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Press release - UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00:01hrs, 2nd August 2007

BRITISH BEHAVIOUR ABROAD

**- Foreign & Commonwealth Office report reveals numbers of
British citizens getting into trouble abroad -**

With the holiday season upon us and the FCO set to deal with the thousands of UK citizens that will be calling upon its services this summer, the FCO 'Know Before You Go' campaign today releases its British Behaviour Abroad report.

The report provides incident figures from Foreign Office records highlighting the key problems that British nationals experience abroad. According to the most accurate figures available, the period April 05–March 06 saw 1,368 Britons arrested in the USA; 955 hospitalised in Greece; 376 British citizens die in France and 6,078 lose their passports in Spain.

The FCO believes that many of these problems could be prevented or made easier to deal with through better preparation by travellers, and by releasing these figures it hopes to encourage travellers to be more prepared for their trips and more aware of their environment whilst abroad.

The report reveals many interesting findings: The Czech Republic features as one of the countries where most consular assistance is required with a disproportionate number of lost passports, arrests and hospitalisations. This is likely to be due to the massive influx of hen and stag parties to Prague. India, Thailand and Australia also appear in the top ten countries where Briton's required consular assistance - perhaps suggesting although Brits are getting more adventurous with their travels they are not doing enough preparation before they go. The high figures in India might well be a result of many British Asians visiting family members and forgoing usual travel preparations such as vaccinations or travel insurance.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office Minister, Meg Munn, said: "One of the most important tasks for the Foreign Office is our work to help British nationals in distress overseas. As this report shows, although some of the incidents people face are unavoidable, many can be prevented with a little planning and careful preparation. Simple precautions like researching your destination, getting comprehensive travel insurance, checking out medical requirements and taking copies of important documents could help avoid common travelling traumas, risks and dangers in the long-run."

Ends

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- FCO BRITISH BEHAVIOUR ABROAD REPORT -

Top 10 countries where British nationals required the most consular assistance (excluding Advice & Self Help cases) from 01 April 2005 - 31 March 2006

Country	Estimated no. British Visits (ONS) *	Lost Passports **	Total arrests	Hospitalisations	Reported rapes	Deaths	Total no. serious assistance cases****
Spain	13,795,000	6,078	1,549	601	41	1,325	5,627
USA	4,116,000	3,064	1,368	73	4	125	3,006
Greece	2,443,000	391	226	955	48	139	2,316
France	10,984,000	713	108	210	6	376	1,408
Germany	2,474,000	1,236	210	42	0	284	1,381
Cyprus	1,424,000	333	330	128	10	63	996
India	847,000	144	35	52	0	111	914
Thailand	381,000	653	108	233	5	224	897
Czech Republic	813,000	445	36	52	1	16	845
Australia	650,000	2,023	48	40	1	59	815

Top 10 most popular countries where British nationals visited from 01 April 2005 - 31 March 2006

Country	Estimated no. British Visits (ONS) *	Lost Passports **	Total arrests	Hospitalisations	Reported rapes	Deaths	General advice sought	Total no. assistance cases
Spain	13,795,000	6,078	1,549	601	41	1,325	5,107	10,734
France	10,984,000	713	108	210	6	376	1,552	2,960
USA	4,116,000	3,064	1,368	73	4	125	5,999	9,005
Italy	3,374,000	991	32	149	5	98	2,843	3,495
Ireland	4,233,000	478	46	3	1	51	250	362
Greece	2,443,000	391	226	955	48	139	701	3,017
Portugal	1,846,000	279	41	92	1	179	95	522
Germany	2,474,000	1,236	210	42	0	284	795	2,176
Netherlands	2,193,000	443	30	2	0	16	160	240
Turkey	1,376,000	97	49	170	38	95	980	1,684

- REPORT LEARNINGS AND TRAVEL ADVICE FROM THE FCO -

LOST PASSPORTS

The facts

- Spain has the highest number of reported lost or stolen passports at 6,078 in this period. As the country most visited by British nationals (13,795,000) this is unsurprising. However, in comparison, France – the second most popular country at 10,984,000 visitors - had only 713 reported lost or stolen passports

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FCO advice on passports:

- Before you travel, make two photocopies of the page with your details on. Leave one with friends or family at home and take one with you when you travel - this will assist a speedier turnaround if your passport is lost or stolen
- Take the number of the British Embassy that will be nearest to you (find out which it is at www.fco.gov.uk/travel) or 0845 850 2829
- Once abroad, keep your passport in a safe place (e.g. hotel safe). If you need to carry ID when you're out and about, use a photocopy
- If you lose your passport or it is stolen, report the loss immediately to the nearest local police station and obtain a police report before contacting the nearest Embassy. Have your photocopy handy

ARRESTS

The facts

- Spain had the highest number of arrests (1,549 in the period), closely followed by the USA (1,368) which had less than half the number of British visitors during the same period (7,000,000)
- Greece is the sixth most popular country to visit but had the third highest number of arrests at 226

FCO advice to prevent unwittingly getting into problems with the law abroad:

- Before you travel, check out the local laws and customs of your destination – what might be perfectly appropriate behaviour or dress in one country might be completely different in another – for example, wearing camouflage clothing is illegal in some Caribbean Countries; and some nasal sprays widely used in the UK are illegal in Japan. Travel guide books and tour operators are good sources of information or check out www.fco.gov.uk/travel which contains the latest travel information by country
- Be aware of what you can and can't bring home. Customs departments throughout the world confiscate illegal souvenirs, and in the UK you could face a criminal prosecution and fines. You can get more information on bringing back meat, animal products or plants from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Visit www.fco.gov.uk/travel or phone 08459 335577 for more details
- Many arrests are due to behaviour caused by excessive drinking. Know your limit and try not to drink more than you usually would at home
- Avoid areas where you might be unwittingly caught up in trouble e.g. rallies,

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marches or protests

HOSPITALISATIONS

The facts

- Greece had the highest number of hospitalisations with 955 reported cases, followed by Spain (601) and then France (210)
- The five locations where injuries are most likely to occur are as follows: roads, beaches, hotels, remote locations and ski slopes
- Failing to purchase travel insurance can cost a lot more than you think. If you suffer a broken leg in Europe it can cost you up to £4,000, while an air ambulance from the USA can cost up to £35,000. Even a simple bout of gastro-enteritis and an overnight stay in hospital in the Mediterranean will set you back at least £600
- Some insurance policies exclude injury or death through acts of terrorism or nature; accidents caused through drinking alcohol or engaging in dangerous sports; or problems arising from a previous illness that you have not declared to the insurer. Make sure you check with your insurer

FCO advice to prevent illness or injury whilst on holiday

- Make sure that all your vaccinations are up to date and find out about any other suggested medical advice by visiting your health-care provider. Follow this advice and be aware of possible health risks during your trip – visit the department of health website for more info via www.fco.gov.uk/travel.
- Always stick to local health & safety guidelines, such as sticking within your level of experience on ski slopes and not diving into water of unknown depth
- If you're going to be driving, familiarise yourself with the rules of the road, the condition of the road and whether the general style of driving is different to the UK – and if you're hiring a car always do so from a reputable company and ensure you wear a helmet if driving a moped or motorbike
- Check with your airline that you can carry any medication you are taking in hand luggage and pack enough supplies. You should keep your medication in its original packaging and take any prescription documents with you. Check with the nearest embassy of the country you are going to (which may be based in London or another European city) that your medication will be legal in that country and find out whether you will need to take a doctor's letter with you
- Purchase full travel insurance. Anyone travelling within the European Economic Area or Switzerland should also get a free European Health Insurance Card

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(EHIC) which entitles you to some reduced or free emergency care – but you will still need travel insurance. You can apply for an EHIC with the department of health on-line via www.fco.gov.uk/travel

- Make sure your insurance is up to date, valid for the entire trip and covers everyone who is traveling. Check exactly what is covered, for example, cover for all the activities you want to do, including any dangerous sports, all your luggage and equipment, personal injury as a result of terrorist activity, and legal costs

DEATHS

The facts

- Spain experienced the highest number of British deaths during this period (1,325) followed by France (376) and then Germany (284)

FCO advice around death abroad:

- Ensure all members of your party have declared all medical conditions to their travel insurer – if an uninsured person dies whilst abroad any treatment they have received and their repatriation to the UK will not be covered
- All deaths must be registered in the country in which the death occurs. If a person in your party dies, whatever the circumstances, report the incident to the local authorities immediately
- There is no obligation to contact the British Consul/Embassy but they can offer support and practical advice at this distressing time

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RAPES

The facts

- Greece had the highest number of rapes (48) followed by Spain (41) and then Turkey (38)

FCO advice to help prevent yourself becoming a victim of rape and sexual assault whilst abroad :

- Try and avoid walking alone, particularly at night – stick to well lit areas in safe neighborhoods
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return
- Make sure you know the address and phone number of where you are staying and how to get back
- Be aware that drugs are sometimes used in rape. They are normally colourless and tasteless, and can make you virtually unconscious and defenceless. Once someone has added drugs to your drink, you will not normally be able to detect them. Be aware that rape drugs can also work in non-alcoholic drinks
- Nominate someone to watch your drinks, especially if you are leaving the group you are with, for example to go to the toilet
- If you are going to drink alcohol, know your limit. Don't drink so much that you are not in control of what you're doing. Alcohol is the most frequently used drug in drug-assisted rape
- Never accept drinks from or share drinks with strangers or from anyone you do not completely trust
- Be sure to observe the customs of your destination in terms of appropriate dress and behaviour, particularly if you are in a non-Western country – follow the lead of the local women if you're unsure

In order to help British nationals to be better prepared for their overseas trips, the FCO runs the '**Know Before You Go**' travel safety campaign. This campaign targets all British travellers from hen and stag groups to football fans; 16-18 year gap year travellers to retirees considering moving abroad. Each campaign aims to encourage people to prepare for their travels with a view to avoiding common travelling traumas, risks and dangers. The latest '**Know Before You Go**' campaign initiative is a TV 'filler' advertisement explaining what the FCO can and can't do for you, launching August 2007.

Notes to editors

* **Most accurate figures available, based on the Consular Annual Return March 05-April 06**

** **Most accurate figures available, based Compass NG (lost/stolen passports) data March 05-April 06**

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***Total no. assistance cases - includes 'Advice and Self Help' cases (i.e. 'General advice sought')
***Total no. serious assistance cases - excludes 'Advice and Self Help' cases (i.e. 'General advice sought')

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