[IE] Publication of Draft Strategy for Management of Radio Spectrum

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The Office of the Director of Telecommunications Regulation (ODTR) has recently published a draft version of the strategy for the management of the radio spectrum in Ireland. The impetus for the publication of the draft strategy has been the economic impact of the use of the radio spectrum in recent years, together with the growth in demand for the radio spectrum, particularly as the information society has developed and with the general trend towards convergence. The strategy document outlines the expected use of the spectrum in the years ahead.

The draft strategy document is part of an ongoing consultation process between the ODTR and all interested parties. Spectrum users are invited to submit comments on topics raised in the strategy document by 3 December 2001.

The strategy document sets out its objectives for the management of the spectrum in general. These include the promotion and support of efficient use of the spectrum in the interests of users and the nation as a whole, while complying with international legislation and harmonising and co-ordinating with international organisations. There is also a need to support and promote innovation, research and development.

A number of strategy guidelines are also set out. These are designed to align spectrum management strategy and philosophy. They mainly concern the allocation of spectrum and licensing procedures. Again they emphasise the need for efficient use of the spectrum in the interests of users. The ODTR also points out that compliance with international standards is required in order to obtain spectrum access. The ODTR will continue to consult with the industry when making decisions.

The document also addresses the question of "administrative pricing". This is based on the principle that charges in excess of the costs of licence administration and enforcement are only justified if demand for spectrum exceeds supply either at present or in the foreseeable future. In such circumstances, the charges should be related to bandwidth, area over which the user has exclusive use (or the extent of sharing, if the use is not exclusive), and the time period over which the user has exclusive use. The Director of Telecommunications Regulation is considering the possibility of introducing administrative pricing to Ireland. It is

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already in use in the UK and France, as well as in Australia and New Zealand, and is being considered in a number of other countries. The Director is planning to prepare a consultation paper on this issue by Autumn 2002.

Finally, the draft document sets out specific spectrum management objectives for each type of service, such as telephony, broadcasting (including Digital Terrestrial Television in its initial stages and as it develops further), business radio, amateur radio and satellite.

"Strategic Management of the Radio Spectrum in Ireland: Draft Publication", Doc. No. ODTR 01/81 of 3 October 2001

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