

Bias in the assessment of Electromagnetic Fields (EMF)

NGOs lodge a complaint to the European Ombudsman

The recent assessment of Electromagnetic Field health risks by a European Commission expert group¹ is largely biased towards a pro-industrial scientific viewpoint, according to 39 NGOs. The organisations claim that the SCENIHR experts omitted the contradictory conclusions of a substantial part of the scientific community, and that some of the experts have close links to the telecom or electrical industry. - *This might explain why they discarded all alarming studies on brain tumours and other diseases, says Mona Nilsson, chair of the Swedish Radiation Protection Foundation. A new balanced assessment is urgently needed if we don't want to risk Public Health by policies based on incomplete and biased data.*

An unbalanced expert group

In a field where alarming scientific evidence is accumulating and the scientific controversy is sharp, the European Commission has appointed an expert group dominated by scientists who are well known for their disbelief in EMF health risks. (See Encl. 3) Many of them have links to the controversial organisation ICNIRP.² The SCENIHR sub-group on epidemiology offers a striking example of the lack of impartiality and pluralism. Headed by the notorious no-risk profile Joachim Schüz, it discarded or excluded all studies linking mobile phone use to head tumours (see encl. 1). This was done despite the objections from a group member (see Encl.4), and in complete contradiction to the conclusion of many fellow scientists, some expressing deep concern for Public Health as the Bioinitiative Group for instance. The unbalanced group was appointed without regard to earlier calls for transparent, impartial and pluralist expert assessment from different stakeholders. (See ex. in Encl. 5)

In addition there are noteworthy conflicts of interest in the SCENIHR EMF expert group. Several members have intimate relations to the concerned industry like Theodoros Samaras (ex-consultant, **Vodafone**), Mats-Olof Mattsson, ICNIRP (**Telia Sonera's** scientific council), Kjell Hansson-Mild (**Telia Sonera's** scientific council), Zenon Sienkiewicz, ICNIRP (consultant, **Japan EMF Information Center** emanating from **Japan Electrical Safety & Environment Technology Laboratories** and the **Japan Electric Association**) and Anssi Auvinen, ICNIRP (repeatedly funded by MMF, the **Mobile Manufacturers' Forum**)³. The industry benefits tremendously from the no-risk conclusion as it postpones costly regulations and lowers the risks of liability claims.

NGO demands and suggestions

Considering the decisive impact the SCENIHR assessment will have on Public Health policies and standards, and the recent recommendations⁴ of the European Ombudsman to obtain more balanced expert groups with less conflicts of interests, concerned NGOs will lodge a complaint to the Ombudsman and address a petition to the European Commission. EU citizens and decision-makers will not receive correct information about EMF health risks unless expert assessments are impartial and made in the general interest. The NGOs therefore demand:

- 1. An investigation by the European Ombudsman of the appointment and composition of the SCENIHR EMF steering and working groups, including questions of pluralism, transparency, corporate influence, NGO participation, and the integration of suggestions from the public consultation.*
- 2. An annulment of the SCENIHR report on EMF health risks.*
- 3. The appointment of a new balanced, transparent and contradictory expert group without conflicts of interest by an unbiased steering group.*
- 4. A new balanced and independent assessment.*
- 5. The establishment of a permanent stakeholder committee at DG SANCO, where NGO viewpoints can be truly pronounced and considered in the decision process on EMF policy, legislation, research and expert assessment.*

Contact persons: Mona Nilsson, Swedish radiation protection foundation mona@stralskyddsstiftelsen.se +468-560 512
13 Alasdair Philips, Powerwatch, UK. SKYPE: amphil

REFERENCES

1 The report *Potential health effects of exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF)* was adopted January 27, 2015 by the EC Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) It assessed the recent research (2009-2013) on EMF health risks related to radiofrequency fields from wireless technologies and low frequency fields.

2 **ICNIRP** is the association that formulated the guidelines behind most current EMF exposure standards. It exclusively takes *thermal effects* into consideration (warming of tissue) and explicitly excludes exposure to wireless devices exceeding 6

minutes as well as possible long-term effects like cancer and neurodegenerative diseases. Its non-protective approach and closed structure give ICNIRP features of a front group for corporate and military interests, according to EMF related NGOs. ICNIRP experts have a huge influence in international and national standard setting committees, including the WHO EMF-Project. See e.g. **Critic of ICNIRP** <http://www.chronicexposure.org/limitsICNIRP.html> and **The Procrustean Approach** <http://www.emfacts.com/papers/>

3 Samaras: http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/docs/doi_scenih_r_samaras_en.pdf

Mattsson: [Declaration of interests](#)

Hansson-Mild: [Declaration of interests](#)

Sienkiewicz: [Declaration of interests](#)

Auvinen: [Declaration of interests](#)

4 The recommendations following the European Ombudsman's own-initiative [inquiry](#) concerning the composition of EC expert groups.

ENCLOSURES

Enclosure 1: SCENIHR: a biased assessment of EMF health risks - the example of head tumours

Enclosure 2: SCENIHR: a biased assessment of EMF health risks - the example of EHS *soon available*

Enclosure 3: SCENIHR members' history (intellectual and financial bias).

Enclosure 4: Letter from SCENIHR member Kjell Hansson-Mild on assessment bias.

Enclosure 5: IEMFA's letter to DG Sanco, "Call for Transparent, Impartial and Pluralist Expert Assessment on health risks of non-ionizing electromagnetic fields (EMF), Nov 14, 2011

LIST OF SIGNATORIES

International EMF alliance <http://www.iemfa.org>

Swedish radiation protection foundation, Sweden <http://www.stralskyddsstiftelsen.se>

Priartem, France <http://www.priartem.fr>

Collectif des électrosensibles de France <http://www.electrosensible.org>

EMFacts, Australia <http://www.emfacts.com>

EM-radiation research trust, UK <http://www.radiationresearch.org>

Powerwatch, UK <http://www.powerwatch.org.uk>

Folkets stralevern, Norway <http://www.folkets-stralevern.no>

Swedish association for the electrohypersensitive (FEB), Sweden <https://eloverkanslig.org>

StopUMTS, Netherlands, www.stopumts.nl

A.M.I.C.A. Association for Chronic Toxic and Environmental Injury, Italy www.infoamica.it

ElettromogVoluturino Italy <http://elettromogvoluturino.interfree.it>

Electrically hypersensitives in Finland, www.sahkoherkat.fi

ReteNoelettromogItalia, Italy, www.retenoelettromogitalia.it

Stichting Kennisplatform Elektromagnetische Straling, Netherlands www.stichtingkennisplatformems.org

Fundacja Instytut Badań Elektromagnetycznych im. Jamesa Clerka Maxwella, Poland www.ibe.org.pl

Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Przeciwdziałania Elektrosmazeniom "Prawo do Życia", PL

www.prawodozycia.pl

Stowarzyszenie "Nasze Bielany", Poland www.naszebielany.org

Polska Unia Właścicieli Nieruchomości (Member of Union Internationale de la Propriété Immobilière –

International Union of Property Owners www.uipi.com), Poland www.puwn.pl

Beperk de Straling, Belgium www.beperkdestraling.org

TESLABEL, Belgium, www.teslabel.be

Coalition québécoise de lutte contre la pollution électromagnétique <http://www.cqlpe.ca>

Robin des Toits, France www.robindestoits.org

Coordination Ntle des Collectifs contre les antennes relais tout azimut, France

Coordinating group of the Plataforma Estatal Contra la Contaminación Electromagnética (PECCEM), Spain.

<http://www.peccem.org>

Electrosensibles por el derecho a la salud, Spain. <http://electrosensiblesderechosalud.org/>

Bio-Electromagnetic Research Initiative, UK www.bemri.org

Stralingsarmvlaanderen, Belgium www.stralingsarmvlaanderen.org
WaveBreaker (Vågbyrtaren), Sweden, www.vagbrytaren.org
Electrosensitivity in Ireland www.iervn.com
EHS Association of Electrosensitives, Denmark, www.ehsf.dk
SSITA, UK www.ssita.org.uk
Mast Victims, UK <http://www.mast-victims.org>
Rådet for Helbredssikker Telekommunikation, Denmark www.helbredssikker-telekommunikation.dk
American association for cell phone safety, USA <http://americanassociationforcellphonesafety.org/>
Citizens for a radiationfree community, USA <http://citizensforaradiationfreecommunity.org/>
The people's initiative Foundation, USA <http://thepeoplesinitiative.org/>
Stop smart grid, USA <http://stopsmartgrid.org/>
Agir pour l'Environnement <http://www.agirpourenvironnement.org/>