Public health: limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields 0Hz-300GHz. Recommendation

1998/0166(CNS) - 12/07/1999 - Final act

PURPOSE : to provide a common framework aiming at a higher level of protection against exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (0 Hz to 300 GHz). COMMUNITY MEASURE : Council Recommendation on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (0 Hz to 300 GHz) CONTENT : this Recommendation aims to establish a Community framework on exposure to electromagnetic fields. This recommendation has as its objective the protection of the health of the public and it therefore applies, in particular, to relevant areas where members of the public spend significant time in relation to the effects covered by this recommendation. The common framework draws on a large body of scientific documentation and is based on the opinions and the most recent information on the subject. It consists of basic restrictions and reference levels concerning the exposure to such fields which serve as a basis to set the reference levels in the Member States. It is left to the Member States to provide for detailed rules and basic restrictions including reference levels from the framework provided in the Annexes of the recommendation (Annex I, II and III, in particular) as well as the procedures for the use and classification of conditions in which the individuals are exposed, and if they are workplace related or not. The conformity to the recommended restrictions and reference levels should result in a higher level of protection for individuals. Only the adverse effects on health have been used on which to base the recommended limitation of exposure. Member States are free to provide stricter rules if they wish, as long as the basic restrictions are respected. The restrictions and the reference levels apply to all the rays emitted by electromagnetic fields, with the exception of optical rays (which still require the scientific confirmation) and ionising radiation for which Community measures already exist. A certain number of criteria should be taken into consideration when setting the reference levels in the Member States, in particular the length of the exposure, the parts of the body exposed, the age and the state of health of the public. At the same time, the Member States are called upon to strengthen public awareness regarding the risks and protection measures against electromagnetic fields by supplying appropriate information on the impact of these fields. In addition, the Commission is called upon to work towards the establishment of European standards in the area and to encourage research into long and short term effects of exposure to electromagnetic fields in the current framework programme for research and technological development. A review of this recommendation is also foreseen in order to keep it up to date. A Report is also awaited within 5 years which will take into account the reports of the Member States and the latest scientific data and opinions on the subject. ENTRY INTO FORCE : 12.07.1999.