

# **The WHO International EMF Project**

## **IRELAND**

### **Report of National EMF Activities in 2020-2021**

#### **July 2021**

#### Policy and Legislative

In May 2019, Radiological Protection Act 1991 (Non-Ionising Radiation) Order 2019 ([S.I. 190 of 2019](#)) was signed into national law to extend the functions of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to include responsibilities related to public exposure to non-ionising radiation in the frequency range 0 Hz to 300 GHz, commonly known as electromagnetic fields (EMF). The main functions assigned to the EPA include providing advice and information to the public, stakeholders and the Government on public exposure to EMF, as well as monitoring public exposure to EMF to inform our advisory role.

Previously, responsibilities in relation to public exposure to EMF in Ireland rested with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment<sup>1</sup>. This Department retains responsibility for setting policy in this area and is also currently responsible for national policy on mobile connectivity. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) has responsibility for occupational EMF exposure, while the Health Service Executive (HSE) has responsibility with regards to public exposure to optical radiation, including UV, and EMF exposure of patients.

#### Research

During 2020/2021, RF EMF data collected by ComReg near telecom masts throughout Ireland and publicly available on their websites were collected and analysed. The results of this work are being used to support our advisory and monitoring roles.

During 2021, the EPA prepared and issued a Research call to investigate EMF levels and best international practices regarding major electricity infrastructure in Ireland, such as the Celtic Interconnector between Ireland and France. The selected project will be granted with €100,000 to carry out the work in one year. The results of the project will be collected in the form of a Research report. If so agreed with the Research team, a peer-reviewed publication may also be prepared.

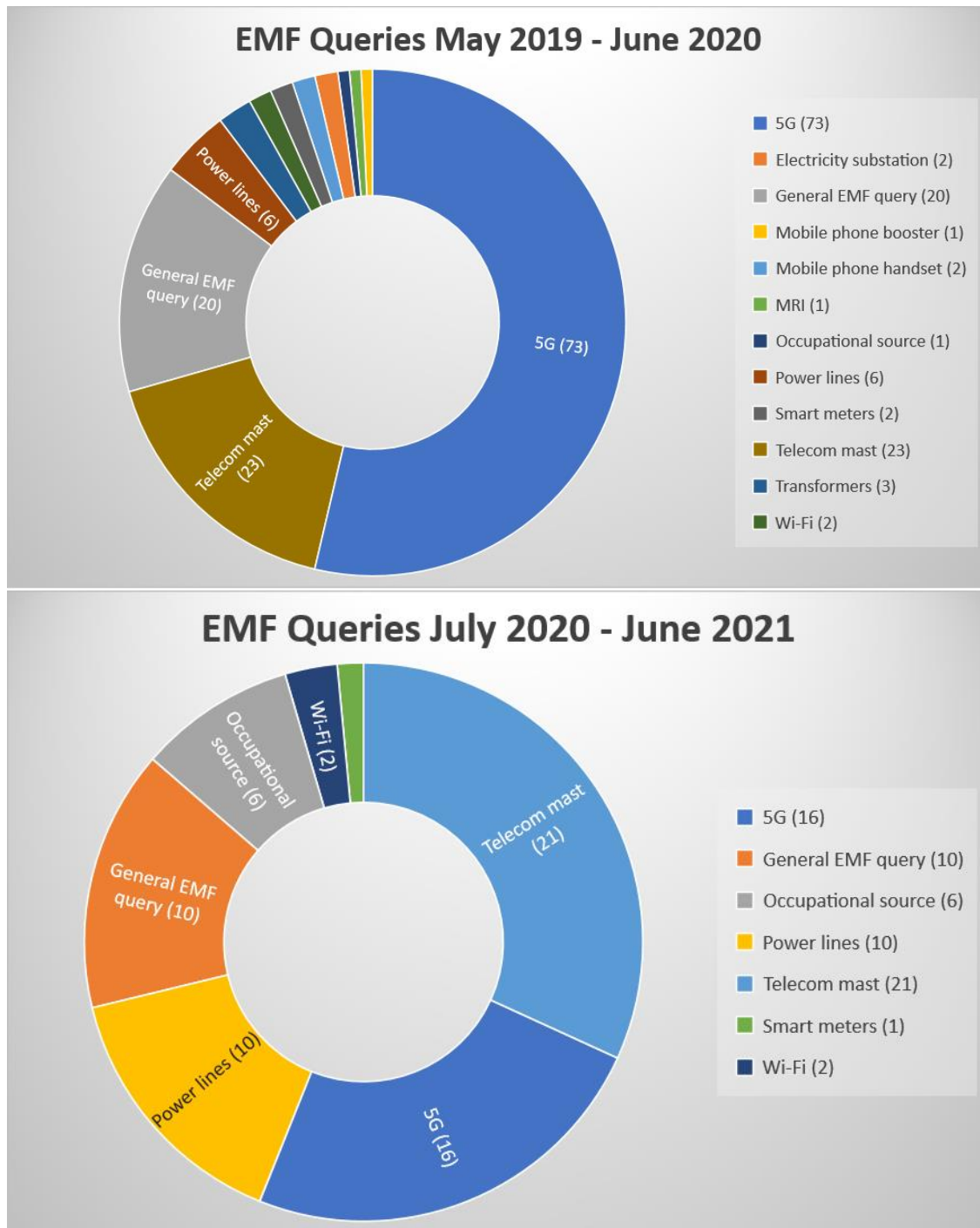
In 2021, the EPA also contributed to the WHO EMF Project research efforts with a €20,000 grant, which adds to two previous grants of the same amount previously allocated. Moreover, EPA staff collaborate as members of the WHO International Advisory Committee, by participating and contributing to WHO meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> As of 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment became the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications.

## Public Concern

During the second semester of 2020 and the first semester of 2021, there has been a slight shift in relation to the type of EMF queries received. Although queries on 5G and telecommunication towers and base stations (“masts”) remained the most frequent type of query (>50%), queries on 5G have dropped notably. On the other hand, there has been a slight increase in the number of queries on power lines received. To our knowledge, the roll-out of 5G in Ireland has not been affected to a relevant extent by efforts from the public (including public demonstrations and an attempted arson attack to a telecommunication tower) and some elected members of local authorities.



## Public Information

Responses to queries from the public, stakeholders and the Government are based on the findings of the RIVM review as well as on the official positions of WHO, ICNIRP, IARC and other public health agencies worldwide (e.g. PHE, ARPANSA).

As part of our role to provide information to the public, [several EMF webpages](#) are available and regularly updated within the main EPA website. These cover general and detailed information on EMF exposure, and EMF and health issues.

Our EMF monitoring programme, which aims to assess population-based exposure to EMF started in March 2021. Broadband and frequency-specific RF EMF measurements in public areas of high footfall in seven locations (out of 50 planned) have been carried out. Measurement data collected will be made available on our website via summary reports, graphs and maps.