

# Germany

## Report on EMF Activities 9<sup>th</sup> International Advisory Committee Meeting on EMF June 2004

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The discussions on possible health effects of high frequency electromagnetic fields are going on in Germany.

### 1<sup>st</sup>. General research activities

German RF-research programme: 8.5 Million Euro will be spend in the years 2002 to 2005 to get more knowledge on effects of HF electromagnetic fields. The program will cover all fields of research. Laboratory studies as well as epidemiology studies and research in risk communication ([www.emf-forschungsprogramm.de](http://www.emf-forschungsprogramm.de)).

### 2<sup>nd</sup> New policies and legislations

The Radiation Protection Commission (Strahlenschutzkommission [SSK]) finished a recommendation on "Limit Values and Precautionary measures for the Protection of the General Public against Electromagnetic Fields" in 2001. The SSK distinguishes between the following definitions of the categories scientific evidence, scientifically – grounded suspicion and scientific indication:

An interrelation between an impairment of health and electromagnetic fields is **scientifically proven** if scientific studies of research groups show this connection independently of each other and the scientific overall picture supports the existence of a causal connection.

There is a **scientifically based suspicion** regarding an interrelation between an impairment of health and electromagnetic fields if the results of confirmed scientific investigations show an interrelation but all the scientific investigations do not sufficiently support the existence of a causal interrelation. The extent of the scientific suspicion is determined by – the number and consistency of the scientific works available.

There are **scientific indications** if single investigations indicating to an interrelation between an impairment of health and electromagnetic fields have not been confirmed by investigations independently of each other and are not supported by the scientific overall picture.

The Radiation Protection Commission is aware of the fact that the evaluation of the state of knowledge also includes subjective judgements. To take into account the spectrum of opinions it also consulted other(external) experts. Since a complete consensus can hardly be achieved among scientists, the judgement of acknowledged expert bodies who have made themselves available to the scientific discourse has particularly highly been evaluated.

Some results of the evaluation of the Radiation Protection Commission (SSK):

- The SSK comes to the conclusion that even after the assessment of the recent scientific literature, there is no evidence of current scientific knowledge in view of proven impairments of health to challenge the scientific assessment underlying the protective concepts of ICNIRP or the EC Council Recommendation.
- The SSK considers the present concept of limit values, consisting of basic restrictions and the limit values derived under "worst case" exposure conditions to be suitable and flexible enough to protect from impairments of health occurring from exposures in everyday life.

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- The SSK recommends that the development of devices and mounting of installations require the minimisation of exposures as a quality criterion. It points out that - contrary to public concern which refers particularly to site-specific fixed installations – particularly the immission from devices due to electromagnetic fields, e.g. in domestic devices or mobile phone products for consumers, should be regarded under the viewpoint of precautionary health protection, because here a high exposure of a user can easily be assumed.
- The SSK recommends to take measures for the minimisation of exposures from electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields within the scope of technical and economical possibilities. This is particularly required for the areas where persons stay regularly for a longer time period. The procedures should correspond to the state-of-the-art of technology (e.g. in electrical installations).

An English translation is available.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Public concern**

This recommendation was the basis of different measures of the Federal Government and the network providers:

In December 2001 the mobile phone network providers signed a self-commitment containing the following:

#### **I. Measurements of the Government:**

- a) Endorse the limit values which are established in the ordinance on electromagnetic fields from 1996. Basis for this decision was the mentioned recommendation of the Radiation Protection Commission.
- b) Intensifying EMF research different Ministries will spend more than 20 Million Euro in different areas of research. Besides health effects will be investigated as well as techniques to reduce EMF fields strength.
- c) Implementing a database which contains all approved base stations (Open access to the public since spring 2004).
- d) Information of the public on new results in EMF research.
- e) Federal government will evaluate experience with the self-commitment of the mobile net providers.

#### **II. Self-commitment of the mobile network providers**

- a) Improvement of the information for local authorities on the development of mobile networks and information of people living close to base stations. Partizipation of local authorities in the planning and siting of base stations.
- b) Site sharing of different net providers.
- c) Reconsider siting of base stations if Kindergartens and schools are effected .
- d) Labelling of handsets: Network provider will encourage mobile manufacturers to give good and easily accessible information of SAR values
- e) Intensifying research: Network providers have announced to support the research program of the Federal Ministry of the Environment with an additional 8.5 Million Euro.
- f) The network providers will support the implementation of a network of mobile and stationary measuring facilities with 1.5 Million Euro.

Network provider shall report about the experience with this commitment once a year to the federal government. The report will be prepared by an independent surveyor.

During the first year the participation of the public in the development of networks was very rare but during the second year there are some signs detectable that this will happen more and more.

### **Labeling of handsets**

In addition to the measures mentioned above a label for handsets with SAR values lower than 0.6 Watt/Kg was created. With no acceptance by the industry.

**4<sup>th</sup> New public information**

A web page is in preparation for the information of the public.