



European BioElectromagnetics Association

An intensive effort is being conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) towards the world-wide harmonisation of health standards for safe exposure to electromagnetic fields. The European Union issued in July 1999 a recommendation to the Member States to adopt a common framework for protection against these fields.

With reference to this matter, and to the information published by the mass media on health impacts of electromagnetic field exposure, the European Bioelectromagnetics Association (EBEA) considers its duty to disseminate the following:

1. Biological effects of electromagnetic fields have been studied for almost thirty years and the international scientific community is undertaking risk estimation and assessment to contribute to the development of health regulations.
2. Scientific research is based on strict methodology, availability and reproducibility of the results in several laboratories and institutions, and has produced an extensive amount of literature on this subject. Health risk assessment must therefore be carried out through a global examination of all studies reported in peer reviewed publications.
3. The results provided by these studies have been reviewed and examined by expert groups in different international institutions (e.g. WHO, COST 244), with the aim of evaluating the data and recommending further research. These institutions and others (e.g. ICNIRP) have provided guidelines for risk assessment, exposure limits and protection measures.
4. On the basis of this knowledge, the Council of the European Union addressed all Member States with a recommendation aimed at protecting the population from electromagnetic fields. The recommendation is based on the results drawn from all scientific studies presently available to protect against proven effects.
5. There is no way of assuring the total absence of health risks, because there can not exist any study that will prove with total certainty the absence of harmful effects from any material, technology or food. Calling upon research to guarantee absolute certainty or to quantify the risk can only come from those who ignore valid scientific methods.
6. These considerations do not contradict the necessity for further research. The scientific community's primary duty is to provide answers to unresolved questions. Considering the concern about these topics, the World Health Organisation, the European Union, and several National Governments and Agencies have promoted additional research, to be carried out using strict scientific quality criteria and aimed at providing the most comprehensive information from which to assess health risks.

There are differences in the perception of risks from exposure to electromagnetic fields between the scientific community and the general public. This is due partly to a lack of communication of appropriate information and comprehension of the available knowledge. The scientific community is ready to place its knowledge at the disposal of the general public and therefore needs collaboration from communications professionals: an objective, well-balanced analysis will allow setting this topic at the proper level of priorities in health policy.
