

Executive Brief - Outcomes of the ITU Regional Assessment for Europe on EMF Exposure Limits and Risk Communication Challenges

27 April 10:00 - 12:00 CEST

Guiding Questions for Participants

Recommendations are extracted from the ITU Regional Assessment for Europe on EMF Exposure Limits and Risk Communication Challenges: <http://www.itu.int/go/R85B>

Recommendation 1: Taking into account the fact that the revised ICNIRP 2020 Guidelines include changes for the mmWave spectrum, and the fact that 5G networks using mmWave spectrum will be soon ready to deploy, it is recommended that European Commission starts the process of revision of the EMF Directive 2013/35/EU of the European Parliament and Council recommendation 1999/519/EC to reflect the main changes of the ICNIRP 2020 Guidelines.

- When do you foresee the adoption of revised limits to take place in terms of timeline in your country?
- For countries that are not part of the EU, what may be some challenges in adapting the EMF regulations to the revised ICNIRP guidelines
- Do you foresee that a delay in adapting ICNIRP 2020 guidelines will limit the deployment of 5G (especially for 27GHz band)?

Recommendation 2: In support for efficient deployment of 5G, simplified procedures and shorter approval time is needed. Since other obstacle for installation of antennas/radio base stations seems to be related to the concerns with EMF exposure limits and public acceptability putting pressure on regulators, active communication between regulators and public is crucial.

- What are best practices in addressing concerns of the public regarding the installation of a new base stations?
- How to balance a more simplified and quicker procedure for permit-granting and simultaneously address the concerns of local communities?
- For EU countries, the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive mandates that permit granting must be centred in the single information point. In countries where this is implemented, does the single information point also handle the permit granting for EMF.

Recommendation 3: Regulators are recommended to assign a regulatory officer in their office to the major international Standards Development Organizations, to engage in the standardization process and specifically follow up equipment compliance assessment standards progress, get first-hand information and reflect their concerns and needs to the relevant committees.

- Standardization is a dynamic environment and needs to be followed closely to anticipate changes. What are the main obstacles to this recommendation? (lack of human resources, financial resources, etc.?)

Recommendation 4: a) Regulatory bodies should follow evidence-based EMF protection policies.

b) Authorities should be more proactive in conveying information to the general public, including across the Internet and social media where misinformation spreads.

c) Particular attention should be given by authorities to the interplay between misinformation on EMF and other domains, including Covid-19.

- What is the main difficulty in explaining scientific evidence relating to EMF to decision-makers?
- What are the pending main challenges in conveying information to the general public? (lack of expertise, resources, etc?)



- How is collaboration on EMF misinformation being undertaken with other authorities? For example the Ministry of Health?

Recommendation 5: For the regulators it is crucial to establish a dialogue between all stakeholders concerning the deployment of 5G networks. The ingredients for effective dialogue include consultation with stakeholders, leveraging live or periodic monitoring of EMF levels, implementing capacity building activities, acknowledgement of scientific uncertainty, and a fair and transparent decision-making process. Failure to do these things can result in loss of trust and flawed decision-making.

- How can all these elements be incorporated in one strategic approach? Perhaps within the national 5G/spectrum strategy if available? If not what are the plans to address this matter?
- Have public authorities involved industry as an “ally” in this process? Could a communication campaign with industry based on a strategic approach be a useful tool to address this matter?