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Savings Can be Made While Using Phone Abroad

The Telecoms Regulator, **Etain Doyle** has today, July 17th 2002, issued new advice to consumers on how to reduce their mobile call charges when travelling in the popular European destinations of France, Spain, Portugal, Greece and the Netherlands following the publication of a second report to increase consumer awareness on mobile roaming charges – the charge for using your mobile phone while abroad.

The report provides options for the consumer to reduce the costs of making calls on mobile phone while abroad and builds on earlier research carried out by the ODTR in April of this year which evaluated roaming charges between Ireland and the UK.

Using two consumer usage profiles – (2 week holiday-maker & short-hop visitor) the report assesses potential cost savings based on operator's tariffs for June 2002 for each of the destination featured. Based on the profiles, cost savings are possible across most destinations:

- Savings of over 50% where possible in each destination for both consumer profiles when switching from a pre-pay to a post-pay service.
- When manually selecting mobile networks the profiled consumers could save anywhere up to 53% depending on the travel destination and the network selected.

Other general cost saving options include:

- Controlling incoming calls through diversion and barring
- Use of text messages
- Avail of cheaper off-peak tariffs
- Use of International Traveller Services for high usage consumers

The exact savings on international roaming costs depend very much on the individual's usage pattern and the operator's prices. In evaluating the % savings it is important to take account of the quoted roaming rate. For example, a 50% reduction on a €1 roaming rate (50c) still leaves the customer paying more than a 25% reduction on a 60c roaming rate (45c). Fundamentally the best advice to the consumer is to contact their Irish mobile operator before travelling and pick an option that best suits their individual usage requirements.

Commenting on the report, the Telecoms Regulator, Etain Doyle, said "Clearly, there are a range of options available which allow consumers to cut their mobile call costs when abroad. Savings can be made if the consumer is informed. My Office will continue to examine ways of enabling consumers to make informed choices in the market."
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