

# Health Information



**Council Recommendation on EMF  
Explanatory session with Croatia  
and Turkey, Brussels, 9 June 2006**

# Legal Basis

- Article 152 of the Treaty calls for coordination of national public health policies to fight major diseases
- Harmonisation is usually not envisaged, except for specific cases (blood, organs, for example)
- Support given to coordinated action through the Public Health Programme
- Council of Ministers can adopt Recommendations on a proposal of the Commission by qualified majority

# Other legal considerations

- Outside the public health area, mention should be made of Directive 1999/5/EC on radio equipment and telecommunications equipment, Directive 2004/40/EC on minimum health and safety requirements for exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents, and the low voltage Directive 73/23/EEC, for example, all of which have implications for electromagnetic fields

# Electromagnetic fields

- Issue raised in the Public Health context at EU level in 1997
- Advice given by International Commission on non-ionising radiation and World Health Organisation
- Opinion of Commission Scientific Committee

# Council Recommendation

- The Commission proposed to Council to adopt a Recommendation on EMF
- Council asked the European Parliament for its opinion on the draft
- Adopted by Council in July 1999

# Content of Recommendation

- a system of basic restrictions and reference levels for overall public exposure, based on established physical effects.
- *task of the Member States to ensure that adequate health protection measures are taken.*
- At Community level, development of binding European standards for emissions from radio telecommunications and other low voltage devices should contribute to ensuring that such equipment respects the recommended limits. Workplace emissions are also covered by a 2004 directive
- When reference levels are exceeded, it is recommended that national authorities carry out an assessment of the exposure situation and take appropriate follow-up actions, such as informing the public exposed, changes in the installation or design of the source of radiation or in the way it is operated

# Implementation of Recommendation

- Member States were requested to report to the Commission on national guidelines and measures taken.
- These legislative measures are now published in an implementation report of 2002.

# Commission actions 1

**The Recommendation calls on the Commission to**

- **Work towards the establishment of European standards including methods of calculation and measure (see Directive 1999/5/EC on radio and telecommunications equipment, the low voltage Directive 73/23/EEC and Directive 2004/40/EC on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (electromagnetic fields))**
- **Encourage research into long and short-term effects of exposure to electromagnetic fields at all relevant frequencies in the implementation of the research framework programme**
- **Continue to participate in the work of international organisations competent in this field and promote the establishment of an international consensus in guidelines and advice on protective and preventive measures**



## Commission actions 2

- Keep the matters covered by this recommendation under review, with a view to its revision and updating, taking into account also possible effects, which are currently the object of research, including relevant aspects of precaution and to prepare a report, within five years, taking into account the reports of the Member States and the latest scientific data and advice

# Standards

- Under Directive 1999/5/EC, Member States must ensure that products that are placed on the market and put into service, are safe and do not affect the health of the user or any other person.
- To that end, the Commission mandated the elaboration of safety standards to be recognised under this Directive with the objective to ensure that the public will not be exposed beyond the limits of the Council Recommendation.
- *Member States are obliged to survey their market to ensure compliance with the Directive. As yet there are no indications that products in the Community market would not comply.*

# Current situation on the review

- Commission has asked its Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) to undertake a comprehensive review of the opinion of the Scientific Committee on Toxicity, Eco-toxicity and the Environment of 30 October 2001 on possible health effects of electromagnetic fields. In view of the substantial quantity of new scientific information that has become available since 2001, the opinion is programmed for the second half of 2006.

# Current situation on the review

- In parallel, the Commission is bringing up to date its picture from 2002 about implementation in the Member states of the Recommendation

# Workers protection

- A specific legal regime is in place for workers protection
- These rules are set out in a 2004 Directive
- Mention can also be made of specific rules for pregnant women from 1992.

# Research

- DG Research and the Joint Research Centres have ongoing activities on EMF science.
- EMF-Net, a coordination action for the years 2004-2008 funded under Framework Programme 6 will collate the results of projects such as Interphone and Perform-A after their publication in scientific journals.
- Research will continue under the proposed Framework Programme 7

# Public health programme

- The public health programme runs from 2003-2008. A proposal for a new programme is currently being examined in Co-decision between the European Parliament and Council. EMF is an issue addressed in this proposal.