

News

Merging Research Efforts

In late October, the two research initiatives of the European, COST (Cooperation in Science and Technology) and ESF (European Science Foundation) decided to merge their research activities. However, COST will be maintained as an interstate organization; the representatives from member countries will continue to be responsible for decision-making. The merging shall provide synergies and harmonization of research and administrative tasks within the recently instigated „Sixth Framework“. Over the next 4 years, the EU will provide funds of 50 to 80 million Euro for these research efforts.

Internet presentation of COST 281 action

In 2001, the action COST 281 „Potential Health Implications from Mobile Communications Systems“ was founded as a continuation of COST 244 and COST 244 bis within the International Cooperation in Research and Development. It shall harmonize national research programs and coordinate the exchange among experts across countries.

COST 281 comments on scientific development and promotes the exchange of scientific results in workshops. In the meantime three workshops took place dealing with topics such as „Emerging Technologies“, „Mobile Radio and Children“, and „Microdosimetry“. For 2001, two

workshops are planned in Dublin and Budapest on the topics „Epidemiological Studies on Radio Base Station Emission“ and „Head Exposure“.

Information on all COST 281 actions can be found on the web at www.cost281.org.

International Special Meeting of the Research Association for Radio Applications on possible genetic effects from mobile radio fields

Together with the Ministry of Environment and Traffic, Baden-Württemberg, the Berufsgenossenschaft für Elektrotechnik und Feinmechanik, and the European Commission within the COST 281 research program, on November 25 to 27, 2002, the Research Association for Radio Applications hosted a meeting taking place in Löwenstein (near Stuttgart). International experts from seven countries dealt with the question whether mobile radio electromagnetic fields are able to affect genetic processes in the cell or even to promote cancerogenesis.

Repeatedly, public fears are voiced concerning the question whether radio waves could have health-damaging effects on the body despite maintaining valid limit values. But, although there is intense research undertaken in this field for many years now, there is still no definite evidence for such „non-thermal“ effects. An area receiving particular attention among experts

are possible effects on genetic processes in the cell. Of special interest is the question whether fields far below valid limit values could cause genetic alterations.

The Löwenstein meeting was aimed at convening leading experts in different special disciplines and research groups for an exchange of experience, to present the state-of-the-art of science in this field, and possibly issue recommendations for further research projects.

International Workshop on the topic of „Subtle Temperature Effects from Electromagnetic Fields“ in London

Within the COST 281 program of the European Union, on November 12 to 13, 2002, an international workshop on the topic „Subtle temperature effects from electromagnetic fields“ took place in London. Experts from more than 20 countries attended the 2-days meeting to discuss among others recent research results dealing with „non-thermal“ effects from radio waves on biological systems.

The London conference particularly was devoted to the question how „non-thermal“ effects may be separated from thermal effects and/or whether, lastly, we are dealing with local temperature effects at the microscopic level, too, if no macroscopic heating is measurable. Thus the workshop's title: „Subtle Temperature Effects of RF-EMF“.

The results of the workshop will soon be available in a rapporteur's report on the COST 281 web site (www.cost281.org). Moreover, there are abstracts of all lectures held during the conference.

On the day before the workshop, another scientific conference took place at the same quarters, organized by the British MTHR program (Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research), giving a survey of the state-of-the-art of European research activities in the field of effects from electromagnetic fields (HF and NF) on biological systems

Study: Electromagnetic Environmental Compatibility in Public Discussion

The Federal Ministry of Economy and Technology (BMWi) has published a study as part of its action program aiming to objectify public discussion. The study is called: „Electromagnetic environmental compatibility in public debate – situation analysis, strategy development and evaluation considering UMTS technologies based on a dialogue with citizens“.

Commissioned by the BMWi, the study

was performed in May 2002 by wik-Consult, Bad Honnef. It is aimed at presenting a well-founded assessment on public debate trends.

For analysis of the EMVU debate, expert interviews with representatives of mobile radio network operators and mobile phone manufacturers, medical and technical experts, representatives of the states and communities as well as environmental and consumer protection citizens' groups were carried through. Based upon this information, proposals were made as how to act to objectify the debate by initiatives taken by leading representatives from politics, economy and the public, and to tone down discussion by strategies promoting perspectives for compromise. To clarify possible developments, two scenarios were created – „Discourse and compromise“ and „Latent conflict“. Based on these scenarios, the effect of currently planned and performed measures was looked at and predicted.

The brochure can be ordered for 50 Euros from the Wissenschaftliches Institut für Kommunikationsdienste (WIK), Postfach 2000, 53588 Bad Honnef, or it may be found on the web site of the BMWi (under the paragraph „comprehensive studies“).

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