is an integral part of the Government's Jobs Initiative and is intended to promote tourism, particularly from emerging markets such as China, India and the Gulf Region. Under the Programme, tourists or business people who have lawfully entered the UK, including Northern Ireland, on a valid UK visa are able to travel on to Ireland without the requirement to obtain an Irish visa.

Commenting on the today's announcement Director of the Ireland India Council Mr Prashant Shukla congratulated the Minister and



Government and highlighted if Government could consider Schengen and US valid visas as an entry criteria along with present UK Visa, this will further enhance huge tourism opportunities for Indian visitors travelling parts of Europe and America to line up their visits to Ireland as over 25 thousands strong Indian community living in Ireland.

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## Indian travelers in Ireland

According the website Tourism in Ireland most people who are coming from India to Ireland are Individuals from the age group 25 to 45 years old. Indian travellers tend to come to Ireland between April and September.

The average length of stay for an Indian visitor in Ireland is 10-15 days. Understanding awareness and image of Ireland in India. Indians want to experience other cultures but still have a taste of home.

Travel abroad is an important status symbol amongst the growing middle classes.

