

IMPLEMENTATION OF the Council Recommendations in Belgium

Introduction of new rules for mobile phone sales

Presentation by Dr. Marina Lukovnikova
(Ministry of Public Health, Belgium)

Athens, 28 March 2014

*WORKSHOP ON ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS AND HEALTH EFFECTS:
FROM SCIENCE TO POLICY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS*



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



4 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

I. Measures in a nutshell

II. In practice

III. Grounds



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.



12

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.



III. Grounds

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 consistence 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!



This paper was produced for a meeting organized by Health & Consumers DG and represents the views of its author on the subject. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the Commission's or Health & Consumers DG's views. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this paper, nor does it accept responsibility for any use made thereof.