

France

Report on EMF Activities

9th International Advisory Committee Meeting on EMF

June 2004

General research activities in France related to EMF health

Expert reports

A report by the planning committee of the National Programme on Health and Environment (interministerial committee) was published in February 2004. It makes various recommendations on research, risk assessment and risk management. The part that deals with EMF is substantial.

A full report on ELF and health commissioned by the General Directorate for Health, DGS (Ministry of Research) will be completed within two months and made public soon after. It will include research recommendations.

Several expert reports have been issued in France over the last years on mobile telephony and health. The yearly update of the most recent one (French Agency for Health and Environment, AFSSE, 2003, <http://www.afsse.fr>) is due in the Autumn of 2004.

Research funding

ELF research is presently entirely funded by the power utilities (EDF, RTE), while RF research is funded via several sources: the European programmes (FP 5 & 6: Guard, Reflex, Ramp, Perform-B, EMF-NET), MMF and GSM association, the French military research agency (DGA), the Ministry of Research, and the three French mobile telephone operators. Total funding for EMF research is around 2 M€ per year (including research in dosimetry, sociology, etc.).

A foundation for research on "Health and RF" is in the creation phase with the help of the Ministry of Research. It should start funding research (epidemiology, laboratory and information to the public) in 2005. Funding is for 4 years with ca. 1.1 M€/year, coming from the government (52%) and Industry (48%, operators, manufacturers, broadcasters). The scope extends to all RFR applications and not only mobile telephony.

Research activities

ELF: activity is rather low at the moment and includes two main projects on a leukaemia rat model, and on the serotonin receptor 5HT1B.

RF: most of the activity is devoted to mobile telephony.

Activity in dosimetry is presently at a high level, both on exposure systems for biological research and exposure assessment (ADONIS programme).

Epidemiological research is concerned with the Interphone project in its final phase and an epidemiological study on radars is ongoing within the military research establishment.

Laboratory research on humans, animal and cells is active with 20 projects

ongoing, including 7 within COMOBIO+ and several within the ongoing European programmes (see above).

New policies and legislations regarding EMF exposure

European 1999 recommendation

The recommendation has been part of French regulations since May 2002.

Various specific regulations exist for base stations and mobile phones.

There is no regulation for ELF except for the siting of power lines.

Areas of public concern and national responses

There are still concerns expressed in France about mobile telephony, mainly about base stations (UMTS in particular since the publication of the TNO report).

Some pressure groups are very active at the local level and in the media.

Public debates are still being held very often at the local level. Major public meetings are to be held in Paris in the months to come.

The AFSSE and the DGS are national institutions that provide information to the public mainly via reports and Web sites (<http://www.afsse.fr>; <http://www.sante.gouv.fr>).

The three operators have founded an association to deal with communication to the public about health and mobile telephony (AFOM). They are publishing leaflets and booklets and have extensive information on their Web sites. (<http://www.afom.fr>, <http://www.orange.fr>, <http://www.sfr.fr>, <http://www.bouygatel.fr>). They have signed with all French town majors an agreement on siting of base stations and information. Several hundreds measurements are performed yearly at the requests of concerned citizens and at random.

New public information activities

The national agency for frequencies (ANFr, <http://www.anfr.fr>) has a website with maps and data on all emitters in France and measurements (<http://www.cartoradio.fr>)

The Science Museum in Paris will hold soon an exhibition on mobile communications which will include various shows on health and EMF.

The new foundation to be created soon will have a major role in educating the public about RFR and health.

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