**Issued on behalf of Stena Line**

**Date: 17th July 2017**

**Stena makes substantial investment in Scottish Route**

Stena Line’s parent company has confirmed a multi-million pound investment package to acquire the Superfast VII and Superfast VIII ferries which operate on its Cairnryan – Belfast route.

The ships currently operate under a charter contract agreement with AS Tallink Grupp and have done since they were deployed on the Cairnryan – Belfast route when it opened in November 2011. Since then the vessels have proved to be both highly reliable and extremely popular with Stena Line customers, hence the acquisition.

Paul Grant, Stena Line’s Trade Director (Irish Sea North) said: “We are delighted to confirm that we have now acquired the highly successful Superfast VII and VIII vessels. Since their arrival the ships have proved to be perfectly suited to our 2hr 15 min service between Cairnryan and Belfast and appeal equally well to our freight and travel customer segments.

Belfast is a key European business hub for Stena Line and this latest investment signifies Stena’s commitment to developing the region further in the years ahead.”

To date on the route the Superfast vessels have made a total of 23 000 trips and carried 6.4m passengers, 1.4m cars and 1m freight units. Stena will take over formal ownership of the vessels in December 2017.

The purchase of the Superfast vessels is part of Stena Line's ambitious development plan. This plan also involves the construction of new vessels which will be built at the AVIC Shipyard in China.

Stena Line is the largest ferry operator on the Irish Sea, offering the biggest fleet and the widest choice of routes between Britain and Ireland including Belfast to Liverpool and Heysham, Belfast to Cairnryan, Dublin to Holyhead and Rosslare to Fishguard routes, a total of 228 weekly sailing options between Britain and Ireland. Stena Line also offers a direct service from Rosslare to Cherbourg with three return crossings a week.

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**NOTE TO EDITOR: For further information please contact Lawrence Duffy of Duffy Rafferty Communications on Belfast (028) 9073 0880.**