

Federal Ministry for  
Economics, Family and Youth  
Department IV/1  
Stubenring 1  
1011 Wien

Our Character  
Oberfeld/HaD

Honored ladies and gentlemen,

The data transmission from the smart grid can in principle be made via radio (eg, GSM, WLAN), power line communications (PLC) and data cables (copper, fiber optics). Which technology is implemented is until then up to the utility companies.

People in Austria are burdened with ever increasing exposures to electromagnetic fields. According to the WHO (IARC), after low-frequency magnetic fields (e.g. of the power supply), in May 2011 high-frequency electromagnetic fields such as those occurring in GSM and WLAN were also classified as possibly carcinogenic for humans. For intermediate frequencies in the kilohertz range (dirty power / dirty electricity), as occur in the PLC connection from transformer to Smart Meter that is favored by the utility companies in Austria, we have data from the U.S. which also shows an increased cancer risk.

The Austrian Chamber of Physicians emphatically calls to attention that with the area-wide introduction of 'smart meters' and their connection via power line communication (PLC), the Austrian population's exposure to electrical or magnetic fields in the intermediate frequency range (kilohertz range) would be massively raised. These fields are also emitted by cables in the building, including connecting cables to appliances and electrical appliances, far removed from the Smart Meter. The expected health consequences would be an increase in symptoms and diseases that fall into the category of so-called multi-system diseases. This illness is characterized by involving several organs or functional systems at the same time and in interaction. The consequences are, among others, an increased stress load on people. This can, depending on an individual starting position and exposure level, lead to an increased risk for exhaustion (keyword burn out), learning problems, depression, and cancer.

The Austrian Chamber of Physicians assumes that these health aspects and resulting significant socioeconomic consequences and costs were not considered up to then, because the technical and environmental medicine expertise in this regard were to given in the two reports (PWC, Kearney). These health and socioeconomic consequences that are to be expected are, from the perspective of the Austrian Chamber of Physicians, mandatory to be included in the consideration. The Austrian Chamber of Physicians strictly rejects another, in this case actually state-mandated, expansion of the Electrosmog exposure on the Austrian population.

In the following several additional open questions from the perspective of the Austrian Chamber of Physicians are cited in abbreviated form.

- The legal status of the customer in case of error / failure / rejection of smart meters is not clear.
- To date, the customer has no choice (opt out).
- Who is liable in the event of health problems and diseases caused by the increased field exposure on the part of the Smart Meter?
- To date, the Interference resistance of smart meters is not clarified in the case of elevated solar activity. From NASA there are corresponding warnings for the years 2012 to 2014. This could lead to an increased risk to total failure of the power supply.

From the perspective of the Austrian Chamber of Physicians the planned timetable of mandatory introduction of "smart meters" should be reconsidered or suspended until pending clarification and solution of open questions.

Best Regards

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