

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5028/08  
by Wolfgang Bulfon (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Health risks to consumers from energy-saving lightbulbs

The results of several series of tests have led experts and testing institutes to raise the issue of possible health risks from energy-saving lightbulbs.

The German consumer protection group Stiftung Warentest detected electric field strength values far in excess of the TCO standard of 10 V/m at a distance of 0.3m in a number of manufacturers' energy-saving lightbulb models (in the absence of available specific standards, those for TV/computer screens were used). These values exceeded the standards by a factor of between 2 and 6.5.<sup>1</sup>

The Austrian Medical Association spokesman on environmental medicine referred in a seminar handout to potential links between health problems and electro-magnetic fields, which occur inter alia near energy-saving lightbulbs. Symptoms such as headaches, asthma attacks and concentration problems occurred with unusual frequency. There are as yet no epidemiological studies to confirm a causal link between electro-magnetic fields and the above-mentioned symptoms.<sup>2</sup>

What is the Commission's assessment of the potential health risk to the consumer?

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Einleuchtend und zuverlässig' in: Stiftung Warentest, Test magazine, 01/2006, p. 71-75.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gerd Oberfeld: 'Umweltmedizinische Beurteilung elektromagnetischer Felder', Handout for Seminar 3 of the Austrian Medical Association's Environmental Medicine diploma course – Electro-magnetic Fields, 21- 22 April 2007, Pörschach.