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To: His Excellency Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations; Honorable Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization; Honorable Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the U.N. Environment Programme; U.N. Member Nations

# International Appeal: Scientists call for Protection from Non-ionizing Electromagnetic Field Exposure[1]

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 fields (ELF EMF).

## Scientific basis for our common concerns

Numerous recent scientific publications have shown that EMF effects 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)"<sup>[1]</sup>. 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 fields"<sup>[2]</sup>. 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 magnetic fields (ELF-MF) in 2002<sup>[3]</sup> and radiofrequency radiation (RFR) in 2011<sup>[4]</sup>. 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.

- children and pregnant women be protected;
- guidelines and regulatory standards be strengthened;
- manufacturers be encouraged to develop safer technology;
- 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;
- the public be fully informed about the potential health risks from electromagnetic energy and sought harm reduction strategies;
- medical professionals be educated about the biological effects of electromagnetic energy and be provided training on treatment of patients with electromagnetic hypersensitivity;
- governments fund training and research on electromagnetic fields and health that is independent of industry and mandate industry cooperation with researchers;
- media disclose experts' financial relationships with industry when citing their opinions regarding health and safety aspects of EMF-emitting technologies; and
- white-zones (radiation-free areas) be established.

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Inquiries, including those from qualified scientists who request that their name be added to the Appeal, may be made by contacting Elizabeth Kolley, M.A., Director, EMFscientist.org, at info@emfscientist.org (mailto:info@EMFscientist.org).

**Note:** 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.

[1] <http://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPamf.pdf> (http://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPamf.pdf) (http://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPamf.pdf)

[2] <http://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPStatementEMF.pdf> (http://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPStatementEMF.pdf) (http://www.icnirp.org/cms/upload/publications/ICNIRPStatementEMF.pdf)

[3] <https://publications.iarc.fr/08>

[4] <https://publications.iarc.fr/126>

## Translations of the Appeal

- Arabic (Images/docs/trans/Arabic\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- Chinese (Images/docs/trans/Chinese-2017.pdf)
- Farsi (Images/docs/trans/Farsi\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- Finnish (Images/docs/trans/Finnish\_International\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- French (Images/docs/trans/French\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- German (Images/docs/trans/German\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2020217.pdf)
- Greek (Images/docs/trans/Greek\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- Hebrew (Images/docs/trans/Hebrew\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2107.pdf)
- Italian (Images/docs/trans/Italian\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- Japanese (Images/docs/trans/Japanese\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- Korean (Images/docs/trans/Korean\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- Norwegian (Images/docs/trans/Norwegian\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- Polish (Images/docs/trans/Polish\_Apel-naukowcow\_2017.pdf)
- Portuguese (Images/docs/trans/Portuguese\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- Spanish (Images/docs/trans/Spanish\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2107.pdf)
- Swedish (Images/docs/trans/Swedish\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- Turkish (Images/docs/trans/Turkish\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2017.pdf)
- Croatian (Images/docs/trans/Croatian\_EMF\_Scientist\_Appeal\_2020.pdf)

**Australia**

- Dr. Priyanka Bandara, Ph.D.**, Independent Environmental Health Educator/Researcher, Advisor, Environmental Health Trust, Doctors for Safer Schools, Australia
- Dr. Peter French BSc, MSc, MBA, PhD, FRSM**, Conjoint Senior Lecturer, University of New South Wales, Australia
- Dr. Gautam (Vini) Khurana, Ph.D., F.R.A.C.S., Director**, C.N.S. Neurosurgery, Australia
- Mr. Victor Leach**, Radiofrequency Protection Consultant App. Physics (PMT) / MSc (Mech.) / MARP / MCRSA, Member / Oceanic Radiofrequency Advisory Association, Inc. (ORSA), Australia
- Dr. Gautam (Vini) Khurana, Ph.D., F.R.A.C.S., Director**, C.N.S. Neurosurgery, Australia
- Dr. Don Malisch, Ph.D.**, Australia
- Dr. Julie McCredien, Ph.D.**, President, Oceania Radiofrequency Radiation Advisory Association, Inc. (ORSA), 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
- Mr. Steven Weller, MSc, Ph.D student**, Centre for Environment and Population Health, College of Medicine and Dentistry, Griffith University, Member of Oceanic Radiofrequency Advisory Association (ORSA), Australia

**Austria**

- Dr. Michael Kundl, MD**, University of Vienna, Austria
- Prof. Pierre Madl, EE MSc & PhD**, Paris Lodron, University of Salzburg (PULS), Radiological Measurement Laboratory (RMLS), Edge Institute (AT), Austria
- Dr. Gerd Oberfeld, MD**, Public Health Department, Salzburg Government, Austria
- Dr. Bernhard Polner, MD**, Polner Research, Austria
- Prof. Dr. Hugo W. Rüdiger, MD**, Austria

**Bahrain**

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

**Belgium**

- Prof. Marie-Claire Cammaerts, Ph.D.**, Free University of Brussels, Faculty of Science, Brussels, Belgium
- Mr. Joris Everaert, M.Sc.**, Biologist, Species Diversity team, Research Institute for Nature and Forest, Belgium
- Dr. Andre Vander Vorst, PhD**, professor emeritus, University Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

**Brazil**

- Ms. Vanja Araujo Condessa, MSc.**, Electrical Engineer, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
- Prof. Dr. João Eduardo de Araújo, 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 Sul, Brazil
- Prof. Adiza Doda, Ph.D., MSc.**, Engineering Sciences, Minas Methodist University, Brazil
- Dr. Daniela Condessa Doda, MD**, Federal University of Medicine, Brazil
- Mr. Michael Condessa Doda**, Systems Analyst, MRE Engenharia Ltda, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
- Mr. Claudio Fernandez, MEEng**, Associate Professor at the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio Grande do Sul, Caracas, Brazil
- Prof. Orlando Fortado Vieira Filho, PhD**, Cellular & Molecular Biology, Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil
- 

**Canada**

- 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, InVivoPlus 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.**, InVivoPlus Labs, Dept. of Surgery, Royal Victoria Hospital, McGill University, Canada
- Mr. James McKay, M.Sc.**, Ecologist, City of London, Planning Services, Environmental and Parks Planning, London, Canada
- Prof. Anthony B. Miller, MD, FRCP**, Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto, Canada
- Prof. Klaus-Peter Ossenkopp, Ph.D.**, Department of Psychology (Neuroscience), University of Western Ontario, Canada
- Dr. Malcolm Paterson, PhD**, Molecular Oncologist (ret.), British Columbia, Canada
- Prof. Michael A. Persinger, Ph.D.**, Behavioural Neuroscience and Biomolecular Sciences, Laurentian University, Canada
- Dr. Margaret Sears MEng, PhD**, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, Prevent Cancer Now, Ottawa, ON, Canada
- Ms. Sheena Symington, B.Sc., M.A.**, Director, ElectroSensitive Society, Peterborough, Canada

**China**

- Prof. Hual Chiang**, Bioelectromagnetics Key Laboratory, Zhejiang University School of Medicine, China
- Prof. Yuyang 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. Minglan Wang, Ph.D.**, College of Life Science & Bioengineering, Beijing University of Technology, China
- Prof. Dun Wang, Ph.D.**, College of Materials Science & Engineering, Beijing University of Technology, China
- Prof. Haihui Zhang, Ph.D.**, School of Food & BioEngineering, Jiangsu University, China
- Prof. Jianbao Zhang**, Associate Dean, Life Science and Technology School, Xipin Jiaotong University, China
- Prof. Haiyan Zhao**, Director of STSCRN, 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

**Colombia**

- Eng. Rodrigo James Abril, MSc.**, Researcher/Educator on Biological and Health Effects and Environmental Impact of EMF, Colombia

**Croatia**

- Dr. Ivanica Trosic, Ph.D.**, Institute for Medical Research and Occupational Health, Croatia

**Egypt**

- Prof. Dr. Abu Bakr Abdel Fattih El-Bedweli, 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 Abou Elz, Ph.D.**, Physiology, Zoology Department, Faculty of Science, Cairo University, Egypt
- Prof. Dr. Nasr Radwan, Ph.D.**, Neurophysiology, Faculty of Science, Cairo University, Egypt

**Estonia**

- Dr. Hilda Hinkkus, Ph.D., D.Sc.**, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia
- Dr. Tarmo Koppel, PhD.**, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia

**Finland**

- Dr. Mikko Ahonen, Ph.D.**, University of Tampere, Finland
- Dr. Marjatta Haggrén, LL.M., M.Sc.Sc.**, Principal Researcher, Radio and EMC Laboratory, Finland
- Prof. Dr. Osmo Hänninen, Ph.D.**, Dept. of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Eastern Finland, Finland, Editor-in-Chief, Pathophysiology, Finland
- Dr. Kevindra K. Kesari, MBA, Ph.D.**, Radiation Biologist, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, Assistant Professor, Jyväskylä National University, India, Dr. Darluz Lasezayank, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor of Biochemistry, University of Helsinki, Finland, Member of the IARC Working Group that classified cell phone radiation as possible carcinogen.
- Prof. Emeritus Rainer Nyberg, EdD, MPS**, Abo Akademi University (ret.), Vaasa, Finland
- Dr. Georgiy Ostroumov, Ph.D.**, (in the field of RF EMF), independent researcher, Finland

**France**

- Prof. Dr. Dominique Beljonne, MD, MPH**, Professor in Oncology, Paris V Descartes University, ECER Executive Director
- Dr. Pierre Le Rut, Ph.D.**, Clitrem, Le Mans, France
- Dr. Annie J. Basco, MD, MPH, MS, DrPH, Frr.** Research Dr., French NH (INSERM), Former, Chief, Unit of Epidemiology for Cancer

#### Ghana

**Prof. Esauon Partovi, Ph.D.**, Head of Bio-cygenetics 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 (http://www.researchgate.net/institution/University\_of\_Duisburg-Essen) (http://www.researchgate.net/institution/University\_of\_Duisburg-Essen) (http://www.researchgate.net/institution/University\_of\_Duisburg-Essen) (http://www.researchgate.net/institution/University\_of\_Duisburg-Essen) (http://www.researchgate.net/institution/University\_of\_Duisburg-Essen) (http://www.researchgate.net/institution/University\_of\_Duisburg-Essen)

**Dr. Horst Eger, MD**, Electromagnetic Fields in Medicine, Association of Seditary Health Insurance Physicians, Bavaria, Germany

**Prof. Dr. Karl Hecht, MD**, Senior Director, Institute of Pathophysiology, Charité, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany

**Dr. Sc. Florian M. König, Ph.D.**, Florian König Enterprises (FKE) GmbH, Munich, Germany

**Dr. rer. nat. Leibeicht von Kilting, Ph.D.**, Head, Institute of Environ.Physik; Ex-Head, Dept. Clinical Research, Medical University, Lubeck, Germany

**Dr. Cornelia Waldmann-Setsam, MD**, Member, Competence Initiative for the Protection of Humanity, Environment and Democracy e.V., Bamberg, Germany

**Dr. Ulrich Warneke, Ph.D.**, Stonk-Institut, University of Saarlandes, German

#### Greece

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

**Dr. Christos Georgioulis, Ph.D.**, Biology Department, University of Patras, Greece

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

**Dr. Alkateriki Skourouliakou, M.Sc., Ph.D.**, Department of Energy Technology Engineering, Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Greece

**Dr. Stefanos A Zinilis, MD**, Hellenic Cancer Society-Katolonia, Greece

#### Iceland

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

#### India

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

**Prof. Jyendra Behari, Ph.D.**, Ex-Dean, Jawaharal Nehru University; presently, Emerita Professor, Aranya University, India

**Prof. Dr. Madhukar Shivaji Das**, Institute of Wildlife Veterinary Research, India

**Associate Prof. Dr Amajor Dhami, PhD**, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India

**Ms. Et. Piyush A. Kokate, MTECH**, Scientist C, Analytical Instrumentation Division (AID), CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), India

**Prof. Girish Kumar, Ph.D.**, Electrical Engineering Department, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, India

**Dr. Prabita Mandal PhD**, Department of Physics, Indian Institute of Technology, Karpur, India

**Prof. Rashmi Mehra, Ph.D.**, Head, Department of Physiology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India

**Prof. Dr. Kameshwar Prasad MD**, Head, Dept. of Neurology, Director, Clinical Epidemiology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, India

**Dr. Sivani Saravannan, PhD**, Dept. Advanced Zoology and Biotechnology, Loyola College, Chennai, India

**Dr. N.N. Sharnesh, PhD**, Melaka Manipal Medical College, India

**Dr. R. S. Sharma, MD**, Sr. Deputy Director General, Scientist - G & Chief Coordinator - EMF Project, Indian Council of Medical Research, Dept. of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi, India

**Prof. Dr. Dorairaj Sudarshanam, M.Sc., M.Ed., Ph.D.**, Fellow - National Academy of Biological Sciences, Prof. of Zoology, Biotechnology and Bioinformatics, Department of Advanced Zoology & Biotechnology, Loyola College, Chennai, South India

#### Iran

##### Islamic Republic of

**Prof. Dr. Soheila Abdi, Ph.D.**, Physics, Islamic Azad University of Sabzpoor, Tehran, Iran

**Prof. G.A. Jelodar, D.V.M., Ph.D.**, Physiology, School of Veterinary Medicine, Shiraz University, Iran

**Prof. Hamed Mobarkeh, Ph.D.**, Head BRC; head, Membrane Biophysics & Macromolecules Laboratory, Institute of Biochemistry & Biophysics, University of Tehran, Iran

**Prof. Seyyed Mohammad Mahdavi, Ph.D.**, Dept of Biology, Science and Research, Islamic Azad University, 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. Amirzadeh Emami Razzavi, Ph.D.**, Clinical Biochem., National Tumor Bank, Cancer Institute, Tehran Univ. Medical Sciences, Iran

**Dr. Masoud Sepahmanesh, Ph.D.**, Gastroenteropathology Research Center, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Iran

**Prof. Dr. Mohammad Shabani, Ph.D.**, Neurophysiology, Kerman Neuroscience Research Center, Iran

#### Israel

**Mr. Michael Peleg, M.Sc.**, radio communications engineer and researcher, Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, Israel

**Prof. Elinor D. Richter, MD, MPH**, Occupational & Environmental Medicine, Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Public Health & Community Medicine, Israel

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

**Dr. Danyel Wolf, MD**, Podiatrist and General Practitioner, Shearley Blout Chait, Shiron Shomron district, Israel

**Dr. Ronit 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.**, IRIAS, Research Section, Rome, Italy

**Dr. Flavia Belgiochi, Ph.D.**, IATF, Director, Cesare Maltoni Cancer Research Center, Ramazzini Institute, Italy

**Prof. Giovanni Di Bonaventura, PhD**, School of Medicine, "G. d'Annunzio" University of Chieti-Pescara, Italia

**Prof. Emanuele Calabro**, Department of Physics and Earth Sciences, University of Molise, Italy

**Prof. Franco Cervellati, Ph.D.**, Department of Life Science and Biotechnology, Section of General Physiology, University of Ferrara, Italy

**Vale Crocetta, Ph.D. Candidate**, Biomolecular and Pharmaceutical Sciences, "G. d'Annunzio" University of Chieti, Italy

**Dr. Agostino Di Ciaia, MD**, President Scientific Committee, International Society of Doctors for Environment (ISDE), Italy

**Prof. Stefano Falone, Ph.D.**, Researcher in Applied Biology, Dept. of Health, Life & Environmental Sciences, University of L'Aquila, Italy

**Prof. Dr. Speridione Garbisa**, M.D. 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.**, Principal Investigator of Finalized Research of the Italian National Health Service, Spokesman, ICEMS-International Commission for Electromagnetic Safety, Italy

**Prof. Dr. Angelo Levis, MD**, Dept. Medical Sciences, Pavia University, Italy

**Prof. Salvatore Magagnoli, Ph.D.**, Department of Physics and Science, Messina University, Italy

**Dr. Fiorenzo Marinelli, Ph.D.**, Researcher, Molecular Genetics Institute of the National Research Council, Italy

**Dr. Arianna Pompilio, PhD**, Dept. Medical, Oral & Biotechnological Sciences, G. d'Annunzio University of Chieti-Pescara, Italy

**Prof. Dr. Raouf Saggiol, MD**, School of Medicine, University G. D'Annunzio, Chieti, Italy

**Dr. Morendo Sopritti, 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

#### Japan

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

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

**Dr. Yasuhiko Ishihara, PhD**, Biomedical Sciences Program, Graduate School of Integrated Sciences for Life, Hiroshima University, University, Japan

#### Jordan

**Prof. Mohammed S.H. Al Salamah**, Jordan University of Science &

Technology, Jordan

#### **Kazakhstan**

**Prof. Dr. Temur 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

#### **Nigeria**

**Dr. Obajulawa Adesjoke PhD**, Cell Biology and Genetics Unit, Dept of Zoology, University of Ife, Lectorate, Biological Sciences Department, Biotechnology Unit, Aba Babalola University, Nigeria

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

**Prof. Olatunde Michael Ohi, Ph.D.**, Radiation & Health Physics, Leadbe Airotoia University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria

#### **Oman**

**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. Stanisław Szmagielski, MD, Ph.D.**, Military Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Poland

**Prof. dr hab. Włodzisław Klonowski, Ph.D., Dr.Sc.**, Biomedical Physics, Nalecz Institute of Biocybernetics & Biomedical Engineering, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland

#### **Portugal**

**Prof. Hugo Silva, Ph.D.**, Physics Department, University of Evora, Portugal

#### **Romania**

**Ailina Cobzari, Engineer**, National Institutes Research & Development and Institute of Construction & Sustainability, Romania

#### **Russian Federation**

**Prof. Vladimir N. Bittl, Ph.D.**, A.M. Prokhorov General Physics Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University

**Dr. Oleg Grigoryev, DSc., Ph.D.**, Chairman, Russian National Committee on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection, Russian Federation

**Prof. Yuriy Grigoryev, MD**, Former Chairman, Russian National Committee on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection, Russian Federation

**Dr. Natalia Iegorovna Khoreva, Ph.D.**, Senior researcher of the Laboratory of Physics and Chemical Problems of Radiobiology and Ecology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russian Federation

**Dr. Anton Merkulov, Ph.D.**, Russian National Committee on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Dr. Evgeny Vladimirovich Tsiou, Ph.D.**, Technical Sciences Candidate, Pribunov Abal State Technical University, Russia

**Dr. Maxim Trushin, Ph.D.**, Kazan Federal University, Russia

#### **Serbia**

**Dr. Snezana Raus Balind, Ph.D.**, Research Associate, Institute for Biological Research "Mira Stankovic", Belgrade, Serbia

**Prof. Danica Dimitrijevic, Ph.D.**, Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences, University of Belgrade, Serbia

**Dr. Starijana 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. Kwon-Seok Cha, Ph.D.**, Molecular-Electromagnetic Biology Lab, Kyungpook National University, South Korea

**Prof. Dr. Yoon-Myoung Gim, Ph.D.**, School of Electronics and Electrical Engineering, Dankook University, South Korea

**Prof. Dr. Myung Chan Gye, Ph.D.**, Hanyang University, South Korea

**Prof. Dr. Miha Ha, MD**, Dankook University, South Korea

**Prof. Seung-Chul Hong, MD**, Iqiy University, South Korea

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

**Prof. Hak-Rim Kim**, Department of Pharmacology, College of Medicine, Dankook University, South Korea

**Prof. Myoung Ju Kim, MD, Ph.D.**, Department of Anatomy, Dankook University College of Medicine, South Korea

**Prof. Jae Seon Lee, MD**, Department of Molecular Medicine, NHA University College of Medicine, Incheon 22212, South Korea

**Prof. Yun-Sil Lee, Ph.D.**, Ewha Woman's University, South Korea

**Prof. Dr. Yoon-Won Kim, MD, Ph.D.**, Hallym University School of Medicine, South Korea

**Prof. Jung Keog Park, Ph.D.**, Life Science & Biotech. Div., Research Inst. of Biotechnology, Daejeong University, South Korea

**Prof. Sungman Park, Ph.D.**, Institute of Medical Sciences, School of Medicine, Hallym University, South Korea

**Prof. Kwon Song, Ph.D.**, Dept. of Chemistry, Yonsei University, South Korea

#### **Spain**

**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. Bardsano, D.Sc.**, University of Alcalá, Department of Medical Specialties, Madrid, Spain

**Dr. Claudio Gómez-Parretera, MD, Ph.D.**, La Fe University Hospital, Valencia, Spain

**Prof. Dr. Miguel López-Lazaro, PhD**, Associate Professor, Department of Pharmacology, University of Seville, Spain

**Prof. Dr. Elena Lopez Martín, Ph.D.**, Human Anatomy, Facultad de Medicina, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Spain

**Prof. Dr. Emilio Mayayo, MD**, Pathology Unit, School of Medicine, University Rovira i Virgili (URV), Tarragona, Spain

**Prof Enrique A. Navarro, Ph.D.**, Department of Applied Physics and Electromagnetics, University of Valencia, Spain

#### **Sudan**

**Mr. Mosab Nouraldain Mohammed Hamad, MA**, Head, Dept. of Medical Parasitology Health Sciences, Elsheikh Abdallah Ebnadi University, Sudan

#### **Sweden**

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

**Dr. Lenmar Hardell, MD, Ph.D.**, University Hospital, Örebro, Sweden

**Dr. Lena Hedendahl, MD**, Independent Environment and Health Research, Luleå, Sweden

**Prof. Olof 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, Rosling Laboratory, Lund University, Sweden

**Dr. Fredrik Söderqvist, Ph.D., Cr.** for Clinical Research, Uppsala University, Västerås, Sweden

#### **Switzerland**

**Dr. phil. nat. Daniel Favre, A.R.A. (Association Romande Alerte**, Switzerland

#### **Taiwan (Republic of China)**

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

**Dr. Jian-Ming, Ph.D.**, Center for Molecular and Clinical Immunology, Chang Gung University, Taiwan

#### **The Netherlands**

**Dirk K.F. Meijer, em. Professor of Pharmacology, PhD**, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands

#### **Turkey**

**Prof. Dr. Mehmet Zülfi Akdağ, Ph.D.**, Department of Biophysics, Medical School of Dicle University, Diyarbakir, Turkey

**Associate Prof. Dr. Hali Abraham Atasoy, MD**, Pediatrics, Abant İzzet Baysal University, Faculty of Medicine, Turkey

**Prof. Ayse G. Caneven (Karsman), Ph.D.**, Gazi University, Faculty of Medicine, Dept. of Biophysics, Turkey

**Prof. Dr. Mustafa Balit Celik, Ph.D.**, Former Head, Turkish Biophysical Society, Head, Biophysics Dept. Medical Faculty, Dicle Univ., Turkey

**Prof. Dr. Osman Cevizci**, Electrical-Electronics Engineering Department, Sakarya University, Turkey

**Prof. Dr. Süleyman Dadağ, Ph.D.**, Dept. of Biophysics, Medical School of Dicle University, Turkey

**Prof. Omar Elmas, MD, Ph.D.,** Mugla Siki Kocman University, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Physiology, Turkey  
**Prof. Dr. Ali H. Ergi, MD,** Faculty, Radiation Oncology Department, BAV University Medical School, Turkey  
**Prof. Dr. Arzu Firatler, M.Sc, Ph.D.,** Occupational Health & Safety Department, Baskent University, Turkey  
**Associate Prof. Ayşe İbrahim Çarşı, PhD,** Marmara Univ. School of Medicine, Biophysics Department, Turkey  
**Prof. Süleyman Kaplan, Ph.D.,** Head, Department of Histology and Embryology, Medical School, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Samsun, Turkey  
**Prof. Dr. Mustafa Nazaroğlu, Ph.D.,** Biophysics Dept. Medical Faculty, Söğütözü Düzce University, Isparta, Turkey  
**Prof. Dr. Ercan Odaç, MD, Ph.D.,** Karadeniz Technical University, Medical Faculty, Trabzon, Turkey  
**Prof. Dr. Elcin Özgür, Ph.D.,** Biophysics Department, Faculty of Medicine, Gazı University, Turkey  
**Prof. Dr. Selim Şaker,** Electrical Engineering Department, Bogaziçi University, İstanbul, Turkey  
**Prof. Dr. Cemil Şart, Ph.D.,** Department of Biophysics of Medicine Faculty, Hıran University, Turkey  
**Prof. Dr. Naciye Şeyhan, B.Sc., Ph.D.,** Medical Faculty of Çiğdem University, Chair, Biophysics Dept. Director GENK; Cr.; Panel Mdr; NATO STO HFM; Scientific Secretarial Member; ICEMS; Advisory Committee Member; WHO EMF; Turkey  
**Prof. Dr. Bahriye Siray (Arsl), Ph.D.,** Gazı University Faculty of Medicine, Dept of Biophysics, Turkey

#### Ukraine

**Dr. Oleh Baniha, MD,** 2nd Municipal Polyclinic, St. Paraskeva Medical Centre, Ukraine  
**Prof. Victor Martyniuk, PhD,** ECIS "Institute of Biology", Head of Biophysics Dept. Taras Shevchenko National University of Kiev, Ukraine  
**Prof. Igor Yakymenko, Ph.D., D.Sc.,** Institute of Experimental Pathology, Oncology & Radiobiology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine

#### United Kingdom

**Michael Bevington, M.A., M.Ed.,** Chair of Trustees, ElectroSensitivity UK (ES-UK), UK  
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**Mr. David Gee,** Associate Fellow, Institute of Environment, Health and Societies, Brunel University, UK  
**Dr. Andrew Goldsworthy BSc PhD,** Lecturer in Biology (retired), Imperial College, London, UK  
**Emeritus Professor Dennis L. Henshaw, PhD,** Human Radiation Effects, School of Chemistry, University of Bristol, UK  
**Dr. Mao-Wan Ho, Ph.D.,** Institute of Science in Society, UK  
**Dr. Gerard Hyland, Ph.D.,** Institute of Biophysics, Neuss, Germany, UK  
**Dr. Isaac Jamieson, Ph.D.,** Biosustainable Design, UK  
**Dr. Erica Mallory-Blythe, BSBM,** Founder, Physicians' Health Initiative for Radiation and Environment; ICBE-EMF; Hon. Member British Society of Ecological Medicine, UK  
**Emeritus Professor, Michael J. O'Carroll, PhD,** former Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of Sunderland, UK  
**Mr. Alexander Phillips,** Electrical Engineer, UK  
**Dr. Syed Ghulam Sarwar Shah, M.Sc., Ph.D.,** Public Health Consultant, Honorary Research Fellow, Brunel University, London, UK  
**Dr. Cyril W. Smith, DIC, PhD,** Retired 1990 UK  
**Dr. Sarah Starkey, Ph.D.,** independent neuroscience and environmental health research, UK

#### United States

**Dr. Hiral Z Baldwin MD,** Fellow of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, Neuroscience Solutions, LLC, USA  
**Dr. Martin Blank, Ph.D.,** Columbia University, USA  
**Prof. Jim Birch, MS, Ph.D.,** Dept. of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, Amold 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. Prof. Simona Carnazza, Ph.D.,** Biophysist, Daamen College, Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo Neurology Dept., USA  
**Prof. Kent Chamberlin, Ph.D.,** Professor & Chair Emeritus, Dept. Electrical & Computer Engineering, Univ. of New Hampshire, Dept.  
**Dr. Sandra Cruz-Pol, PhD,** Professor Electrical Engineering, on Radio Frequencies, Electromagnetics, University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez; Member of US National Academies of Sciences Committee for Radio Frequencies, Puerto Rico, USA  
**Dr. Zohreh Davanipour, D.V.M., Ph.D.,** Friends Research Institute, USA  
**Dr. Debra Davis, Ph.D., MPH,** President, Environmental Health Trust; Fellow, American College of Epidemiology, USA  
**Dr. James DeMeo, PhD,** retired in private industry, USA  
**Mr. Paul Raymond Doyon, EMRS, MAT,** Doyon Independent Research Associates, USA  
**Prof. On P. Gandhi, Ph.D.,** Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Utah, USA  
**Prof. Beatrice Galante, MD, Ph.D.,** University of California at San Diego School of Medicine, USA  
**Dr. Reba Goodman Ph.D.,** Columbia University, USA  
**Dr. Martha R. Herbert, MD, Ph.D.,** Harvard Medical School, Harvard University, USA  
**Dr. Garner Heuser, M.D., Ph.D., F.A.C.P.,** Emeritus member, Cedars Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA Former Assistant Clinical Professor, UCLA; Former member, Brain Research Institute, UCLA, USA  
**Dr. Donald Hillman, Ph.D.,** Professor Emeritus, Michigan State University, USA  
**Ms. Elizabeth Kelley, MA,** Managing Director, International Commission on the Biological Effects of Electromagnetic Fields, USA  
**Dr. Seungyeon Kim, Ph.D.,** Assistant Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Georgia Institute of University, USA  
**Dr. Ronald N. Kostoff,** Ph.D., Gainesville, VA, USA  
**Ms. Neha Kumar,** Founder, Nonionizing Electromagnetic Radiation Shielding Alternatives, Pvt. Ltd. B. Tech - Industrial Biotech, USA  
**Dr. Henry Lai, Ph.D.,** University of Washington, USA  
**Ms. B. Blake Levitt,** medical/science journalist, former New York Times contributor; EMF researcher and author, USA  
**Prof. Trevor G. Marshall, PhD,** Autoimmunity Research Foundation, USA  
**Dr. Albert M. Marville, II, Ph.D. and C.W.B.,** Adj. Professor, Johns Hopkins University 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  
**Dr. Jeffrey L. Marrongelli, DC, CCN,** President/Managing Partner of BioEnergyMed LLC, USA  
**Dr. Ronald Melnick, PhD,** Senior Toxicologist, (Retired, leader of the NTP's health effects studies of cell phone radio frequency radiation), US National Toxicology Program, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, USA  
**Dr. Samuel Miham, MD, MPH,** USA  
**Mr. L Lloyd Morgan,** Environmental Health Trust, USA  
**Dr. Joel M. Moskowitz, Ph.D.,** School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley, USA  
**Dr. Indira Naim, PhD,** Isoaho National Labs, Isoaho Falls, 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  
**Ms. Camilla Rees, MBA,** Electromagnethhealth.org; CEO, Wide Angle Health, LLC, USA  
**Dr. Cindy Lee Russell, M.D.,** Physicians for Safe Technology, USA  
**Ms. Theodora Scarato, MSW,** Environmental Health Trust, USA  
**Prof. Narendra P. Singh, MD,** University of Washington, USA  
**Prof. Eugene Sobel, Ph.D.,** Retired, School of Medicine, University of Southern California, USA  
**Mr. David Stetzer,** Stetzer Electric, Inc., Blair, Wisconsin, USA  
**Dr. Lisa Tully, Ph.D.,** Energy Medicine Research Institute, Boulder, CO, USA

## Supporting Scientists who have published peer reviewed papers in related fields

**Oiga Amelia, PhD,** Post-Doctoral Researcher; Dept of Biology & CESAM, University of Aveiro Campus, Universidade de Santiago, Portugal  
**Dr. Pinar Muñoz Calero, MD,** specialist in Pediatrics, Neonatology, Stomatology and Addiction Medicine, President of Fundación Alborada; Medical Director of Alborada Outpatient Hospital; Co-chair of Pathology and Environment and Associate Professor of the Medicine at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain  
**Michele Cascardi, MA,** Environmental Science, President/Chief Executive Officer, Salvatore Brandi International Hospital, Rome, Italy  
**Enrico Corsetti,** Engineer, Research Director, Salvatore Brandi International Hospital, Rome, Italy  
**Dr. Dietmar Hildebrand, Ph.D.,** Biophysicist; Co-inventor Biostack Experiments, Germany

