

EN
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Answer given by Mr Breton
on behalf of the European Commission
(17.3.2020)

The Commission considers 5G as of strategic importance for Europe since it will be the connectivity basis for the digital transformation of our economy, in particular in strategic sectors such as transport, energy, manufacturing, health and media. The 5G Action Plan includes actions to align roadmaps and priorities for a coordinated 5G deployment across all EU Member states. The Ministerial Declaration ‘Making 5G a success for Europe’ calls to support the objectives to make 5G a success for Europe. These are political commitments to support the objectives, e.g. by making frequencies available and ensure interoperability, which as such do not represent a legal obligation.

The Commission is closely monitoring new scientific evidence on electromagnetic fields (EMF) exposure. Council Recommendation 1999/519/EC has set out precautionary limits of EMF exposure of the general public in accordance with the guidelines of the ICNIRP¹. The maximum exposure levels determined by the Recommendation are 50 times lower than the limits identified as having health effects, based on the available scientific evidence. It is expected that the exposure to electromagnetic fields when 5G will be in use, is very close to the exposure due to 4G and well below the strict limits. The SCHEER² 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 EMF exposure. This Committee has already produced five relevant opinions that have not provided any scientific justification to revise the limits set by the Recommendation. There is an ongoing revision of the guidelines by ICNIRP. Once this guidance is adopted the Commission will re-examine the situation.

¹ International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection

² The Commission’s Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks