

I ( T ) A S

Irish Tourist

Assistance Service

helping tourist victims of crime

Annual Report 2013

*Celebrating 20 Years*

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I would like to congratulate the Irish Tourist Assistance Service on their 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of providing assistance to tourist victims of crime in Dublin.

Dublin prides itself on being a friendly city and is happy to welcome hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. The majority have an enjoyable stay in our capital city and as Lord Mayor I receive many positive comments. Unfortunately however, a few people do have a bad experience during their stay in Dublin and I am reassured that the staff and volunteers of the Irish Tourist Assistance Service are at hand to help them through those difficult experiences.

As Lord Mayor I meet with a wide range of organisations who work to improve the city. Ranging from State bodies such as Dublin City Council and An Garda Síochána to local business and tourism bodies. With us all working together, we are seeing a positive impact on the streets of Dublin which benefits locals and visitors alike.

As Lord Mayor and on behalf of the citizens of Dublin I would like to pay tribute to the Irish Tourist Assistance Service staff and volunteers who continue to work tirelessly and quietly not only in Dublin but countrywide.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Christy Burke'.

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**Christy Burke**  
**Lord Mayor of Dublin**



**Message from the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Paschal Donohoe T.D.**

I am delighted as Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport to take this opportunity to congratulate the Irish Tourist Assistance Service on their 20th Anniversary.

Irish people are world renowned for our hospitality and welcome. While many things have changed throughout those 20 years, our welcome for overseas visitors is now as friendly as ever. Visitors are assured of a truly memorable holiday and research has shown the vast majority of our overseas visitors are more than happy to recommend Ireland as a holiday destination. However, for a very small percentage of tourists who become victims of crime while visiting Ireland, it is reassuring to know that the Irish Tourist Assistance is available year-round to offer immediate support and assistance free of charge.

Many visitors return to Ireland because they simply cannot fit in all they would like to experience in just one visit. It is a credit to the hard working staff and volunteers at ITAS that many of the victims of crime whom they have helped, also return to hopefully experience all of the really positive things which a holiday here offers.

Since its inception in 1994, ITAS have always looked at ways of improving the service provided, with the production of a safety DVD, a multi-lingual “Safety Tips for Tourists” guide and a user-friendly website. While in an ideal world their assistance would not be required at all, I know that ITAS will continue to look at ways to further improve their service in the years ahead.

Looking back at the year just past, we had the enormously successful year of “The Gathering” to entice visitors to Ireland. Thankfully the initiative worked very well and hopefully the many new events throughout the country, the strong bonds formed in organizing same and the positive experiences of those who visited from overseas in 2013 will leave a successful legacy in terms of even more visitors in the years ahead.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge my appreciation of the tremendous work of ITAS and its contribution to the success of Ireland’s tourism industry during the past 20 years.



### **Message from the Minister for Justice and Equality, Frances Fitzgerald T.D.**

I congratulate the Irish Tourist Assistance Service (ITAS) for the work that they have done to help tourist victims of crime over the last 20 years. I am pleased that the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime has been able to provide considerable financial support to ITAS from the funds made available through the Department of Justice and Equality. I wish ITAS continued success with their endeavours to make the experience of all visitors to Ireland a positive one.



### **Message from Nóirín O'Sullivan, Garda Commissioner**

An Garda Síochána is very proud to be associated with the Irish Tourist Assistance Service (ITAS). The development of tourism in Ireland, which helps support so many jobs and communities around the country, has in part been due to our reputation for friendliness.

In the event that a tourist does become a victim of crime, they know that regardless of their cultural background or the language they speak, that the ITAS staff and volunteers will be there to listen to them, advise them, and do all they can to help them get their holiday plans back on track. The ITAS' work in reassuring and supporting visitors to these shores has seen many people experience at first hand that caring, open and helpful nature.

The ITAS has always been very supportive of the work that An Garda Síochána does to prevent and tackle crime in all its forms.

I want to thank ITAS for that support and the work they have done over the last 20 years. I want to wish them well in the future and assure them of the continued support of An Garda Síochána.



**Message from Shaun Quinn, Chief Executive, Fáilte Ireland**

I am delighted to have this opportunity to congratulate the Irish Tourist Assistance Service on 20 years of providing an invaluable resource to visitors to Ireland.

A quiet hero of the tourism industry, the Irish Tourist Assistance Service works tirelessly to ensure that those tourists and visitors who find themselves in difficulty are reassured and assisted and that their needs are met every step of the way.

This practical support, offered free of charge to tourists in distress, not only enables them to continue to enjoy their holiday, but also helps to enhance Ireland's reputation as a welcoming and caring destination.

I would like to wish all those involved with ITAS all the best for the future and once more thank them for their part in reaffirming the Céad Míle Fáilte at the heart of the Irish tourism experience.

## **Message from Derek Nally, Founding Member of the Service**



When asked by Lisa, a friend of many years standing, to pen a “few words” marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Irish Tourist Assistance Service, I readily agreed given the valuable role the Service provides for tourist victims of crime. When helping to establish the original Service (TVSS) with Ann Meade in 1994, I was conscious of the need to put in place a professional organisation with the skill and resources necessary to offer support and counselling to tourist victims of crime while holidaying here in Ireland.

That the Irish Tourist Assistance Service has succeeded in meeting the aims and objectives of the founding members is clearly evident by the fact that this year it is celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment. Over the years it has provided invaluable support and assistance to those in need and many visitors to this country have had every reason to gratefully acknowledge the role played by the Service’s personnel in helping them recover from the trauma of being a victim of crime.

The efforts of the Service in this respect has helped enhance Ireland’s reputation as a nation fully conscious of its responsibilities towards visitors to our country and it is my earnest hope that the work started all those years ago will continue under the excellent leadership of Lisa Kennedy for many years to come.

May I take this opportunity of congratulating Lisa, her staff and volunteers on reaching such an important milestone in the life of the Service and to thank them collectively for upholding the highest standards of professional care as envisaged by the founding members.

## **Message from Ann Meade MBE, Founding Member of the Service**

### **Irish Tourist Assistance Service - 20 years a-growing**



As a founding member, in 1994, of a special service for victimised tourist visitors to our country, it is a great pleasure to congratulate the Chairman and Board of Directors of ITAS, Lisa Kennedy, Chief Executive, and Bernard Lavelle, Office Manager, on the continuous provision of the service to this date.

Over the years, visitors to our country who had the misfortune to become victim to a crime have availed of much needed assistance from a dedicated and professional style of service, long since regarded as a best practice model internationally.

Lisa Kennedy has responded to a number of invitations to conferences abroad to speak on the only service in Europe, specialising in assisting tourists who become victims of crime. In 2013 the EU Commission issued a Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime in all EU member states, which is due to come into force on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

One of the Commission's aims is that the Directive will improve on the number of victims accessing support and help in cross border victimisation, as fifty percent of all crime happens to people who are travelling. ITAS has been cited as a prime example of high standard service delivery, contributing as it does, to our reputation as a nation fully conscious of its responsibilities towards visitors to our country.

Those associated with ITAS know that considerable effort, backing and support are vital in the provision of a service adequate to the needs of victimised tourists.

The service has been fortunate in its sponsors, many of whom have remained loyal through the years. Without funding and benefit in kind from tourism related and other organisations it would not have been feasible to continue the high standard service delivery. The importance of partnerships with the many players across the sector cannot be over-estimated.

I congratulate the many sponsors, volunteers and everyone involved with the initiative, on their commitment and dedication. It's thanks to you all that twenty years on the aims and objectives of the founding members are alive and well.



## Message from Martin Holohan, Chairman of ITAS



ITAS celebrates 20 years of service provision to tourist victims of crime in 2014. In that time, almost 13,000 tourists have been supported by ITAS through the many difficulties that arise when one is a victim of crime in a foreign country. Language barriers, cultural and legal differences, isolation and being stranded in a strange country without money or identification are just a few of the challenges tourists may face in these situations. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the staff and volunteers who have shown tourists the caring, hospitable qualities for which Ireland is renowned.

Since 1994, An Garda Síochána has been the main source of referral of tourist crime victims to ITAS. For 14 years ITAS was accommodated in the DMR Headquarters in Dublin and the Gardaí continue to accommodate the Service in Store Street Garda Station at weekends and Public Holidays. I would like to express my gratitude for their continued support and hope that this successful partnership continues well into the future.

On behalf of the Service, may I extend my sincere gratitude to all our sponsors. I can say without hesitation that your support is fundamental to the success and viability of ITAS. The goodwill of the industry is very much in evidence through the high level of assistance provided to tourist victims of crime. Due to the immediate nature of the assistance provided by ITAS, I am delighted to report that 747 tourists (92%) opted to continue their holiday plans in 2013.

I would also like to thank the embassies for working in co-operation with ITAS for the past 20 years. We are delighted that they have recognised the unique service ITAS offers their citizens and are very proud that it has been formally acknowledged. In 2004, Ann Meade, founding member of the Service, was awarded an MBE in recognition of the service ITAS provides to British visitors and in 2008 Bernard Lavelle, Manager was made a Cavaliere in the Order of The Star of Italian Solidarity by the President of Italy for the support which we have provided to its citizens.

As the only dedicated service in Europe offering assistance to tourist victims of crime, I believe that ITAS is as relevant today as it was 20 years ago. As Chairman, I would like to see more tourists benefitting from ITAS' assistance and also a greater level of awareness and increased financial support across all levels of the tourism and hospitality sector. ITAS plays a vital role in protecting the reputation of Ireland's tourism offering. In terms of damage limitation, the service ITAS provides to the industry is invaluable.

## **ITAS Celebrates 20 Years**

### **The Beginning**

In the early nineties reported crime was high in Ireland. Of particular note during the summer months was the amount of crime involving tourists in Dublin city and surrounds. The media highlighted incidents on a regular basis with accounts of individual citizens, taxi-drivers and others assisting stranded tourists.

While tourism and crime are linked the world over, Dublin has always had a better record than many European or other capital cities. Yet in 1993 the New York Herald Tribune advised its readers not to travel to Dublin for safety reasons.

That same year the European Forum for Victim Services Conference in Switzerland included a presentation on the Amsterdam Tourist Assistance Service (ATAS). This initiative was set up in 1991 in response to the city's chronic level of crime against tourists. It involved the City Council, the police and many tourism and business interests. Already it was proving a success in addressing the needs of victimised tourists.

Derek Nally and Ann Meade (Founding Members of the Service) attended the European Forum for Victim Services conference in Switzerland and felt that the initiative would work equally well in Ireland.

*"The spate of robberies of tourists in the early nineties really went against the notion of our hospitality as a nation. We invite people to visit us and make them welcome. When things go wrong, then as good hosts, it is up to us to try and put things right".* **Ann Meade**

On returning to Ireland, the officers in Victim Support were appraised and it was decided to establish a pilot project. However it required the support and co-operation of others. Meetings were held with the Minister for Justice, the Garda Commissioner, Dublin Corporation and the Irish Tourist Board, all of whom gave a positive response.

*"Without the enthusiastic willingness and support of the then Minister for Justice, Maire Geoghegan-Quinn and the Garda Commissioner of the day, Mr. Patrick Culligan, to adopt the concept which Ann Meade and I were endeavouring to promote in 1994, Tourist Victim Support Service in Ireland could never have commenced.*

*Their joint input was the catalyst for the success enjoyed today by the Irish Tourist Assistance Service (ITAS), which provides tourists with a professional style of assistance in instances where they have become victims of crime".* **Derek Nally**

## **Preparation**

In November 1993, the Co-ordinator of ATAS made a presentation, at an event hosted by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, in the Mansion House. The large invited audience included representatives from Departments of Justice, Tourism and Trade, the Garda Síochána, the Irish Tourist Board, Dublin Corporation, Dublin Chamber of Commerce, Embassies and representatives from other tourism and related business interests.

Following the presentation, a Steering Committee comprising representatives of a cross-section of those bodies present was appointed to oversee the establishment of a Service for tourist victims of crime. The first and most important task was raising the funding to cover an estimated £21,000 (€26,670) to cover the initial six months project. Having the support of the Department of Tourism and Trade was considered crucial for the initiative; the Minister was approached and a grant of €6,350 (£5,000) was paid through Bord Fáilte (now Fáilte Ireland). Similar donations were received from Dublin Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce and Aer Rianta (Airports Authority); smaller donations came from other sources.

The Department of Justice through An Garda Síochána donated rooms to the Service at their Dublin Metropolitan Region Headquarters in Harcourt Square. Appeals were made to the Tourism Industry, which resulted in restaurants donating vouchers for meals, hostels and hotels donating free accommodation, doctors volunteering free services and tourist attractions donating sightseeing vouchers. The airlines, ferry companies, rail and bus services also offered their support through complimentary/re-issuing of tickets. The goodwill from the tourism and hospitality industry is still very much in evidence today.

With the structures in place a co-ordinator, with a victim support background and fluent in three foreign languages was appointed and volunteers with a range of language skills were recruited and trained.

## **Official Launch**

In April 1994 the Minister for Justice, Maire Geoghegan Quinn launched the Dublin Tourist Victim Support Service on board Stena Hibernia, in Dun Laoghaire harbour. The initial six months project proved very successful. Some 267 cases involving 303 visitors required assistance. Having received help from the service virtually all clients decided to continue their holiday in Ireland. Subsequently Dublin was dropped from the title and it became the Tourist Victim Support Service (TVSS) assisting tourists nationwide. In 2005 the service

established itself as an independent company limited by guarantee with Charitable Status changing its name from Tourist Victim Support Service to the Irish Tourist Assistance Service (ITAS).

### Key Highlights and Achievements over 20 years

- In 1996 the **Princess Royal**, the Patron of Victim Support in the UK paid a visit to the service where she met with staff and volunteers.



**HRH The Princess Royal visiting TVSS at its location in Garda DMR Headquarters**

- 1997 saw the launch of the first *Victim Impact Survey*. The results were impressive including the fact that **100% of respondents felt that the help offered by TVSS was sufficient for their needs.**
- TVSS was invited to participate in a conference held in Umea, Sweden during 1998 where research conducted on the legal situation of tourists as victims of crime was discussed.
- **After the September 11<sup>th</sup> atrocity in 2001**, and at the request of the American Embassy, the service processed offers of accommodation from members of the public for stranded American tourists and individual requests from American visitors for same. The co-ordinator of TVSS was invited to attend an international meeting hosted by the **National Organisation for Victim Assistance (NOVA)** in Edmonton, Canada in 2001. Nova had been awarded a two year grant to develop promising practices for assisting international tourist crime victims by the office for victims of crime in the US Department of Justice.

- The second *Victim Impact Survey* was conducted in 2001 by the Tourism Research Centre at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). Again results were impressive with **96% of respondents who had been assisted by the Service stating that they would recommend Ireland as a holiday destination even after they had been a victim of crime in this country.**
- Bernadette Kelly de Giorgi, Volunteer was among those who received an award in recognition of the impact of their work at a gala evening to mark the **2001 United Nations International Year of the Volunteer**. Bernadette was nominated for her role in supporting Guido Nasi and his mother Simonetta following Guido's assault in 1999.
- In 2002, the Co-ordinator was invited by the American Embassy to take part in a delegation visiting **the US for a 3 week study programme to examine the role of NGO's.**
- Also in 2002, the first edition of the '**Safety Tips for Tourists**' guide was launched by the Minister for Tourism, John O'Donoghue, TD.
- In 2003, along with delegates from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Foreign Affairs, TVSS was invited to participate in a conference on '**Assistance to Cross Border Victims in the European Union – An Action Plan**'. The conference was hosted by the Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority.
- ITAS celebrated its **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** in 2004 on board the Stena 'Adventurer' in Dublin Port. Staff, volunteers and sponsors are joined by The Minister for Justice and the Lord Mayor of Dublin.
- ITAS was invited to present at a Seminar in Paris, the aim of which was to collect information on best practice models for victims within Europe. Each best practice model was included on a CD, which was distributed to relevant government departments and support organisations in each EU country.

- **International Recognition 2004** - HRH Queen Elizabeth II honoured **Ann Meade** with an **MBE** in recognition of the assistance given to British tourists.



**HRH Prince Charles confers Ann Meade with the MBE at Buckingham Place**

- In 2005 the Service is established as an independent company limited by guarantee with Charitable Status. The service changes its name to 'Irish Tourist Assistance Service' (ITAS).
- **International Recognition 2008** – ITAS Office Manager, **Bernard Lavelle** is accorded the title of “**Cavaliere**” (Knight) in the **Order of the Star of Italian Solidarity** by the President of the Republic of Italy, **Giorgio Napolitano**.



**H.E. Dr. Savoia, Italian Ambassador, shares a joke with Bernard at the presentation**

- In the same year ITAS is granted Associate Membership of **Victim Support Europe**.

- In 2009 ITAS accepted an invitation to participate in an **EU project with Portugal and Spain**. The goal of the project was the publication of an information booklet on victims' rights and information for cross border victims.
- In 2010 ITAS launched its **1890 Helpline Number**
- The newly designed credit card sized '**Safety Tips for Tourists**' was launched by Mr. Michael Ring, T.D., Minister of State for Tourism and Sport in 2011.
- In 2011 & 2013 ITAS was invited by Victim Support Europe to present at its annual conferences in Moscow and Edinburgh respectively.
- In 2012 ITAS was invited by the Fundamental Rights Agency to their conference in Brussels, '**Justice in Austerity: challenges and opportunities for access to justice**'. ITAS presented at a working group, the focus of which was '**Rights of victims of crime in times of economic austerity**'.
- 2013 – ITAS joined the Victims' Rights Alliance, a group of victim support and human rights organisations working together to ensure that the EU Directive *establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime* is implemented within the proposed time frame of 15<sup>th</sup> November 2015.
- To date ITAS has assisted almost 13,000 tourists from 50 different countries.

Today, ITAS is the only dedicated service in Europe offering specialist assistance to tourist victims of crime. It is seen as a model of “best practice” and has been the subject of many research projects into the area of cross border crime including New Zealand, Malta, UK, France and Australia.

### **Objectives of the Irish Tourist Assistance Service**

- To minimise the impact of the crime on tourists both emotionally and financially.
- Offer a comprehensive service where all issues facing tourist victims in the aftermath of crime can be addressed with a view to resolution.
- To enable tourists to continue with their holiday plans.
- To ensure that tourist victims of crime return home with a more positive outlook on Ireland after their ordeal.
- To raise awareness in the public domain of issues affecting tourist crime victims.

## **Clients' Comments over 20 years**

*"I'm sending this email to thank and thank again the ITAS association for the tremendous help they brought me this last week-end. Having been stolen my wallet on Saturday evening, the people there gave me all the support they could, providing very good advises about process to be followed, and managing all the departure stuffs with the flying company. Thanks to them, I was able to be at the right place at the right moment, and even if the story finally ended well for me (my wallet has been found back and then brought to Garda on Monday morning), they did still support me to get the earliest flight and be back to France middle of afternoon. Besides this material assistance, they also brought me their moral support, dealing with all these stuffs in a quite professional, but also friendly and smiley way, and looking really concerned about my situation. This kind of association is one of the reasons why I will only keep good memories of Dublin. Knowing in advance that we can rely on such level of assistance when flying to a country is more than good for tourism, and shall be a key point for travel destination selection for holidays. This is at least big relief for me to know that, next time I will fly to Dublin (and I will for sure), ITAS will be present to support me if any issue arises. Thanks again for your perfect assistance" – **France***

*"The two ladies in the ITAS office made a traumatic experience much easier to handle. They went out of their way to help in every possible way. We could not have asked for a more professional, courteous, kind, caring and sympathetic response than we received. Thank you for having such a service for tourists in need and staffing it with top-notch people" – **U.S.A.***

*"How are you? We are back in Japan, my ordinary life and doing well. My passport was stolen last month when we travelled. Not knowing what to do, I asked you for help. Thank you very much!! We shall never forget your kindness" – **Japan***

*"Remembering you so much this Christmas Eve 2011; very thankful for all the support you gave me while I was in Ireland" – **Your Honduras student***

*"The Angels have done their job! Thank you" – **Germany.***

*"The management and staff were very helpful and comforting during a trying time for us. Thanks so much!" – **Canada.***



### **Clients' Comments over 20 years cont'd...**

*"Hi all, It's me, the super bad luck Chinese girl. It's great to be back in Germany. I really appreciate all the things you helped me with in Dublin. Even though all my things were stolen, I still like this city and its people, because of you!"*

*ITAS is an amazing system really can help tourists. When back in Germany I always talk to my friends and family about ITAS. There are more and more tourists going to China, I really hope China can have a similar system one day and I would be a volunteer.*

*I will go to Ireland at least one more time, to finish my trip plan, this time I will take care of my bag" – **Chinese, studying in Germany.***

*"What amazing people! I was tired, depressed and uncertain when I came in and I feel wonderful now! Thank you all" – **U.S.A.***

*"This made my day and stay in Dublin! Thank you for the wonderful service and understanding!" – **Norway.***

*"Thank you for saving us! We were in a terrible fix and you helped tremendously, Thanks" – **U.S.A.***

*"Your service and help were invaluable to me dealing with the upsetting situation. While I have a bad feeling for one person who stole my cash, I have excellent long term memories of all the other people we met and beautiful / historic sights during the 2 week visit to Ireland. Thank you again and Happy Holidays!" – **U.S.A.***

*"We want to thank you for your personal care and understanding, a very professional and caring organization. Thanks again" – **Germany***

*"Never have I come across such kindness in people who don't even know me. Thank you God bless" – **England***

*"We are extremely grateful for all your help. We would have been lost without it" – **Australia***

*"My god, you ITAS are like a sweet smelling rose opening doors for me" – **New Zealand***

## **Clients' Comments over 20 years cont'd...**

*"Thanks for everything. Très très bon service. Very helpful" – **Canada***

*When people say to me: "Oh, that's a horrible way to spend your vacation!" I reply: "Perhaps I missed seeing Ireland's beautiful lands, but I got to experience its true beauty, the hearts and souls of the people who live there. And I sincerely mean that. What could have been a truly horrible experience was eased by caring and compassionate people such as yourself. Thank you. I hope to one day return so that I can see Ireland's lovely country and enjoy its warm hospitality" – **U.S.A.***

*"I am writing on behalf of my wife and I to thank the wonderful staff of ITAS, who were so supportive of our needs following a burglary at our motorhome. We were given every assistance with our faxing and email requirements; we were further spoiled with a plentiful supply of T.L.C., coffee and complimentary tickets to a tourist attraction, which we enjoyed immensely. While we were thankful only our laptop was stolen, the stress and trauma of the loss was still significant. A very sincere thank you to the three ladies who were there on the day" – **New Zealand***

*"Now, more than five weeks have gone since I made first this horrible experience to be lost in a foreign country without valid papers and without a penny – and the second wonderful experience that I have not been lost, that I found very kind, warm-hearted people who tried to help me with all their possibilities – and they succeeded.*

*I think you remember me, the woman who at the check-in discovered that her ID card and her credit card were stolen. You succeeded to calm my mind with hearty words, tea and cookies; you even booked me on a new flight. You gave me all that was necessary to get new papers, you organised a bed in a hostel, a train ticket to get to & from the Embassy and bus tickets to your office and to the airport – one of you even came with me to the bus-stop and made sure I took the correct bus.*

*I am full of gratitude to you!!!" – **Germany***

*We left your beautiful country not disappointed from a robbery, but with great love of the people of Ireland, for their kindness and compassion during our time of need" – **USA***

## **2013 Key Activities**

### **‘Safety Tips for Tourists’ Guide**

ITAS continued distributing the very popular ‘Safety Tips for Tourists’ guides. However with decreased resources only 20,000 guides were printed in 2013. Distribution outlets included airports, ferry ports, tourist offices, tourist attractions, language schools, embassies and Garda stations nationwide. The credit card sized guide includes crime prevention advice listed in English, French, Italian and Spanish. Information includes car safety, care of belongings and personal safety. It also includes information on reporting a crime and details of ITAS.

It is quite natural for visitors to let down their guard while on holiday. They are relaxed and enjoying new experiences. The objective of the guide is to provide tourists with safety recommendations and advice to reduce the number of preventable incidents of tourist crime and to ensure visitors to Ireland have a safe and enjoyable holiday.

### **Victims’ Rights Alliance**

On 15 November 2015, the EU Directive *establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime* must be transposed into Irish law. During 2013, the Irish Tourist Assistance Service joined the Victims’ Rights Alliance, a group of victim support and human rights organisations working together to ensure that the Directive is implemented within the proposed time frame.

The Directive provides for minimum rights, supports and protections for all victims of crime regardless of where the crime was committed in the EU, the residential status of the victim or the victim's nationality or citizenship. The Directive will have a major impact on how victims are treated in Ireland and throughout Europe. The Directive will afford victims the right to certain information about their case throughout the entire criminal justice process.

The Alliance was officially launched on 15 November 2013 in the Mansion House in Dublin. The Lord Mayor of Dublin and the Minister for Justice and Equality spoke at the event and both were positive about the formation of an alliance working to promote victims’ rights.

The Alliance will make submissions to Government on a range of issues such as the Right to Information, an appropriate complaints procedure for victims, referral mechanisms to victim support services and training for all professionals who engage with victims.

## **Tourism Policy – Public Consultation**

ITAS made a submission to the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in relation to the tourism policy review undertaken by the Minister. ITAS recommended the following:

- A structured approach to funding for ITAS to allow for proper planning.
- A centrally located office in Dublin City Centre that is available 7 days a week in a secure environment to enable tourist victims of crime to easily access the office and feel safe and protected.
- Greater assistance from the tourism agencies to raise the profile of ITAS to the tourism and hospitality industry to ensure that tourist victims of crime are made aware of ITAS should they require support and assistance.
- Integration of a crime prevention strategy carried out by multiple agencies working together, City/County Councils, Gardaí, tourism industry and ITAS to ensure the safety of visitors to the country.

## **International**

ITAS continues to be the only dedicated service in Europe offering assistance to tourist victims of crime so we were delighted to accept an invitation to present a workshop on Cross Border Victimisation at the Victim Support Europe Annual Conference in Scotland. The presentation focused on the reasons why tourists are targeted, the difficulties that they face being a victim of crime in a foreign country and how ITAS supports tourist victims of crime throughout this process. The workshop was well attended and generated much interest. The Conference was a great networking opportunity and gave organisations the opportunity to stay informed of victims' issues in Europe.

ITAS also attended the Victim Support Europe conference "Victims of Crime beyond 2015 – A Manifesto" which was held at the European Parliament in Brussels on the 6th November 2013. The event focused on the future of victims' rights in Europe after the implementation phase of the EU directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection and included presentations from representatives from the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Following this conference, ITAS then attended a roundtable discussion hosted by the *JUSTICA* European Rights Network, in association with Victim Support Europe. The aim of the discussion was to provide attendees with information and practical tools to progress

the effective implementation of the Victims' Directive in their countries. The discussion centred around challenges facing victims of crime and there was expert opinion, best practice exchanges and other ideas to contribute towards effective implementation of the Victims' Directive.

## **Partnerships**

### *An Garda Síochána*

The majority of tourists that receive assistance from ITAS are informed of the service by An Garda Síochána. ITAS would like to thank the Gardaí for their support and for providing information to distressed tourists. The service will continue to build on this relationship and to raise awareness of the assistance provided by ITAS to enable a greater number of tourist victims of crime to avail of support.

ITAS attended the National Garda Forum in September 2013 which was very informative. The forum affords victim support organisations and the Gardaí an opportunity to discuss areas of cooperation and also concern.

### *Tourist Industry/Directly to Tourists*

Many of the crimes perpetrated against tourists occur within the industry setting. In the year of the Gathering, ITAS increased its promotion to the tourism industry. Information on the service was distributed to tour operators and tour guides. ITAS also used industry newsletters and magazines to highlight the service.

Fáilte Ireland and the Irish Hotels Federation assisted ITAS with direct marketing initiatives to ensure that those dealing directly with tourists were aware of the services provided by ITAS should any of their clients require assistance. It is important that front line personnel are aware of the existence of ITAS so tourists can receive quality care and support in the aftermath of crime.

### *Embassies*

In 2013, ITAS referred 210 tourists to their embassy for further assistance. This usually involves the issuing of Emergency Travel Documents (ETD). ITAS would like to extend our thanks to all the embassies we work with. Many issued ETD's under time constraints and also facilitated after-hours and weekend appointments in order that their citizens did not have to prolong their stay. For this we are extremely grateful.

## Sponsorship & Support

Funding of ITAS proved very difficult in 2013 with the Service recording a loss. ITAS is very grateful to the agencies and organisations that continue to support the Service. We would like to acknowledge and thank them for recognising the value of the Service: **Ashling Hotel, Australian Embassy, British Embassy, Brooks Hotel, Car Rental Council, Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime, Convention Centre Dublin, Diageo Ireland, Danish Embassy, Diocese of Killalea, Dublin City Council, Fáilte Ireland, Fitzpatrick Castle Hotel, French Embassy, Germany Embassy, Heineken Ireland, Irish Hotels Federation, Irish Tour Operators Association, Meath County Council, Mespil Hotel, South Dublin Co. Tourism, Taipei Representative Office, Vintners Federation of Ireland, Viking Splash Tours, Watercourse Distillery.**

### “In Kind” Support

Tourists who are victims of crime require immediate assistance. Many tourists are left stranded without the means to support themselves and this adds greatly to the trauma of being victimised. ITAS are in a unique position to offer complimentary assistance through the goodwill of the tourism industry which allows tourists time to come to terms with the situation in which they find themselves. We would like to thank the industry for the support it provides. Their goodwill is evident from the following list of **complimentary support** ITAS receives: ***GP visits and advice; Hotel & Hostel accommodation; Retail vouchers Reissue/Rescheduling & complimentary ferry tickets; Rescheduling of airline flights Restaurant vouchers; Sightseeing vouchers; Transport by bus, dart, taxi and train.***

## Other Support

ITAS would like to thank **City Centre Voluntary Groups Ltd** and the **Department of Social Protection** for providing staff to the Service. Currently ten part time **staff** work over 7 days to provide the valuable assistance to tourist victims of crime. They also provide essential administrative support. Without this provision of staff ITAS would not be in a position to operate the Service.

We would also like to express our thanks to our **volunteers**. The nature of volunteering in ITAS has changed from face to face assistance to translation over the telephone.

ITAS would like to thank both staff and volunteers for their expertise and commitment to the Service.

## **2013 Analysis of Contacts**

With 50% of all crime happening to people who are travelling there is greater potential for tourists to fall victim to crime. According to Eurosta data, around 30 million crimes against person and property are recorded annually in Europe. Crime often affects more than one victim, leading to a qualified estimate that there is likely to be up to 75 million direct victims of crime across the EU annually. Tourist victims of crime have a specific set of needs that require immediate attention. ITAS is able to provide a comprehensive service to tourists in these situations with the aim of reducing the consequences of crime.

ITAS recorded 442 incidents of crime or other traumatic event, its third highest number of incidents since its inception in 1994. This involved assisting 812 tourists, as many incidents involve more than one person. Nearly 70% of the support given involved face to face assistance. Staff will always invite tourists to visit the office as communication can be easier and it allows them to make necessary phone calls. The remaining tourists were assisted via the Helpline. With Ireland still a popular destination for weekend breaks, this period continues to be the busiest time with 50% of assistance to tourists being provided during weekends and public holidays.

In 2013, the number of days involved in casework totalled 544. Some of the situations ITAS handle are complicated and it may take a number of days before they are fully resolved. This is particularly true in cases where tourists are citizens of one country and studying in another and are on holiday in Ireland. Depending on their nationality a visa may be required to re-enter the country where they are studying and sometimes this can take time to organise.

Eighty nine per cent of tourists were provided with information on ITAS via the Gardaí. ITAS continue to receive the majority of contacts through the Gardaí. Tourists also receive information on ITAS from their embassies (16 cases), the tourist industry (8) and other sources (8). Self referral occurred in 17 cases.

With over 3 million tourists visiting the capital each year, Dublin continues to record the highest level of tourist crime incidents in the country. 83% of tourists contacting the office were victims of crime or other incidents in Dublin. Time permitting the majority of these tourists will visit the office. ITAS staff will assess and prioritise the tourists' needs based on their personal circumstances. Tourists are provided with possible solutions to their problems. Due to their level of experience ITAS staff may advise them on what they feel is the best course of action, however the final decision rests with the tourist and ITAS staff

fully respect their choice. Encouraging tourists to make a decision empowers them and is part of the recovery process.

If tourists cannot call to the office for support then assistance is given over the telephone. Staff offer reassurance and give relevant information. In cases where tourists need to travel to Dublin to visit their embassy for emergency travel documents ITAS can facilitate complimentary travel through our network of contacts.

61% of the tourists assisted by ITAS were female. Tourists aged between 18-35 years (45%) continue to be the main age category referred to ITAS. Younger tourists usually have less travel experience and are possibly more vulnerable, have limited resources and are most in need of ITAS assistance. Other age categories: 36-45 year olds (10%), 46-55 (13.5%), 56-65 (12%), over 66 (8%), 10-16 (2%) and under 10 years (0.5%). 9% of the age category is unknown.

### **Contacts from An Garda Síochána**

Tourists involved in 393 cases (89%) of crime or other traumatic incidents were informed of the service by the Gardaí. Of these 336 (85%) were provided with information on ITAS from Garda stations in Dublin.

With millions of tourists visiting the capital each year the majority of crimes occur in the city centre, particularly the areas policed by Store Street and Pearse Street Garda Stations. The majority of cases (128) in which ITAS provided assistance reported their incident to Pearse Street Garda Station. This was followed closely by Store Street Garda Station at 122 cases. Other stations include O'Connell Street (32), Kevin Street (25) and Bridewell (18).

Outside of Dublin, the majority of cases in which ITAS provided assistance reported their incidents to Gardaí in Co. Wicklow (20). This was followed by Co. Kerry with 8, Co. Louth 5 and counties Galway and Sligo with 4 cases each.

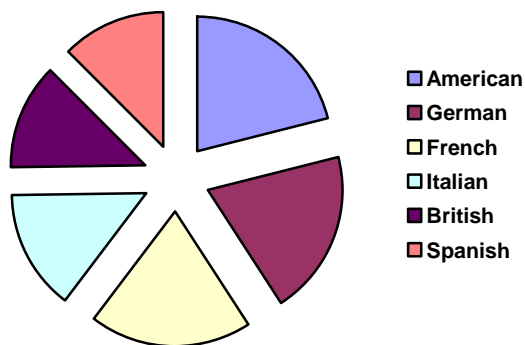
### **Main Types of Crime**

The majority of tourists that ITAS assist have been victims of theft. There was no significant increase in the numbers assisted that had been victims of 'Theft from Person' compared to the previous year. However, assistance to tourists involved in 'Theft from Car' increased by 36%. ITAS assisted tourists involved in 6 incidents of violent crime in 2013. These included incidents of aggravated theft, assault and robbery.



ITAS has always assisted tourists who were not victims of crime. This is due to the fact that in many of these cases the tourist can be just as vulnerable or traumatised than if a crime was committed. The majority of cases in this category are 'lost property' incidents, however many tourists have told us that they believe their items were stolen but the incident has been categorised as 'lost property'. Other incidents include missed flights, expired passports and traffic accidents. In 2013, ITAS assisted in 145 such cases.

## Client Nationality



ITAS assisted 812 tourists from 46 different countries. American citizens were the main nationality that availed of the service in 2013 up 69% on the previous year. This was followed by German citizens. There was an increase in several other nationalities including Australians, Belgians, Dutch, French, Portuguese and Swiss. The top 6 nationalities make up 71% of the tourists availing of the service in 2013. Here is a breakdown:

<b>American</b>	<b>122 people (15%)</b>	<b>Italian</b>	<b>84 people (10%)</b>
<b>German</b>	<b>114 people (14%)</b>	<b>British</b>	<b>73 people (9%)</b>
<b>French</b>	<b>112 people (14%)</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>73 people (9%)</b>

ITAS referred 210 cases to embassies for emergency travel documents (ETD'S) or for a replacement passport to be issued. The main embassies ITAS worked with were the German Embassy, (36 cases), American Embassy (32 cases), French Embassy (30 cases), Italian Embassy (27 cases), and Spanish Embassy (21 cases).

## Assistance

There are many challenges that tourist victims of crime face not least being in a foreign country and for many a foreign language. The trauma is intense. The feeling of isolation increases as they realise they have no money, no passport, and for some only the clothes are wearing and they don't know where to turn. For many tourist victims of crime this is the reality. ITAS exists to ensure that no tourist victim of crime should experience this

additional trauma. The aim of the service is to minimise the impact of the crime both emotionally and financially. While the initial priority is on practical assistance emotional support is of utmost importance.

When passports have been stolen and where security is not an issue, ITAS have liaised with airlines and in 100 cases tourists have been cleared to fly with the ITAS1 Garda report and another form of photo ID. This can have a huge impact on the emotional status of the tourist as they do not have the trauma of being stranded in a foreign country with no identification and in many cases no money. On 18 occasions airlines re-scheduled flights free of charge to facilitate tourists having to visit their embassies for Emergency Travel Documents. ITAS is very grateful to the airlines for facilitating these requests. We received accommodation for stranded tourists from hotels and hostels 9 times during 2013. 52 meal vouchers were given to tourists to assist them while they awaited emergency funds from home. Many tourists are left with no money and require transport to get to their embassy or to the airport. Complimentary transport - by bus, rail, DART, taxi and ferry - was organised in 63 cases.

### **Trip Status**

Crime can be both emotionally and physically shocking. It can also impact on the person's perception of their own safety and effect the perception of the location where the incident occurred. ITAS staff aim to reduce these effects and very often a tourist who has walked through our door with tears in their eyes, leaves with a much more positive outlook and in many cases with a smile.

In 2013, 92% of tourists opted to continue their holiday plans after receiving assistance from the service. 5% of tourists were forced to stay – this mostly occurs when ID/passports are stolen particularly over the weekend and the tourist cannot travel until they obtain a emergency travel document. 2% had to abandon/shorten their plans due to the consequences of the crime. The trip status of 1% of tourists was not accounted for.

## 2013 Trip Status and Clients' Comments

On the first evening of my holidays all my IDs and my money were stolen. All of you have been a great help for me and once again I want to thank you. You have been very helpful. Besides the miserable start I enjoyed my trip although it was difficult – without a credit card number you are nothing.  
**GERMANY**

Thanks for your cordial assistance. **ITALY**

Thank you so much for your assistance. **SOUTH AFRICA**

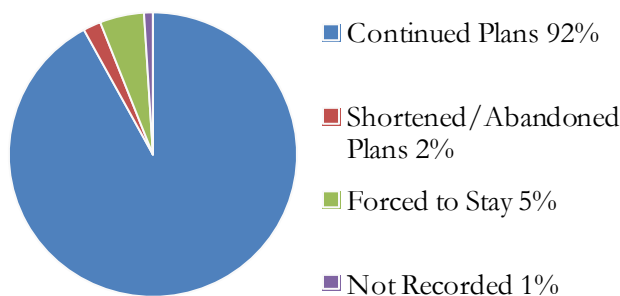
Thank you very much for the great support! **SWITZERLAND**

Thank you very much!! **USA**

I really appreciate all your help. Thank you again. Best wishes to all of you. **U.K.**

I can't thank you enough for your help with my Swiss tourist. Also a big thank you to the Police & Aer Lingus. I had never used your help before, thank God! But, I am so impressed with you. Wonderful to talk to a human being – not a machine! Once again, a big thank you!  
**AN IRISH TOUR GUIDE**

### Trip Status



Hello, I just want to extend my praise and thanks for your amazing service. It was a really stressful and trying weekend and I would have been lost without your assistance. Keep up the amazing work!! **USA**

We just wanted to let you know that we got home safe. Thanks again for helping us, we really appreciate that.  
**AUSTRIA**

Thank you so much for looking after my daughter when she had her purse/passport stolen last weekend. It was her first visit to Dublin so she was unfamiliar with the city and very upset. I would have been worried sick had it not been for your help and kindness. Thanks again. **SCOTLAND**

Thanks to your help I got home safe after I lost my ID card in Dublin. You guys were not only extremely resourceful and efficient, but also very very NICE!  
**ROMANIA**

So kind! Thank you for helping us. The loveliest ladies!! So so helpful! Couldn't be more thankful!!  
**U.K.**

Thank you for your support and I wish all of the ITAS's staff have the best things from life! **ITALY**

So patient, so helpful – even after hours. Thanks so much! Ireland & its people. **USA**

Thanks so very much for your terrific support & help with helping me! **CANADA**

You are the most patient people in the world!! You are amazing! Thank you so much!!! **MEXICO**

Thanks so much for listening, understanding and giving actual solutions. **SPAIN**

Many thanks to the people who helped me when my wallet was stolen. **BELGIUM**

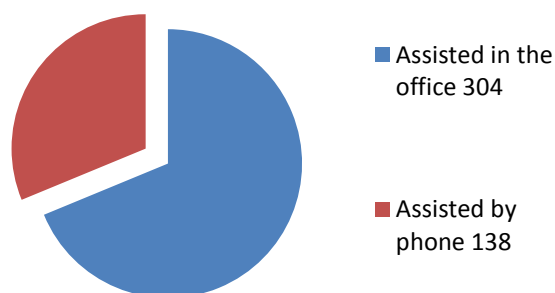
## Analysis of Statistics

Number of cases assisted	442
Cases assisted in the office	304
Cases assisted by phone	138
Number of casework days*	544

Number of people involved	812
People assisted in the office	563
People assisted by phone	249

\*many cases take several days to resolve

## Cases Assisted

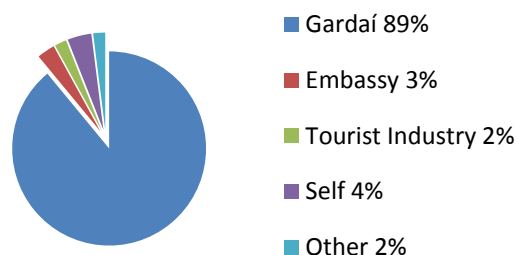


Cases Assisted: 442

Contacts to ITAS via:

Gardaí	393
Embassy	16
Tourist Industry	8
Self	17
Other	8

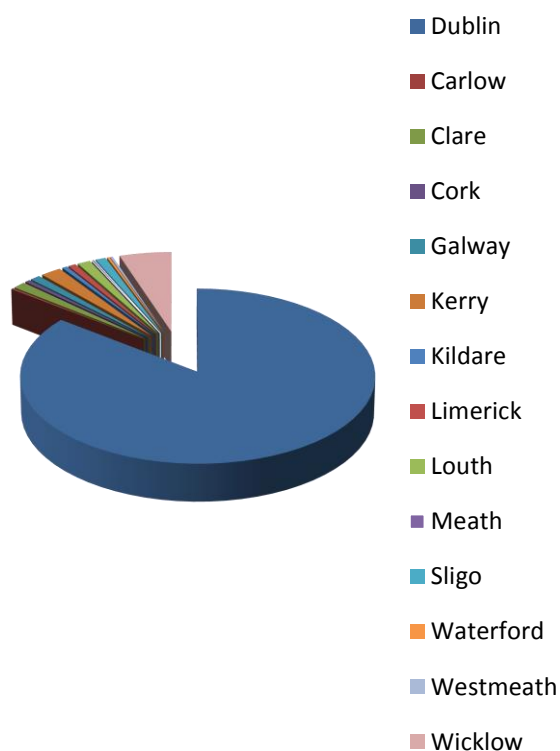
## Total Sources of Contacts



## Garda Contacts by County:

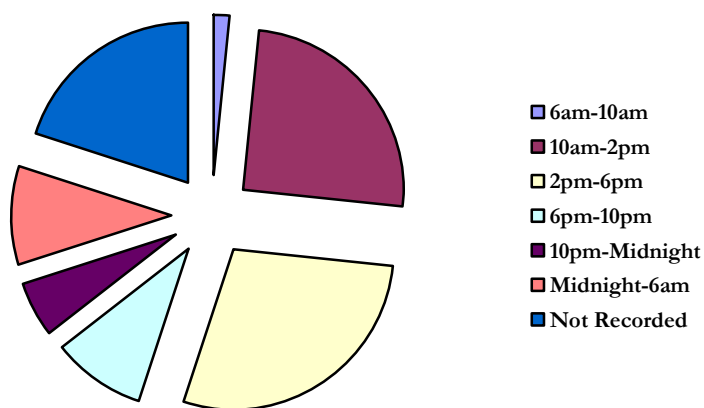
Dublin	336
Carlow	1
Clare	5
Cork	2
Galway	4
Kerry	8
Kildare	2
Limerick	3
Louth	5
Meath	1
Sligo	4
Waterford	1
Westmeath	1
Wicklow	20
Total	393

## Garda Contacts by County



### Time of Occurrence of Crime:

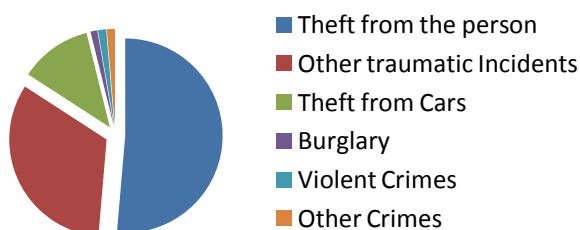
6am-10am	5
10am-2pm	74
2pm-6pm	84
6pm-10pm	28
10pm-midnight	17
Midnight-6am	30
Not Recorded	59



### Main Incident Types:

Theft from the person	227
Other Traumatic Incidents	145
Theft from Car	53
Burglary	5
Violent Crimes	6
Other Crimes	6

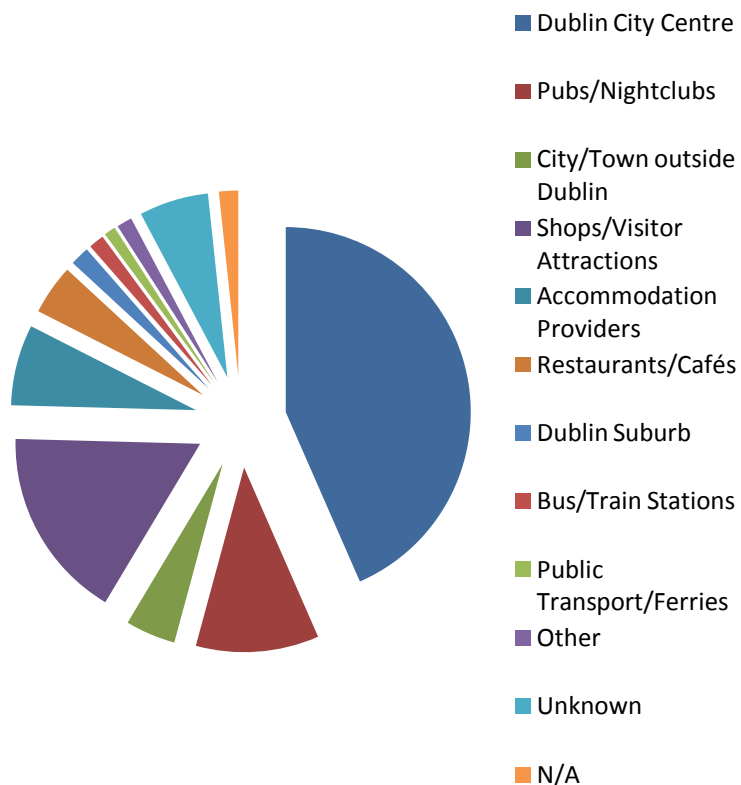
### Main Traumatic Incidents



### Crime Locations:

Dublin City Centre	129
Pubs/Nightclubs	32
City/Town outside Dublin	13
Shops/Visitor Attractions	50
Accommodation Providers	21
Restaurants & Cafés	13
Dublin Suburb	5
Bus/Train Stations	4
Public Transport/Ferries	3
Other	4
Unknown	18
N/A	5

### Crime Locations



<b>Age Groups 2013</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
Under 10yrs	5	2	3
10-16years	16	9	7
17-25yrs	224	159	65
26-35yrs	141	80	61
36-45yrs	80	33	47
46-55yrs	110	65	45
56-65yrs	98	66	32
over 66yrs	64	43	21
Unknown	74	37	37
	<b>812</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>318</b>

## Items Stolen & Assistance Given

<b>Items Stolen *</b>	<b>2013</b>
Cash (approximate stolen €70,000)	270
Passports	182
Credit Cards	276
Bank Cards	140
Driving Licences	114
National Identity Cards	205
Travel Tickets	21
Mobile Phones	74
Cameras/Camcorders	18
Medication	10
Laptops	15
Misc. (Glasses, Clothes, Jewellery, Keys, Personal Items)	289

<b>Complimentary Assistance *</b>	<b>2013</b>
Telephone Calls	332
Referrals to Embassies	210
Travel Tickets Re-issue/Re-schedule	18
Airline Travel with ITAS 1 Form	100
Garda Liaison	90
Accommodation	9
Money Transfers	12
Interpreting	12
Meal Vouchers	52
Medical Assistance	3
Complimentary Transport	63
Referral to Homeless Aid	3

\*numbers relate to cases not tourists e.g. 182 cases involved passports being stolen

**Client Nationalities**

Algerian	1
American	122
Australian	21
Austrian	4
Belgian	22
Bolivian	1
Bosnian	2
Brazilian	12
British	73
Bulgarian	1
Canadian	18
Chinese	7
Congolese	1
Croatian	3
Danish	3
Dutch	21
Estonian	4
French	112
German	114
Greek	2
Hungarian	1
Irish	22
Italian	84
Japanese	5
Korea-South	5
Lithuanian	2
Macedonian	1
Malaysian	1
Mexican	4
Mongolian	1
New Zealander	3
Nigerian	2
Norwegian	2
Polish	4
Portuguese	7
Romanian	3
Slovakian	1
Slovenian	2
South African	5
Spanish	73
Swedish	5
Swiss	29
Tanzanian	1
Trinidadian	1
Turkish	2
Venezuelan	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>812</b>

**Nationalities Referred to their Embassies**

Algerian	1
American	32
Australian	6
Austrian	2
Belgian	10
Brazilian	3
British	6
Canadian	5
Chinese	1
Croatian	2
Danish	1
Dutch	3
Estonian	2
French	30
German	36
Italian	27
Lithuanian	1
Malaysian	1
Mexican	2
Mongolian	1
New Zealander	3
Polish	2
Portuguese	3
Romanian	1
Slovakian	1
South African	1
South Korean	1
Spanish	21
Swedish	1
Swiss	1
Turkish	1
Venezuelan	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>