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Answer given by Ms Gabriel
on behalf of the European Commission
(20.5.2019)

Protection of public health is of a paramount importance and is always taken into account in the Commission's proposals and initiatives, including those on 5G.

In particular, the strict and safe exposure limits for electromagnetic fields recommended at EU level by Council Recommendation 1999/519/EC on the exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields apply for all frequency bands currently envisaged for 5G.

The 5G Infrastructure Public Private Partnership (5G PPP) is supporting research and innovation to develop 5G networks complying with international standards and regulations. It develops systems designed to operate well below the safe health limits of electromagnetic emissions defined by Council Recommendation 1999/519/EC and therefore does not address biological impacts of 5G radiations.

The Commission's Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks (SCHEER) has a standing mandate to provide an independent update of the scientific evidence available, including the assessment of health risks that may be associated with exposure. The Committee has already produced five relevant opinions which have not provided any scientific justification to revise the limits set by Council Recommendation 1999/519/EC. The 5G networks are expected to have similar or lower levels of emission than 4G networks. Combined with 4G a modest cumulative increase is possible in dense areas, still far below the limits. These limits are based on independent guidance issued by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). Therefore an impact assessment is not considered necessary. The ICNIRP is reviewing its guidelines after public consultation. The Commission is looking forward to the conclusions. The SCHEER may reassess the situation depending on the outcome of this review.