DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

23 August 2016

**Hazzard and Ó Muilleoir tour Stena Line port operations**

Infrastructure Minister Chris Hazzard and Finance Minister Máirtín Ó Muilleoir toured Stena Line’s port operations in Belfast (Aug 22nd).

The Ministers had the opportunity to see the impact of significant investment by Stena Line in their operations in the North including their recent £5million ship refit investment programme.

Infrastructure Minister Chris Hazzard, whose department has responsibility for ports policy said: **“Our ports are the gateway to the global economy so** i**t is essential that they are effective and efficient. This enables them to compete internally and connect with the rest of the world.**

**"Stena Line’s significant investment demonstrates a clear commitment to their operations here in the north and the key role they play in the maritime sector.**

**“It makes sense to have a strong link between public sector infrastructure priorities and private investment plans. I want to deliver improved transport links between ports and their hinterlands to core transport routes in the north.”**

Finance Minister Máirtín Ó Muilleoir said: **“Today’s visit is a welcome opportunity to see firsthand the significant contribution Stena Line is making to the maritime sector. This latest investment signals their continued commitment to operations here and highlights the vital role Stena Line plays in maintaining our strategic trade links with the rest of the world. Furthermore, it demonstrates the important impact investing in our infrastructure can have, not only as a boost to the wider economy, but to local communities who benefit through job creation and skills development.”**

Paul Grant, Stena Line’s Route Manager said: **“Stena Line is pleased to welcome both Ministers to its port operations in Belfast. Over the last number of years Belfast has become an increasingly important hub for Stena Line freight and tourism volumes into Northern Ireland so it’s important that we communicate this ongoing development to key figures in the NI Assembly such as Ministers Hazzard and Ó Muilleoir.**

**Notes to editors:**

1. DfI currently has responsibility for ports policy and the legislative framework within which ports operate in the North of Ireland.
2. Stena Line employs over 900 staff and transports 1.4million passengers, 318 000 cars and almost 500 000 freight units annually.
3. All media queries should be directed to the Department for Infrastructure Press Office on 028 9054 0007. Out of hours please contact the duty press officer via pager number 076 9971 5440 and your call will be returned.
4. See photos from the Department for Infrastructure in our Flickr collection: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/niexecutive/collections/72157669044006236/>  Follow the Department on Twitter [@deptinfra](https://twitter.com/deptinfra)