European Commission
DG SANCO – Health and Consumers
Unit D3 Risk Assessment
Brussels

Workshop on Risk Communication – Electromagnetic Fields and Human Health

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DG SANCO invited stakeholders to participate in a risk communication workshop, not risk management. In addition DG SANCO provided a clear statement saying this meeting is not in a position to deal with the Precautionary Principle. I raise a question to this approach and would like to know how the Commission intends on providing risk communication without discussing the risks first?

The continued lack of action or implementation of the precautionary approach to RF from the EU Commission and other authorities is leading to serious frustration with members of the public, some politicians and many doctors and scientists.

Many scientists are now refusing to attend meetings at the EU Commission due to the lack of respect shown towards their advice or opinions. The following statement from Professor Denis Henshaw offers evidence towards this:
"*The mis-match between our extensive scientific knowledge of the adverse health effects of exposures to EMFs of all forms, and the unwillingness of Governments, including the EU even to listen to the scientific advice from those most knowledgeable in the field, well illustrates the unwillingness of many to attend the EMF workshop on risk communication.*"

There is growing public concern about health risks from exposure to electromagnetic fields from base stations, wifi, smart meters and mobile phones. We therefore need to review the latest evidence using the precautionary principle and take the latest findings into account before providing risk communication. RF is now classified by IARC as a 2B possible human carcinogen and therefore firmly falls into the proper application of the Precautionary Principle as defined in various EC documents. It is not ethical to blindly expose the public to electromagnetic fields labelled as “2B possible human carcinogen” without informing them about the risks.

4.3.4 The Precautionary principle under EU law

The EU provides for a precautionary approach to environmental harm under Art 174* EU Treaty (*previously Article 130r before the Treaty renumbered). Article 174(2) states:

"Community policy on the environment shall aim at a high level of protection taking into account the diversity of situations in the various regions of the Community. It shall be based on the precautionary principle and on the principles that preventive action should be taken,

that environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay". In case of doubt, the authorities are prevented from authorising the plan or project under the precautionary principle, article 6(3).

It appears that the EU are totally ignoring and misusing the Precautionary Principle and this approach is forcing the public to take action into their own hands via the courts and through spreading information and research via action groups. Lack of action and consideration from authorities and policy makers is creating the need for a global movement amongst activists. There are now approximately 85 organisations listed under the umbrella for the International EMF Alliance and the list is growing.

Many people are now looking towards taking legal action. On October, 2012, the Italian Supreme Court ruled the Insurance Body for Work (INAIL) must compensate a worker who developed a tumour in the head due to long-term, heavy use of mobile phones on the job. Importantly, the ruling of the Supreme Court underlined the discrepancies between the low evidence of risk found by industry-funded studies and the higher evidence of risk found by independent studies.

In addition, A Spanish Labour Court in Madrid ruled 'permanent incapacitation' of a college professor who suffered from chronic fatigue and environmental and electromagnetic hypersensitivity. The ruling is unique in this regard and will set a precedent for future conditions related to hypersensitivity to these microwaves.

Mobile phone radiation lawsuits are also moving forward in the U.S.

Business risks for investors listed on the New York Stock Exchange are also discussed in the annual report of the securities exchange act of 1934 for the fiscal year ending December 21, 2011
The report includes the following statement from VERIZON:
"*Our wireless business also faces personal injury and consumer class action lawsuits relating to alleged health effects of wireless phones or radio frequency transmitters, and class action lawsuits that challenge marketing practices and disclosures relating to alleged adverse health effects of handheld wireless phones. We may incur significant expenses in defending these lawsuits. In addition, we may be required to pay significant awards or settlements*."

Download more details here:
http://www.radiationresearch.org/images/rrt_articles/Business.pdf

Policy makers are clearly failing to catch up with the science, the courts and public opinion. Measures need to be taken as a matter of urgency to alert the public to the latest information.

The last SCENIHR report was produced 19th January, 2009. This is a review of research up to 2008. IARC have since released the 2b possible human carcinogen classification and the Bioinitiative Group have just last month released a new updated report. The previous SCENIHR report is no longer appropriate and we therefore cannot provide risk communication until the 2b possible human carcinogen classification is taken into account.

The Precautionary Principle has been built into a number of conventions, regulations and laws, notably the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992). The Rio Declaration states: Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation. (From Principle 15)

Is the EU Commission willing to repeat the mistakes made with the Tobacco industry? Or can we learn and take action now before it's too late?

We cannot allow corporate strategies with the end goal of profit-over-health to subvert the truth. It is clear from the Italian Supreme Court decision that the highest court in Italy has taken a decision that bias may be evident in science produced by those companies that have a vested interest in selling their products. Thus we have moved beyond a "perception" of risk or blind acceptance of what is presented to a more discriminating view of how science can be twisted to achieve and outcome that may not have a basis in truth.
"Risk perception" is a term and a focus that has been long used by industry to employ a rather self-serving view that "we are going to frighten consumers if we tell them the truth, and that fright is of greater harm than any real threat that could come from the technology or the product."

Really what we're discussing here is "who has the right to play God?" The truth is the truth. Reality is reality. Psychological studies of human behaviour have long shown that patients facing critical illness have better outcomes when armed with two things: truth and control. If we can come out of this meeting deciding that truth in the hands of consumers is a far better tool than a handful of self-interested parties obscuring the truth behind the scenes, we will have a more honest society and a physically and psychologically healthier one.

It we decide it is best to hide the truth for fear of creating fear among the masses, please raise your hand if you will like to volunteer for the position of playing God.

Let us remember how many decades "risk perception" was debated with respect to tobacco . . . learn from history and not live with regret!

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