

To: His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations Honorable Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization U.N. Member States

International Appeal: Scientists call for Protection from Non-ionizing Electromagnetic Field Exposure

We are scientists engaged in the study of biological and health effects of non-ionizing electromagnetic fields (EMF). Based upon peer-reviewed, published research, we have serious concerns regarding the ubiquitous and increasing exposure to EMF generated by electric and wireless devices. These include– but are not limited to–radiofrequency radiation (RFR) emitting devices, such as cellular and cordless phones and their base stations, Wi-Fi, broadcast antennas, smart meters, and baby monitors as well as electric devices and infra-structures used in the delivery of electricity that generate extremely-low frequency electromagnetic field (ELF EMF).

Scientific basis for our common concerns

Numerous recent scientific publications have shown that EMF affects living organisms at levels well below most international and national guidelines. Effects include increased cancer risk, cellular stress, increase in harmful free radicals, genetic damages, structural and functional changes of the reproductive system, learning and memory deficits, neurological disorders, and negative impacts on general well-being in humans. Damage goes well beyond the human race, as there is growing evidence of harmful effects to both plant and animal life.

These findings justify our appeal to the United Nations (UN) and, all member States in the world, to encourage the World Health Organization (WHO) to exert strong leadership in fostering the development of more protective EMF guidelines, encouraging precautionary measures, and educating the public about health risks, particularly risk to children and fetal development. By not taking action, the WHO is failing to fulfill its role as the preeminent international public health agency.

Inadequate non-ionizing EMF international guidelines

The various agencies setting safety standards have failed to impose sufficient guidelines to protect the general public, particularly children who are more vulnerable to the effects of EMF.

The International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) established in 1998 the "Guidelines For Limiting Exposure To Time-Varying Electric, Magnetic, and Electromagnetic Fields (up to 300 GHz)"¹. These guidelines are accepted by the WHO and numerous countries around the world. The WHO is calling for all nations to adopt the ICNIRP guidelines to encourage international harmonization of standards. In 2009, the ICNIRP released a statement saying that it was reaffirming its 1998 guidelines, as in their opinion, the scientific literature published since that time "has provided no evidence of any adverse effects below the basic restrictions and does not necessitate an immediate revision of its guidance on limiting exposure to high frequency electromagnetic fields². ICNIRP continues to the present day to make these assertions, in spite of growing scientific evidence to the contrary. It is our opinion that, because the ICNIRP guidelines do not cover long-term exposure and low-intensity effects, they are insufficient to protect public health.

The WHO adopted the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classification of extremely low frequency electromagnetic field (ELF EMF) in 2002^3 and radiofrequency radiation (RFR) in 2011^4 . This classification states that EMF is a *possible human carcinogen (Group 2B)*. Despite both IARC findings, the WHO continues to maintain that there is insufficient evidence to justify lowering these quantitative exposure limits.

Since there is controversy about a rationale for setting standards to avoid adverse health effects, we recommend that the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) convene and fund an independent multidisciplinary committee to explore the pros and cons of alternatives to current practices that could substantially lower human exposures to RF and ELF fields. The deliberations of this group should be conducted in a transparent and impartial way. Although it is essential that industry be involved and cooperate in this process, industry should not be allowed to bias its processes or conclusions. This group should provide their analysis to the UN and the WHO to guide precautionary action.

Collectively we also request that:

- 1. children and pregnant women be protected;
- 2. guidelines and regulatory standards be strengthened;
- 3. manufacturers be encouraged to develop safer technology;
- 4. utilities responsible for the generation, transmission, distribution, and monitoring of electricity maintain adequate power quality and ensure proper electrical wiring to minimize harmful ground current;
- 5. the public be fully informed about the potential health risks from electromagnetic energy and taught harm reduction strategies;
- 6. medical professionals be educated about the biological effects of electromagnetic energy and be provided training on treatment of patients with electromagnetic sensitivity;
- 7. governments fund training and research on electromagnetic fields and health that is independent of industry and mandate industry cooperation with researchers;
- 8. media disclose experts' financial relationships with industry when citing their opinions regarding health and safety aspects of EMF-emitting technologies; and
- 9. white-zones (radiation-free areas) be established.

¹ http://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPemfgdl.pdf

² <u>http://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPStatementEMF.pdf</u>

³ <u>http://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Monographs/vol80</u>

⁴ <u>http://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Monographs/vol102/</u>

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All inquiries, including those from qualified scientists who request that their name be added to the Appeal, may be made by contacting Elizabeth Kelley, M.A., Director, EMFscientist.org, at info@EMFscientist.org.

<u>Note</u>: the signatories to this appeal have signed as individuals, giving their professional affiliations, but this does not necessarily mean that this represents the views of their employers or the professional organizations they are affiliated with.

Signatories

<u>Armenia</u>

Prof. Sinerik Ayrapetyan, Ph.D., Life Sciences International Postgraduate Educational Center, UNESCO Chair, Armenia

<u>Australia</u>

- Dr. Priyanka Bandara, Ph.D., Independent Environmental Health Educator/Researcher, Australia; Advisor, Environmental Health Trust and Doctors for Safer Schools
- Dr. Bruce Hocking, MD, MBBS, FAFOEM (RACP), FRACGP, FARPS, specialist in occupational medicine; Victoria, Australia
- Dr. Gautam (Vini) Khurana, Ph.D., F.R.A.C.S., Director, C.N.S. Neurosurgery, Australia
- Dr. Don Maisch, Ph.D., Australia
- Dr. Elena Pirogova, Ph.D., Biomed Eng., B. Eng (Hon) Chem. Eng., Engineering & Health College; RMIT University, Australia
- Dr. Mary Redmayne, Ph.D., Department of Epidemiology & Preventive Medicine, Monash University, Australia
- Dr. Charles Teo, BM, BS, MBBS, Member of the Order of Australia, Director, Centre for Minimally Invasive Neurosurgery at Prince of Wales Hospital, NSW, Australia

<u>Austria</u>

Dr. Michael Kundi, MD, University of Vienna, Austria Dr. Gerd Oberfeld, MD, Public Health Department, Salzburg Government, Austria Dr. Bernhard Pollner, MD, Pollner Research, Austria Prof. Dr. Hugo W. Rüdiger, MD, Austria

<u>Bahrain</u>

Dr. Amer Kamal, MD, Physiology Department, College of Medicine, Arabian Gulf University, Bahrain

<u>Belgium</u>

Prof. Marie-Claire Cammaerts, Ph.D., Free University of Brussels, Faculty of Science, Brussels, Belgium

<u>Brazil</u>

Vânia Araújo Condessa, MSc., Electrical Engineer, Belo Horizonte, Brazil Prof. Dr. João Eduardo de Araujo, MD, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil Dr. Francisco de Assis Ferreira Tejo, D. Sc., Universidade Federal de Campina Grande, Campina Grande, State of Paraíba, Brazil Prof. Alvaro deSalles, Ph.D., Federal University of Rio Grande Del Sol, Brazil Prof. Adilza Dode, Ph.D., MSc. Engineering Sciences, Minas Methodist University, Brazil Dr. Daiana Condessa Dode, MD, Federal University of Medicine, Brazil Michael Condessa Dode, Systems Analyst, MRE Engenharia Ltda, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

<u>Canada</u>

Dr. Magda Havas, Ph.D., Environmental and Resource Studies, Centre for Health Studies, Trent University, Canada Dr. Paul Héroux, Ph.D., Director, Occupational Health Program, McGill University; InvitroPlus Labs, Royal Victoria Hospital,

McGill University, Canada

Dr. Tom Hutchinson, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Environmental and Resource Studies, Trent University, Canada Prof. Ying Li, Ph.D., InVitroPlus Labs, Dept. of Surgery, Royal Victoria Hospital, McGill University, Canada James McKay M.Sc, Ecologist, City of London; Planning Services, Environmental and Parks Planning, London, Canada Prof. Anthony B. Miller, MD, FRCP, University of Toronto, Canada

Prof. Klaus-Peter Ossenkopp, Ph.D., Department of Psychology (Neuroscience), University of Western Ontario, Canada Prof. Michael A. Persinger, Ph.D., Behavioural Neuroscience and Biomolecular Sciences, Laurentian University, Canada

<u>China</u>

Prof. Huai Chiang, Bioelectromagnetics Key Laboratory, Zhejiang University School of Medicine, China
Prof. Yuqing Duan, Ph.D., Food & Bioengineering, Jiangsu University, China
Dr. Kaijun Liu, Ph.D., Third Military Medical University, Chongqing, China
Prof. Xiaodong Liu, Director, Key Lab of Radiation Biology, Ministry of Health of China; Associate Dean, School of Public Health, Jilin University, China
Prof. Wenjun Sun, Ph.D., Bioelectromagnetics Key Lab, Zhejiang University School of Medicine, China
Prof. Minglian Wang, Ph.D., College of Life Science & Bioengineering, Beijing University of Technology, China

Prof. Qun Wang, Ph.D., College of Materials Science & Engineering, Beijing University of Technology, China

Prof. Haihiu Zhang, Ph.D., School of Food & BioEngineering, Jiangsu University, China

Prof. Jianbao Zhang, Associate Dean, Life Science and Technology School, Xi'an Jiaotong University, China

Prof. Hui-yan Zhao, Director of STSCRW, College of Plant Protection, Northwest A & F University, Yangling Shaanxi, China

Prof. J. Zhao, Department of Chest Surgery, Cancer Center of Guangzhou Medical University, Guangzhou, China

<u>Croatia</u>

Ivancica Trosic, Ph.D., Institute for Medical Research and Occupational Health, Croatia

Egypt

Prof. Dr. Abu Bakr Abdel Fatth El-Bediwi, Ph.D., Physics Dept., Faculty of Science, Mansoura University, Egypt
 Prof. Dr. Emad Fawzy Eskander, Ph.D., Medical Division, Hormones Department, National Research Center, Egypt
 Prof. Dr. Heba Salah El Din Aboul Ezz, Ph.D., Physiology, Zoology Department, Faculty of Science, Cairo University, Egypt
 Prof. Dr. Nasr Radwan, Ph.D., Neurophysiology, Faculty of Science, Cairo University, Egypt

<u>Estonia</u>

Dr. Hiie Hinrikus, Ph.D., D.Sc, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia

Finland

Dr. Mikko Ahonen, Ph.D, University of Tampere, Finland

Dr. Marjukka Hagström, LL.M., M.Soc.Sc, Principal Researcher, Radio and EMC Laboratory, Finland

Dr. Dariusz Leszczynski, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor of Biochemistry, University of Helsinki, Finland;

Member of the IARC Working Group that classified cell phone radiation as possible carcinogen.

France

Dr. Dominique Belpomme, Professor in Oncology, Paris V Descartes University, ECERI Executive Director **Dr. Pierre Le Ruz, Ph.D.**, Criirem, Le Mans, France

Georgia

Prof. Besarion Partsvania, Ph.D., Head of Bio-cybernetics Department of Georgian Technical University, Georgia

Germany

Prof. Dr. Franz Adlkofer, MD, Chairman, Pandora Foundation, Germany

- Prof. Dr. Hynek Burda, Ph.D., University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany
- Dr. Horst Eger, MD, Electromagnetic Fields in Medicine, Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians, Bavaria, Germany
- Dr. rer. nat. Lebrecht von Klitzing, Ph.D., Head, Institute of Environ. Physics; Ex-Head, Clinical Research, Fribourg Medical University, Germany
- Dr.Sc. Florian M. König, Ph.D., Florian König Enterprises (FKE) GmbH, Munich, Germany
- Dr. Ulrich Warnke, Ph.D., Bionik-Institut, University of Saarlandes, Germany

Greece

Dr. Adamantia F. Fragopoulou, M.Sc., Ph.D., Department of Cell Biology & Biophysics, Biology Faculty, University of Athens, Greece Dr. Christos Georgiou, Ph.D., Biology Department, University of Patras, Greece

Prof. Emeritus Lukas H. Margaritis, Ph.D., Depts. Cell Biology, Radiobiology & Biophysics, Biology Faculty, Univ. of Athens, Greece

Dr. Aikaterini Skouroliakou, M.Sc., Ph.D., Department of Energy Technology Engineering, Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Greece Dr. Stelios A Zinelis, MD, Hellenic Cancer Society-Kefalonia, Greece

Iceland

Dr. Ceon Ramon, Ph.D., Affiliate Professor, University of Washington, USA; Professor, Reykjavik University, Iceland

<u>India</u>

Prof. Dr. B. D. Banerjee, Ph.D., Fmr. Head, Environmental Biochemistry & Molecular Biology Laboratory, Department of Biochemistry, University College of Medical Sciences, University of Delhi, India

Prof. Jitendra Behari, Ph.D., Ex-Dean, Jawaharlal Nehru University; presently, Emeritus Professor, Amity University, India Prof. Dr. Madhukar Shivajirao Dama, Institute of Wildlife Veterinary Research, India

- Dr. Kavindra K. Kesari, MBA, Ph.D., Resident Environmental Scientist, University of Eastern Finland, Finland; Assistant Professor, Jaipur National University, India
- Prof. Rashmi Mathur, Ph.D., Head, Department of Physiology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India
- Prof. N.N. Sareesh, Ph.D., Melaka Manipal Medical College, Manipal University, India

Iran

- Prof. Dr. Soheila Abdi, Ph.D., Physics, Islamic Azad University of Safadasht, Tehran, Iran
- Prof. G.A. Jelodar, D.V.M., Ph.D., Physiology, School of Veterinary Medicine, Shiraz University, Iran
- Prof. Hamid Mobasheri, Ph.D., Head, BRC; Head, Membrane Biophysics & Macromolecules Lab; Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics, University of Tehran, Iran
- Prof. S.M.J. Mortazavi, Ph.D., Head, Medical Physics & Engineering; Chair, NIER Protection Research Center, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Iran
- Prof. Amirnader Emami Razavi, Ph.D., Clinical Biochem., National Tumor Bank, Cancer Institute, Tehran Univ. Medical Sciences, Iran
- Dr. Masood Sepehrimanesh, Ph.D., Gastroenterohepatology Research Center, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Iran
- Prof. Dr. Mohammad Shabani, Ph.D., Neurophysiology, Kerman Neuroscience Research Center, Iran

Israel

Dr. Yael Stein, MD, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Hadassah Medical Center, Israel

- Dr. Danny Wolf, MD, Pediatrician and General Practitioner, Sherutey Briut Clalit, Shron Shomron district, Israel
- Dr. Ronni Wolf, MD, Assoc. Clinical Professor, Head of Dermatology Unit, Kaplan Medical Center, Rehovot, Israel

Italy

- Prof. Sergio Adamo, Ph.D., La Sapienza University, Rome, Italy
- Prof. Fernanda Amicarelli, Ph.D., Applied Biology, Dept. of Health, Life and Environmental Sciences, University of L'Aquila, Italy
- Dr. Pasquale Avino, Ph.D., INAIL Research Section, Rome, Italy
- Dr. Fiorella Belpoggi, Ph.D., FIATP, Director, Cesare Maltoni Cancer Research Center, Ramazzini Institute, Italy
- Prof. Emanuele Calabro, Department of Physics and Earth Sciences, University of Messina, Italy
- Prof. Franco Cervellati, Ph.D., Department of Life Science and Biotechnology, Section of General Physiology, University of Ferrara, Italy
- Prof. Stefano Falone, Ph.D., Researcher in Applied Biology, Dept. of Health, Life and Environmental Sciences, University of L'Aquila, Italy
- Prof. Dr. Speridione Garbisa, ret. Senior Scholar, Dept. Biomedical Sciences, University of Padova, Italy
- Dr. Settimio Grimaldi, Ph.D., Associate Scientist, National Research Council, Italy
- Prof. Livio Giuliani, Ph.D., Director of Research, Italian Health National Service, Rome-Florence-Bozen; Spokesman, ICEMS International Commission for Electromagnetic Safety, Italy
- Prof. Dr. Angelo Levis, MD, Dept. Medical Sciences, Padua University, Italy
- Prof. Salvatore Magazù, Ph.D., Department of Physics and Science, Messina University, Italy
- Dr. Fiorenzo Marinelli, Ph.D., Researcher, Molecular Genetic Institute of the National Research Council, Italy

Claudio Poggi, Electronics Engineer, Research Director, Sistemi s.r.l., (TN), Genoa, Italy

- Prof. Raoul Saggini, University G. D'Annunzio, Chieti, Italy
- **Dr. Morando Soffritti, MD,** Honorary President, National Institute for the Study and Control of Cancer and Environmental Diseases B. Ramazzini, Bologna, Italy
- Prof. Massimo Sperini, Ph.D., Center for Inter-University Research on Sustainable Development, Rome, Italy

<u>Japan</u>

Prof. Tsuyoshi Hondou, Ph.D., Graduate School of Science, Tohoku University, Japan

Prof. Hidetake Miyata, Ph.D., Department of Physics, Tohoku University, Japan

<u>Kazakhstan</u>

Dr. Timur Saliev, MD, Ph.D., Life Sciences, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan; Institute Medical Science/Technology, University of Dundee, UK

New Zealand

Dr. Bruce Rapley, BSc, MPhil, Ph.D., Principal Consulting Scientist, Atkinson & Rapley Consulting Ltd., New Zealand

<u>Nigeria</u>

Dr. Idowu Ayisat Obe, Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria

<u>Oman</u>

Prof. Najam Siddiqi, MBBS, Ph.D., Human Structure, Oman Medical College, Oman

Poland

Dr. Pawel Bodera, Pharm. D., Department of Microwave Safety, Military Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Poland Prof. Dr. Stanislaw Szmigielski, MD, Ph.D., Military Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Poland

Republic of China

Prof. Dr. Tsun-Jen Cheng, MD, Sc.D., National Taiwan University, Republic of China

Russian Federation

Dr. Oleg Grigoyev, DSc., Ph.D., Deputy Chairman, The Russian National Committee on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection, Russian Federation
 Prof. Yury Grigoryev, MD, Chairman, Russian National Committee on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection, Russian Federation
 Dr. Anton Merkulov, Ph.D., Russian National Committee on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection, Moscow, Russian Federation

<u>Serbia</u>

Dr. Snezana Raus Balind, Ph.D., Research Associate, Institute for Biological Research "Sinisa Stankovic", Belgrade, Serbia
 Prof. Danica Dimitrijevic, Ph.D., Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, University of Belgrade, Serbia
 Dr. Sladjana Spasic, Ph.D., Institute for Multidisciplinary Research, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Slovak Republic

Dr. Igor Belyaev, Ph.D., Dr.Sc., Cancer Research Institute, Slovak Academy of Science, Bratislava, Slovak Republic

South Korea (Republic of Korea)

Prof. Young Hwan Ahn, MD, Ph.D, Ajou University Medical School, South Korea (Republic of Korea)

Prof. Kwon-Seok Chae, Ph.D., Molecular-ElectroMagnetic Biology Lab, Kyungpook National University, South Korea (Republic of Korea) Dr. Myung Chan Gye, Ph.D., Hanyang University, South Korea (Republic of Korea)

Prof. Dr. Yoon-Myoung Gimm, Ph.D., School of Electronics and Electrical Engineering, Dankook University, South Korea (Republic of Korea)

Dr. Mina Ha, MD, Dankook University, South Korea (Republic of Korea)

Prof. Seung-Cheol Hong, MD, Inje University, South Korea (Republic of Korea)

Prof. Dong Hyun Kim, Ph.D., Dept. of Otorhinolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Incheon St. Mary's Hospital, Catholic University of Korea, South Korea (Republic of Korea)

Prof. Ha-Rim Kim, Dept.of Pharmacology, College of Medicine, Dankook University, South Korea (Republic of Korea

Prof. Myeung Ju Kim, MD, Ph.D., Department of Anatomy, Dankook University College of Medicine, South Korea (Republic of Korea)

Prof. Nam Kim, Ph.D., School of Information and Communications Engineering, Chungbuk National University, South Korea (Republic of Korea) Prof. Yun-Sil Lee, Ph.D., Ewha Womans University, South Korea (Republic of Korea)

Prof. Dr. Yoon-Wong Kim, MD, Ph.D., Hallym University School of Medicine, South Korea (Republic of Korea)

Prof. Jung Keog Park, Ph.D., Life Science & Biotech; Dir., Research Instit. of Biotechnology, Dongguk University, South Korea (Republic of Korea)

Prof. Sungman Park, Ph.D., Institute of Medical Sciences, School of Medicine, Hallym University, South Korea (Republic of Korea) Prof. Kiwon Song, Ph.D., Dept. of Chemistry, Yonsei University, South Korea (Republic of Korea)

<u>Spain</u>

Prof. Dr. Miguel Alcaraz, MD, Ph.D., Radiology and Physical Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Murcia, Spain
Dr. Alfonso Balmori, Ph.D., Biologist, Consejería de Medio Ambiente, Junta de Castilla y León, Spain
Prof. J.L. Bardasano, D.Sc, University of Alcalá, Department of Medical Specialties, Madrid, Spain
Dr. Claudio Gómez-Perretta, MD, Ph.D., La Fe University Hospital, Valencia, Spain
Prof. Dr. Elena Lopez Martin, Ph.D., Human Anatomy, Facultad de Medicina, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Spain
Prof. Enrique A. Navarro, Ph.D., Department of Applied Physics and Electromagnetics, University of Valencia, Spain

<u>Sweden</u>

Dr. Michael Carlberg, MSc, Örebro University Hospital, Sweden

Dr. Lennart Hardell, MD, Ph.D., University Hospital, Örebro, Sweden

Prof. Olle Johansson, Ph.D., Experimental Dermatology Unit, Dept. of Neuroscience, Karolinska Institute, Sweden

Dr. Bertil R. Persson, Ph.D., MD, Lund University, Sweden

Senior Prof. Dr. Leif Salford, MD. Department of Neurosurgery, Director, Rausing Laboratory, Lund University, Sweden Dr. Fredrik Söderqvist, Ph.D., Ctr. for Clinical Research, Uppsala University, Västerås, Sweden

Switzerland

Dr. nat. phil. Daniel Favre, Association Romande Alert, Switzerland

<u>Turkey</u>

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Zülküf Akdağ, Ph.D., Department of Biophysics, Medical School of Dicle University, Diyarbakir, Turkey
Prof. Dr. Halil Ibrahim Atasoy MD, Faculty of Medicine, Abant Izzet Baysal University, Turkey
Prof. Ayse G. Canseven (Kursun), Ph.D., Gazi University, Faculty of Medicine, Dept. of Biophysics, Turkey
Prof. Dr. Mustafa Salih Celik, Ph.D., Fmr. Head, Turkish Biophysical Society; Head, Biophysics Dept; Medical Faculty, Dicle Univ., Turkey
Prof. Dr. Suleyman Dasdag, Ph.D., Dept. of Biophysics, Medical School of Dicle University, Turkey
Prof. Omar Elmas, MD, Ph.D., Mugla Sitki Kocman University, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Physiology, Turkey
Dr. Arzu Firlarer, M.Sc. Ph.D., Occupational Health & Safety Department, Baskent University, Turkey
Prof. Suleyman Kaplan, Ph.D., Biophysics Dept, Medical Faculty, Süleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Turkey
Prof. Dr. Ersan Odaci, MD, Ph.D., Karadeniz Technical University, Medical Faculty, Turkey
Dr. Cemil Sert, Ph.D., Department of Biophysics of Medicine Faculty, Harran University, Turkey
Prof. Dr. Nesrin Seyhan, B.Sc., Ph.D., Medical Faculty of Gazi University; Chair, Biophysics Dept; Director GNRK Ctr.; Panel Mbr, NATO STO HFM; Scientific Secretariat Member, ICEMS; Advisory Committee Member, WHO EMF, Turkey

Dr. Bahriye Sirav (Aral), ABD, Gazi University Faculty of Medicine, Dept of Biophysics, Turkey

United Kingdom

David Gee, Associate Fellow, Institute of Environment, Health and Societies, Brunel University, UK

Dr. Mae-Wan Ho, Ph.D., Institute of Science in Society, UK

Dr. Isaac Jamieson, Ph.D., Biosustainable Design, UK

Prof. Michael J. O'Carroll, Emeritus Professor, former Pro Vice-Chancellor, Sunderland University, UK.

Alasdair Phillips, Electrical Engineer, UK

Dr. Syed Ghulam Sarwar Shah, M.Sc., Ph.D., Public Health Consultant, Honorary Research Fellow, Brunel University London, UK Dr. Sarah Starkey, Ph.D., UK

Ukraine

Dr. Oleg Banyra, MD, 2nd Municipal Polyclinic, St. Paraskeva Medical Centre, Ukraine Prof. Igor Yakymenko, Ph.D., D.Sc., Institute of Experimental Pathology, Oncology & Radiobiology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine

<u>USA</u>

Dr. Martin Blank, Ph.D., Columbia University, USA

Prof. Jim Burch, MS, Ph.D., Dept.of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Arnold School of Public Health, University of South Carolina, USA Prof. David O. Carpenter, MD, Director, Institute for Health and the Environment, University of New York at Albany, USA Prof. Simona Carrubba, Ph.D., Biophysics, Daemen College, Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo Neurology Dept., USA Dr. Zoreh Davanipour, D.V.M., Ph.D., Friends Research Institute, USA Dr. Devra Davis, Ph.D., MPH, President, Environmental Health Trust; Fellow, American College of Epidemiology, USA Prof. Om P. Gandhi, Ph.D., Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Utah, USA Prof. Beatrice Golomb, MD, Ph.D., University of California at San Diego School of Medicine, USA Dr. Martha R. Herbert, MD, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School, Harvard University, USA Dr. Donald Hillman, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Michigan State University, USA Elizabeth Kelley, MA, Fmr. Managing Secretariat, ICEMS, Italy; Director, EMFscientist.org, USA Dr. Henry Lai, Ph.D., University of Washington, USA B. Blake Levitt, medical/science journalist, former New York Times contributor, EMF researcher and author, USA Dr. Albert M. Manville, II, Ph.D. and C.W.B., Adj. Professor, Johns Hopkins University's Krieger Graduate School of Arts & Sciences; Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, USA Dr. Andrew Marino, J.D., Ph.D., Retired Professor, LSU Health Sciences Center, USA Dr. Marko Markov, Ph.D., President, Research International, Buffalo, New York, USA Jeffrey L. Marrongelle, DC, CCN, President/Managing Partner of BioEnergiMed LLC, USA Dr. Samuel Milham, MD, MPH, USA L. Lloyd Morgan, Environmental Health Trust, USA Dr. Joel M. Moskowitz, Ph.D., School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley, USA Dr. Martin L. Pall, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Biochemistry & Basic Medical Sciences, Washington State University, USA Dr. Jerry L. Phillips, Ph.D. University of Colorado, USA Dr. William J. Rea, M.D., Environmental Health Center, Dallas, Texas, USA Camilla Rees, CEO, Electromagnetichealth.org; CEO, Wide Angle Health, LLC, USA Prof. Narenda P. Singh, MD, University of Washington, USA Prof. Eugene Sobel, Ph.D., Retired, School of Medicine, University of Southern California, USA David Stetzer, Stetzer Electric, Inc., Blair, Wisconsin, USA Dr. Lisa Tully, Ph.D., Energy Medicine Research Institute, Boulder, CO, USA