

BfS: Interim report on German Mobile Radio Research Program

In April 2005 the Federal Office for Radiation Protection (Bundesamt für Strahlenschutz, BfS) invited scientists, physicians, mobile radio network operators and consumer protection as well as interest groups to participate in the 3rd Expert Panel on the German Mobile Radio Research Program (Deutsches Mobilfunkforschungsprogramm, DMF) in Berlin. The aim was to do an interim evaluation of to-date performed activities, to analyze results and to discuss future strategies.

The objective of the DMF is to minimize resp. to resolve existing uncertainties in the evaluation of potential biological and health-related effects from mobile radio electromagnetic fields by corresponding research projects. The identification of knowledge gaps was based on international knowledge, considering also the Research Agenda of the World Health Organization (WHO), the research recommendations of the German Radiation Protection Commission and – for planning – the proposals of the participants of the previous DMF Expert Panel. The DMF is divided into the four work fields biology, epidemiology, dosimetry and risk communication. Overall, 17 million Euros were made available for the project – paid by half each by the Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMU) and mobile radio network operators.

Further information, lectures and interim or final reports of the single projects are found on the web, at the DMF portal: <http://www.deutsches-mobilfunkforschungsprogramm.de>.

COMAR explains the development of EMF limits

The Committee on Man and Radiation (COMAR) of the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) has issued a technical statement depicting the basic principles and the development of IEEE limits for radio frequency electromagnetic fields. Aside from historical aspects and the scientific basis of limit setting, the statement also delves into concerns often voiced by laypersons (e.g. “Have long-term and non-thermal effects been considered in the setting of

limits?”, “Other countries do have lower limits than the IEEE standard prescribes”).

The full statement is found on the internet: <http://ewh.ieee.org/soc/embs/comar/standardsTIS.pdf>.

Mainz EMF Watchdog: Less health disorders than assumed

After completion of the first project phase, the project group “Mainz EMF Watchdog“ found less complaints regarding health disorders from electromagnetic fields than had been assumed, based on survey data of the Federal Office for Radiation Protection. During the observation period from October 2003 to January 2005, 189 persons complained of health impairments at the internet registration site of the project, which goes back to a joint initiative of the Ministry for the Environment and Forestry of the State of Rhineland-Palatinate and the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz. During an additionally performed questionnaire action, 4114 households in two districts of Mainz were interviewed. 28 households reported persons affected by electromagnetic fields.

In their conclusions, the project group points out that the internet registration site is an adequate tool to gain an impression of the types of impairments and their extent. But due to the small number of registrations, an epidemiological evaluation for the quantification of problems is not possible.

<http://www.muf.rip.de/inhalt/106/download/Watchdog-Abschlussbericht.pdf>

Mobile radio measurement series in Lower Saxony

Under the umbrella of the Lower Saxonian Ministry for the Environment, the TÜV Nord (Technical Surveillance Association, Northern Section) performed the recent measurement campaign of the Informationszentrum Mobilfunk (IZMF). Strengths of the occurring mobile radio fields, with special emphasis on UMTS transmission facilities, were measured in 24 cities of the state and on the island of Borkum. 24-hour long-term measurements were conducted, considering daily variations. Also, for the first time, fields emitted by the DVB-T transmitters of the new digital



terrestrial television were included. The municipalities to be measured were selected in cooperation with the Lower Saxonian Association of Towns and Cities, the Lower Saxonian Association of Cities and Municipalities, and the Lower Saxony Association of Counties. The municipalities were asked to name the antenna sites.

After completion of measurements the results were presented in Hannover, Oldenburg, Braunschweig and Lüneburg. The measurement series in Lower Saxony is the continuation of the actions performed in Northrhine-Westphalia and Hessen.

<http://www.izmf.de/html/de/39565.html>

Annual Expertise 2004 on the implementation of the Self-commitment of mobile radio operators

In their third Annual Expertise on the implementation of the Self-commitment from December 2001, the experts (the German Institute of Urbanistics, the Consumer Protection Agency, e.V., Northrhine-Westphalia, and the consulting firm WIK GmbH) give an overall positive evaluation: Communication and participation among operators and municipalities, based on the Self-commitment, are basically good.

Despite improved routine coordination between municipalities and operators, the number of conflict cases has not decreased much compared to 2002. The expertise therefore recommends that operators do engage more in discussion with citizens and municipal representatives in controversial issues, and that municipalities strictly comply with the limits set for Germany and with strategies recommended in the "Associations Agreement".

http://www.bmu.de/files/strahlenschutz/downloads/application/pdf/jahresgutachten2004_mobilfunk.pdf

MUT: Suspected health-damaging effects of mobile radio are not confirmed

In a scientific dialog with the program group Humans – Environment – Technology (Mensch Umwelt Technik, MUT) of the Research Center Jülich, 25 experts from Germany and Switzerland have evaluated research papers from the six work fields

- genotoxic effects from radio frequency electromagnetic fields,
- animal experimental studies on cancer,
- epidemiological cancer studies,
- effects on the central nervous system and on cognitive functions and sleep,
- impairments of well-being and
- effects on the blood-brain barrier from the year 2000 to 2004:

A new element in risk evaluation was the development of an evidence scheme offering a transparent summary of expert argumentations.

In most cases, the experts failed to find any health-adverse effects from electromagnetic fields. Clear conclusions could not be drawn regarding impaired well-being and electrosensitivity, due to the lack of data, etc. Though there is some evidence for an association between headache and mobile phone use, the association between electromagnetic fields and headache is uncertain. Phoning under stress could be the cause behind this.

Overall, the hypothesis of EMF health-damaging effects is not confirmed.

More information at:

http://www.emf-risiko.de/projekte/ergeb_bewlit.html

Research Foundation on Mobile Communication presents Annual Report 2004

The Annual Report 2004 presents a detailed overview of the ongoing activities of the Swiss Research Foundation on Mobile Communication, whose main objectives are to promote innovative research projects in the area of mobile radio, and the preparation and dissemination of respective research results in science and society.

Regarding research, the paper reports that four new research projects out of 25 applications, with a total budget of about 400,000 Sfr, were commissioned. Further, a follow-up of the Dutch TNO study was commissioned. An overview of ongoing and completed projects, special publications and public relations is included.

More details at:

<http://www.mobile-research.ethz.ch/var/jb2004.pfd>

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<http://www.fgf.de/service/abo.html>

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