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Occupational Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields: paving the way for a future EU initiative

6–8 October 2009

Aula Nordica, Umeå University

Umeå, Sweden



SWEDISH
WORK
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Umeå University

Background

The deadline for transposition of EU-directive 2004/40/EC on occupational exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) intended to be implemented in the member states by 30th of April 2008 has been postponed until 30th of April 2012.

This was mainly due to the fact that new scientific studies on the impact on health of exposure to electromagnetic fields have been made public after the directive was adopted and been brought to the attention of the European Parliament and the Council. These studies may shed another light on some difficult issues regarding how to deal with the exposure in some specific situations, like for instance workers near a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanner.

Moreover, the results of these studies are currently being examined on the one hand, by the International Commission for Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) as part of the ongoing review of its recommendations, on the other hand by the World Health Organization (WHO), as part of the review of its environmental health criteria. These recommendations are likely to contain elements which could lead to substantial amendments to the limit and action values.

The postponement of the deadline for transposition has been decided by the European Parliament and the Council: 1) to allow a full overview of the potential negative impact of the

exposure limit values set by the Directive on the medical use of MRI, 2) to get the results of the review of the ICNIRP recommendations, 3) to take into account the WHO's Environmental Health Criteria for electromagnetic fields based on the latest scientific studies published since the adoption of the directive, 4) to conduct an in-depth impact analysis of the Directive's provisions and, finally 5) to enable the European Commission to propose amendments to the Directive in order to guarantee both a high level of health and safety protection for workers and the continuation and development of medical and industrial activities using electromagnetic fields.

As a part of the process of wording the revised version of the directive this conference; "Occupational exposure to EMF: paving the way for a future EU initiative" is being held to open for a debate with the stakeholders well in advance before the decision is to be taken by the Parliament and by the Council. It will also give an opportunity to discuss many of the still open questions in interpretation of the current directive regarding practical implementation.

The conference is being held by the Swedish EU Presidency in association with the European Commission and is arranged by the Swedish Work Environment Authority and Umeå University.

Programme

The programme has been built up in 11 sessions, see below:

- Opening of the meeting
- Setting the context
- Effects of exposure to ELF and static EMF
- Reported health effects and problems
- International guidelines
- EMF in industrial activities: How to work safely with EMF
- EMF in medical activities
- Recent non-binding initiatives and good practice
- Assessment of occupational EMF-exposure
- Accreditation and training, groups with special needs
- Final conclusions and closing of the meeting

A draft programme will be found on www.av.se/eupresidency

Participants

Representatives of the Member States, branch organisations and the social partners have been invited to attend. The conference is also open for observers. For more information, visit our website www.av.se/eupresidency

Speakers

Key speakers and persons considered among the most experienced experts from all over the world have been invited to contribute. Ample time will be given in each session for discussion.

Further information:

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