

Irish Duty Free Alliance set to hold crucial meeting on Friday

The Irish Duty Free Alliance (IDFA) will hold its very first meeting at the Dublin Hilton Hotel this Friday with the primary objective aimed at supporting the re-introduction of duty and tax free sales on routes to and from the UK when it leaves the EU on March 30, 2019.



This worthy initiative has been established by Aer Rianta International (ARI) and the IDFA says it is all part of the overall strategic campaign which is being led by the European Travel and Retail Confederation (ETRC).

THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT MEETING

At the same time, it is also expected to complement the wider pan-European strategy on this issue, plus the work being done by the industry in the UK to inform and encourage the immediate return of duty free allowances once Brexit takes place on 30 March 2019.

According to the IDFA, most of its members now represent most sectors of the Irish travel retail business, including airports, airlines and ferry operators on the retail side and brand owners and suppliers representing the interests of a huge range of major brands.



This initiative is being led by the European Travel and Retail Confederation (ETRC) whose officers and representatives comprise (clockwise) Sarah Branquinho, John Hume, Keith Spinks and Frank O'Connell.

The alliance says it is 'acutely aware' of the large-scale opportunity for the Irish travel retail sector if the re-establishment of duty free between the UK and EU goes ahead.

NATIONAL POLICY STRATEGY

It says that this Friday's meeting 'will seek to agree the roll out of a national policy strategy focused on gaining support across the different political sectors in Ireland, and to ensure there is Government support for the re-introduction of duty free, when the Brexit trade negotiations get underway'.

Any organisations wishing to attend this meeting should contact the IDFA in advance to secure a place. To register interest, please email: karin.oconor@humbrophy.com or telephone +353 (0)1 662 4712.

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A detailed update of the ETRC strategic approach to this hugely important issue can be found in the October edition of *TRBusiness*, where ETRC Secretary General Keith Spinks talks exclusively in depth about building political support for the full return of duty free allowances.

BACKGROUND:

Within this interview Spinks underlined the importance of keeping the pressure on: “Everything we see at the moment – whatever the talk is about a customs union or trade agreements – the UK government’s position remains that it will leave the EU on March 2019.

“If there are some other temporary arrangements or customs it doesn’t matter – the UK becomes a third country. The moment we leave the EU the treaty no longer applies to the UK.

“So there is no legislation that needs to be changed in the EU, as it is written in such a way that if you are travelling to Dubai, Moscow, or New York, these are in third countries and therefore you can purchase duty free.

“So we don’t want the EU legislation to change, the UK will be a third country and travellers to that destination will be able to purchase duty free products.

“So what we are trying to do are to make the member states aware of the importance of this and the benefit this will provide to operators and transport hubs. Particularly those countries that have large traffic flows to the UK – such as Ireland and Spain, or a large percentage of their traffic is UK-bound like Cyprus or Malta.”



Keith Spinks.