

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

Dr Paolo Vecchia,
ICNIRP,
C/O National Institute of Health,
Department of Technology and Health,
Viale Regina Elena 299,
0061 Rome,
Italy.

November 5th 2007

Dear Dr Vecchia,

It is almost ten years since the ICNIRP guidelines on so called 'safe' levels of exposure to electromagnetic signals were last examined and my work as an MEP on this issue has convinced me that a review is long overdue.

Since 1998 a significant body of research has built up that suggests health effects may occur at levels of exposure well below the ICNIRP levels. For example, as I am sure you are aware, on 31 August 2007 the international BioInitiative Working Group of renowned scientists and public health policy experts published a report entitled *A Rationale for a Biologically-Based Public Exposure Standard for Electromagnetic Fields (ELF and RF)*.

This report documents evidence that ELF's are a risk factor for both childhood and adult cancers, and sets out how wireless technologies which rely on RF to send emails and voice communications are thousands of times stronger than levels reported to cause sleep disorders, headaches, problems with memory and concentration and other physical symptoms. It notes the unprecedented levels of exposure to ELF's being created by the "explosion of new sources" and raises serious scientific concerns over the health risks posed by long-term and cumulative exposure.

The report concludes that current safety limits regulating the levels of ELF permitted from power lines, mobile phones and other sources are highly inadequate, and that a much more cautious approach should be taken to further deployment of risky technologies.

The European Environment Agency (EEA) contributed a chapter to the report, concerning the consequences of previous failures to apply the precautionary principle in the face of public and environmental hazards. Following publication of the study the EEA's Executive Director has publicly stressed the importance of precaution where potentially serious future consequences may be involved, and called for actions to reduce exposures to ELF, particularly where vulnerable groups are concerned. The European Commission has also requested that the independent Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (Scenihp) examine the BioInitiative Working Group report.

Extensive developments in terms of new technology are also prompting many here in the UK to call for maximum exposure levels to be reassessed. Perhaps most notably Sir William Stewart, Chair of the UK Health Protection Agency, has said, ' I believe there is a need for a review of the wi-fi and other areas. I think it is timely for it to be done now'.

As I understand it, there is no fixed timescale that allows for regular evaluation of the ICNIRP exposure recommendations. Rather it is at the discretion of Commission members such as

yourself. In light of this situation I am hopeful that you will recognise the need for a review and use your position to call for one as a matter of urgency.

I very much hope you will consider these points and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Lucas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.