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The Alliance for MRI is concerned that the threat posed by the EU Physical Agents 2004/40/EC (EMF) to the future of MRI has not been averted and that there is a need for action by the European institutions.

Despite the adoption of a proposal to postpone the implementation of the Directive until April 2012 (to allow time for a substantive amendment), there are two key threats:

- It is possible that the revised ICNIRP Guidelines on time-varying fields will set limits which will restrict many applications of MRI; notably for
 - interventional and research applications
 - assisting or caring for patients during imaging
 - some forms of functional imaging
- It is unlikely that any amendment to the Directive will be adopted and implemented by April 2012 (due to inter-institutional procedures); as a result the current Directive, which severely curtails the use of MRI, will remain in force.

Given the on-going threat posed to the use of MRI and the need for significant long-term financial investment in MRI by public health institutions and research institutes, it is important that doubt over the future use of MRI applications is removed.

MRI is essential in fighting against life-threatening diseases such as brain tumours, cancers and heart conditions. The Alliance for MRI is concerned that without urgent action to find a timely solution to the current situation, patients in Europe will be precluded from state-of-the-art healthcare services.

MRI has been safely used for over 25 years, with over 500 million patients exposed to up to 100 times the occupational exposure limit set by the Directive, without evidence of harm to workers or patients.

The Alliance for MRI requests an EU-wide derogation for MRI from the Physical Agents 2004/40/EC (EMF) Directive.

The established MR safety standard IEC/EN 60601-2-33 (as amended) establishes limit values for time-varying electromagnetic fields which have been set so that any danger to patients and workers is excluded.

It is essential that this major advance in health care technology is not threatened by burdensome legislation when concerns can be addressed through responsible guidance to medical and service personnel (Guidelines have been developed by radiologists together with other healthcare workers)

The Alliance for MRI

The 'Alliance for MRI' is a coalition of European Parliamentarians, patient groups, leading European scientists and the medical community, who together are seeking to avert the serious threat posed by EU health and safety legislation to the clinical and research use of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).

The Alliance for MRI was officially launched in March 2007 in response to the implementation of the EU Physical Agents 2004/40/EC (EMF) in April 2008. The Alliance was founded by the European Society for Radiology, the European Federation of Neurological Associations and Dr. Swoboda MEP, Vice-Chairman of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament. In October 2007 the European Commission proposed the postponement the implementation deadline from April 2008 to April 2012 to allow more time for the evaluation of new data on EMF and its short-term effects on the human body. The Commission stated that it was never the intention of this Directive to impede the practice of MRI and the postponement was approved by the European Parliament and the Council. The Alliance for MRI was instrumental in raising awareness of the threat posed to MRI and obtaining the postponement of the Directive.

The Alliance is supported by:

26 Members of the European Parliament

Jan Andersson, (PES) SE, John Bowis (EPP/ED) UK, Philip Bushill Matthews, (EPP/ED)UK, Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (ALDE), DE, Harald Ettl (PES) AT, Robert Goebbels, (PES) LU, Stephen Hughes, (PES) UK, Ville Itälä (EPP/ED) FI, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, (ALDE) FI, Karin Joens (PES) DE, Piia-Noora Kauppi, (EPP/ED) FI, Eija-Riitta Korhola, (EPP/ED) FI, Peter Liese (EPP) DE, Elizabeth Lynne, (ALDE) UK, Jules Maaten, (ALDE) NL, Linda McAvan (PES)UK, Dr Angelika Niebler (EPP/ED) DE, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, (EPP/ED) NL, Antonio Panzeri Pier, (PES) IT, Frédérique Ries (ALSE)BE, Zuzana Roithová (EPP/ED) CZ, Jean Spautz, (EPP/ED) LU, Hannes Swoboda (PES) AT (Founding member), Thomas Ulmer (EPP/ED) DE, Anne Van Lancker (PES) BE, Dr Anja Weisgerber (EPP/ED) DE

European and National patient groups European Federation of Neurological Associations (Founding member); including the European Parkinson's Disease Association, The European MS Platform and the European Headache Alliance, The European Heart Network, Europa Donna, The European Patients Forum, The International Diabetes Federation – Europe, Alzheimer Europe, The WHO Collaborative Centre for Research, training and treatment in Epilepsy, The Austrian Lung Association, The Austrian Epilepsy Association, Werkgroep Hersentumoren vzw (Belgian Brain Tumour Group), Epilepsy Centres of the Netherlands Foundation: SEIN

Representative Groups of Scientists

- European Society of Radiology (Founding Member) and institutional members (below)
- The Wellcome Trust
- European Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine and Biology (ESMRMB)

- European Union of Medical Specialists
- European Brain Council
- Luxembourg Medical Council
- European Institute for Biomedical Imaging Research (EIBIR)
- The Society and College of Radiographers
- European Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ESTRO)
- European CanCer Organisation (ECCO)
- European Federation of Organisations for Medical Physics (EFOMP)
- European Federation of Radiographer Societies

Institutional members of ESR:

- Société Française de Radiologie (SFR)
- Spanish Radiological Society (SERAM)
- Polish Medical Society of Radiology
- Norwegian Society of Radiology
- Royal Belgian Radiological Society
- Luxembourg Society of Radiology
- Deutsche Roentgengesellschaft - German Radiological Society (DRG)
- Radiological Society of the Netherlands
- European Society of Urogenital Radiology (ESUR)
- European Society of Thoracic Imaging (ESTI)
- European Society of Neuroradiology (ESNR)
- Croatian Medical Association & Croatian Society of Radiology
- European Society of Cardiac Radiology (ESCR)
- Italian Society of Radiology (SIRM)
- European Society of Breast Imaging (EUSOBI)
- Romanian Society of Radiology
- Danish Society of Radiology
- Austrian Radiologic Society (ÖRG)
- British Institute of Radiology
- Swedish Society of Medical Radiology
- Bulgarian Association of Radiology
- Sociedade Portuguesa de Radiologia e Medicina Nuclear
- Czech Radiological Society
- Slovak Radiological Society
- Faculty of Radiologists, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
- European Society of Head and Neck Radiology
- Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiological Society of Europe
- The Royal College of Radiologists

In addition, a number of individual scientists and patient group representatives have signed up to the Alliance

Further information is available at www.alliance-for-mri.org