



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Cabinet of Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis
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Dear Professor Nyberg, Dear Professor Hardell,

Thank you for your interest in our work on electromagnetic fields (EMF) and for your dedication to protecting EU citizens, which we fully share.

The Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis asked me to reply to your email of 9 November on his behalf, and had previously entrusted this same responsibility to the Director of Public Health, John F. Ryan.

When Mr Ryan answered your email, in which you stated your disagreement with the Commission's stance on the 5G appeal, he presented the conclusions of roughly two decades of research on the potential health effects of EMF, and the views expressed in the Scientific Opinions produced by the independent Scientific Committees¹. The Committee's last Opinion on EMF, published in 2015, is based on hundreds of peer-reviewed studies published worldwide and is the fourth Opinion on EMF published since EMF legislation was adopted in 1999. The Committee's conclusion in this latest Opinion was based on exposure studies, epidemiological studies and in vivo and in vitro studies, and studies on any suggestions of causality were considered for the weighting.

We are indeed familiar with your article "Comment on SCENIHR: Opinion on Potential Health Effects of Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields, published in Bio electromagnetics 36:480484 (2015)", as well as with the 5G Appeal signed by more than 180 scientists. We are also aware that in 2011, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)

¹ ICNIRP - International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection and SCENIHR - Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks

assessed radiofrequency electromagnetic fields as being ‘possibly’ carcinogenic to humans (Group 2B), based on increased risk for glioma and acoustic neuroma.

It is worth noting however, that category 2B is assigned to classify agents for which there is limited evidence of carcinogenicity in humans and less than sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity in experimental animals. It is also important to note that the IARC assessment predates the Opinion by several years. Based on more recent studies published up until it was finalised in 2015, the Opinion concluded that the evidence for increased risk for glioma had weakened since the 2011 IARC assessment, although the possibility of an association with acoustic neuroma remained the same.

At present, the exposure limits set by the European legislation remain valid, and the primary responsibility for protecting the general public from potential harmful effects of electromagnetic fields remains with the Member States. At EU level, the Council Recommendation on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (1999/519/EC) sets basic restrictions and reference levels as a common protective framework to guide the action of Member States for the exposure of the general public to EMF. On 17 November 2017 four standards on EMF, referring to the limits in this Council Recommendation were published in the list of harmonised standards under the Framework Directive on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making available on the market of radio equipment. These standards replace and improve previous standards laid down in Directive 1999/5/EC.

The Commission services are confident that the advice provided by the Scientific Committees is unbiased, accurate and scientifically sound and therefore do not feel it necessary to appoint an independent expert group of EMF-and-health researchers to discuss new safe guidelines for EMF exposure.

The recourse to the EU's Precautionary Principle to stop the distribution of 5G products appears too drastic a measure. We first need to see how this new technology will be applied and how the scientific evidence will evolve. Please rest assured that the Commission will keep abreast of future developments in view of safeguarding the health of the European citizens at the highest level possible and in line with its mandate.

Again, let me thank you for your dedication to our shared commitment to protect the health of EU citizens.

Yours sincerely,



Arūnas Vinčiūnas