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EU watchdog calls for urgent action on Wi-Fi radiation

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Published: 16 September 2007

Europe's top environmental watchdog is calling for immediate action to reduce exposure to radiation from Wi-Fi, mobile phones and their masts. It suggests that delay could lead to a health crisis similar to those caused by asbestos, smoking and lead in petrol.

The warning, from the EU's European Environment Agency (EEA) follows an international scientific review which concluded that safety limits set for the radiation are "thousands of times too lenient", and an official British report last week which concluded that it could not rule out the development of cancers from using mobile phones.

Professor Jacqueline McGlade, the EEA's executive director, said yesterday: "Recent research and reviews on the long-term effects of radiations from mobile telecommunications suggest that it would be prudent for health authorities to recommend actions to reduce exposures, especially to vulnerable groups, such as children."

The EEA's initiative will increase pressure on governments and public health bodies to take precautionary action over the electromagnetic radiation from rapidly expanding new technologies. The German government is already advising its citizens to use wired internet connections instead of Wi-Fi and landlines instead of mobile phones.

The scientific review, produced by the international BioInitiative Working Group of leading scientists and public health and policy experts, says the "explosion of new sources has created unprecedented levels of artificial electromagnetic fields that now cover all but remote areas of the habitable space on Earth", causing "long-term and cumulative exposure" to "massively increased" radiation that "has no precedent in human history".

It says "corrections are needed in the way we accept, test and deploy" the technologies "in order to avert public health problems of a global nature".