IMPLEMENTATION OF the Council Recommendations in Belgium

Introduction of new rules for mobile phone sales

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Limit values for exposure from fixed installations

ELF and IF: consistent with the limits recommended by the Council

RF: *lower limits* (precautionary approach, in according to an advice of the Belgian Health Council)
Limits for fixed installations (RF): from 2009

Flemish region: 4x more stringent than the Council Recommendation

- The **cumulative exposure limit** (10 MHz and 10 GHz): **20.6 V/m** at a reference frequency of 900 MHz
- An extra (emission) limit per antenna: **3 V/m** at 900 MHz (also dependent on the frequency) to be respected at places of residence only
- Excluded: radio and TV antennas, radio amateurs, the ASTRID network for help and safety services and similar services

Brussels region: 200 X more stringent than the Council Recommendation

- **Cumulative exposure limit of 3 V/m** at a reference frequency of 900 MHz, not to be exceeded at all time, in any public area (100 kHz and 300 GHz)
- Excluded: certain TV- and radio transmitters

Walloon region:

- Emission **limit of 3 V/m per antenna** for all the frequencies between 100 kHz and 300 GHz
Products: federal level

Product policy:

- we follow the European standards (the same limits, same test procedures, product marking)
- additional rules for mobile phones (precautionary measure)
Introduction of new rules (2014) for mobile phone sales

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I. Measures in a nutshell
New obligations: from the 1st of March 2014

- indicating SAR for each mobile phone when selling (also over the internet), as well as in publicity

- ban of mobile phones especially designed for young children up to the age of 7

- prohibition on publicity for the use of mobile phones for children (the same age)
Legal basis

- 1) Royal Decree of 30 July 2013 concerning the availability of consumer information about the specific absorption rate of mobile telephones and concerning the publicity for mobile telephones

- 2) Royal Decree of 30 July 2013 concerning the prohibition of marketing mobile telephones especially designed for young children

The measures are based on the Resolution of the Belgian Parliament on a better information to mobile phone users, unanimously adopted in 2009
II. In practice
Indicating SAR

SAMSUNG REX 70

69.99 EUR

- Screen: 3’
- Camera: 3 megapixels
- Mp3
- SAR: 0.6 W/kg (B)
Ban of mobile phones for children

"Mobile phone especially designed for young children":

These are mobile phones looking like toys or for which the manufacturer indicates that they are intended for children younger than 7 years of age. Such mobile phones have a limited number of keys, the possibility to call only a few pre-programmed numbers and usually come without display.
What can still be sold?

Target age > 7 years
What can still be sold?

**Mobile phones designed for elderly people**

When needed for safety reasons, the parents can consider to give their children a simplified mobile phone, intended for elderly people.
Publicity of mobile phone use by children

Mobile phone advertising will no longer be allowed: such as in journals and tv-programs targeting children under 7 years of age.
Inspired by precaution

The WHO classification of radio waves as «possibly carcinogenic for humans»: a causal relationship between mobile phones and brain tumors is not proven, but there is a consistency in some epidemiological and experimental studies, maybe by chance.

Before: risk communication as a precautionary measure (leaflets, brochures, online communications) aiming to give a balanced information on possible EMF risks, in an accessible way.

But: considered not sufficient, due to societal and consumption trends.
Indicating SAR

The measure creates an opportunity to choose a mobile phone in the point of sale taking into account the SAR (to include the SAR-value into the decisional criterion).

- SAR-value is consistent with the average personal exposure (among gsm-users, 2G): a statistical study of IARC showed the average emission power of a mobile phone comprises 50% of its maximal emission power (*Vrijheid M et al, Occup Environ Med. 2009*).

- Choosing a mobile phone with a lower SAR is one of the ways to reduce the exposure: together with texting, using a headset, shortening a call duration.
Ban of mobile phone designed for young children

With an introduction of a such mobile phones on the market, this product, equated with toys, gets a completely innocent notion. The current controversy about potential risks of exposure to radio waves and consumption trends are neglected.

=> To buy a mobile phone for a child, it is not just a parental issue, a matter of informed choice
Trend towards an earlier use of mobile phone worrying

• At present, almost all teens in Belgium aged 12 and older have a mobile phone. At the age of 10 years, 2 out of 3 have a mobile phone (a growth of +21% in the period between 2009 and 2011). This trend will continue, if the mobile phone will be accessible to a child from the earliest years of his life.

• Unlike older children, that use their mobile phone mostly for texting, children under 7 years of age will use the calling modus. The exposure to radio waves is higher when a child is calling than when texting.

• Children absorb twice as much radiation in the brain than adults do, and 10 times more in the bone marrow of the skull (IARC communication, The Lancet Oncology, 2011)

• The cumulated time of exposure in their adult age will be larger than adults now.

• Epidemiologic data only cover ten years of mobile phone use by adults. Data beyond ten years are scarce to non-existent.
Safeguard notification under R&TTE directive still pending

Belgium has introduced a safeguard notification to the European Commission, asking

- to adopt the prohibition in the whole European Union or
- to reconsider the existing technical standard for mobile phones, for both test procedure and limits.

The notification has been submitted to the TCAM, a European committee consisting of governmental experts in the field of telecommunication (Telecommunications Conformity Assessment and Market Surveillance Committee).
More information

-> www.health.belgium.be (see under “In the Spotlight”)
Thank you for your attention!
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