

brennpunkt

Commentary on the current role of the German Commission on Radiological Protection

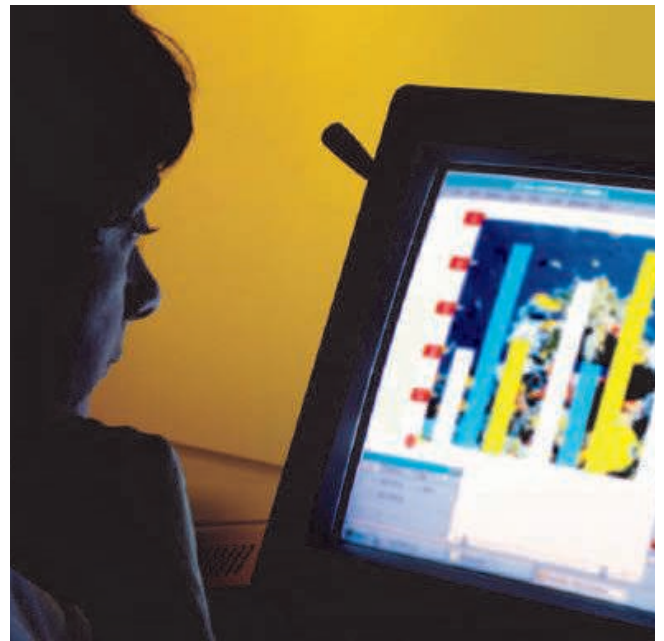
WHO takes distance from Prof. A. Lerchl

Primary reason for exclusion: Professor A. Lerchl is biased

Prof. Alexander Lerchl is a member of the German Commission on Radiological Protection (SSK) and head of its Committee on Non-ionizing Radiation. Thus, he is the highest ranking representative for radiological protection in the area of mobile communication, advisor of the German government, and the German representative in international bodies. In autumn 2010, an unprecedented incident occurred. The WHO turned down his inclusion in a commission of the IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer), which is to carry out a risk assessment of the carcinogenic potential of radiofrequency electromagnetic fields. An insult to Lerchl. Initially, the main reason quoted was his collaboration with the IZMF (German Informationszentrum Mobilfunk), the public relations office of the four German mobile phone operators. He is biased, the WHO wrote:

"Listed under item 1b, we noticed in your Declaration of Interest (DoI) your activities as a consultant for the German Informationszentrum Mobilfunk (IZMF). We have become aware of the fact that this organization has been set-up and is maintained by the mobile-phone networks in Germany to defend the joint interests of the German mobile-phone industry. As such, this activity poses in our view at least an apparent conflict. As was stated in our previous message, an important selection criterion for Working Group members is the absence of such conflicts in their DoI."

Prof. Lerchl did not accept this rejection and intervened, that he would not be a consultant of the IZMF, but an independent expert for their educational programme. The WHO cannot ignore such an argument - because it cannot damage a government position - whoever holds it. Therefore, the WHO replied on October 26, 2010:



"We appreciate, given your distinguished position on the German Radiation Protection Board, the important implication that would have come with concluding a real conflict of interest."

The WHO could not maintain its reasoning, because this would have meant demanding his resignation from the SSK. Therefore, the WHO pays respect to the public office and then passes an even harsher judgement on its current holder.

Second reason for exclusion: Prof. Lerchl does not fulfil the job profile and has a preconceived opinion

Instead of withdrawing the exclusion, the WHO declares itself and issues the maximum sentence on Prof. Lerchl. The formal reason for exclusion due to 'conflict of interest' becomes a more serious private one: Lack of qualification and incompetence, all-clear-signal activities, and his participation in the dirty forum of the IZgMF (Informationszentrum gegen Mo-

bilfunk), a blog in which mobile-phone critics and action groups are quite openly slandered. The WHO writes in unusually clear language:

“An IARC Monograph is an evaluation exercise that demands complete independence from all commercial interests and from advocates who might be perceived as advancing a pre-conceived position.

In this connection, leaving aside the interests you mention in your Declaration, about half of your recent publications on radiofrequency radiation are not original research papers but criticisms of studies that suggest a harmful effect of exposure to radiation emitted by mobile telephones. In addition, some of your statements on the web pages of the "IZgMF" and "NextUp" follow a similarly strong stance.”

The merciless sentence:

“Taking the above points into account, we feel that your participation would not contribute to a balanced search for consensus within the forthcoming Working Group. Given this and the fact that we had many more qualified applicants than we can invite for the meeting, our final decision remains unchanged.”

This is to be considered the maximum sentence. Now the WHO does not assess the government position but the capability and the activities of its holder. This sentence of the WHO on Prof. Lerchl gives us a hint that his lobbying with all-clear-signal activities is well-known within the WHO. Thus, the desolation of the German radiation protection has been openly exposed. The WHO can do without the highest German representative.

The German Federal Office for Radiation Protection (BfS): Timid warnings regarding precaution

It is well known that the BfS plays down the risks of mobile communication and sticks to the thermal dogma. All knowledge on athermal effects of non-ionizing radiation is ignored and the interests of the mobile communication industry are protected. Still, in subordinated clauses, the BfS cannot avoid to recommend caution.

In several documents, the BfS recommends taking precautionary measures, especially with children, and points to the many unanswered risks:

“In general, the German government recommends to keep personal exposure to radiofrequency fields as low as possible and to prefer common cable networks whenever possible.”

(Bundestagsdrucksache 16/6117, 2007)

The German government also points out to the many risks that have not yet been tackled:

“There are open questions regarding the exposure of embryos and children as well as the potential effects on cognition, well-being, and sleep.”

(Bundestagsdrucksache 16/11557, S. 11, 2008)

The final document of the DMF-report states:

“Also, one cannot draw final conclusions yet regarding the long-term effects on humans, especially for a period of more than ten years, and this is true for adults and children.”

(DMF (German mobile-phone research programme), Final Document, page 41, 2008)

These are certainly undoubtedly compelling reasons for an active implementation of the precautionary principle.

Prof. Lerchl: Obvious all-clear signals

From a head within the SSK we would expect that he initiates research programmes that investigate the potential risks of mobile communication radiation and associated open questions. Lerchl does the opposite. To be precise, he does not regard radiation protection to be necessary. With his fundamental point of view that because of biophysical reasons there are no risks, he is the main ambassador of a carefree attitude towards this technology.

In “Alverde” (February 2011), a customer magazine of the German drugstore chain ‘dm’, he writes an we translate:

“Therefore, so-called protective measures – such as keeping the bedroom free of electric devices, reducing the use of mobile phones or even shielding the house against radiation by building biology environmental consultants - are unnecessary. Let us rather use our concern and energy for the protection of genuine health risks.”

An stronger all-clear signal cannot be proclaimed. And it has consequences. Young parents freed from uncertainty and moral dilemma are encouraged not to restrict the mobile phone use of their children. A disastrous advice. Against this stance, Dr. H.-P. Neitzke from the ECOLOG Institute wrote the article “Forschung tut not!” [Research is necessary]. He states that with this advice SSK members come up with ‘arguments’ for those “who prefer to handle their business undisturbed, that means undisturbed by the scientific evidence of effects in biological systems.”

Promotion for LTE

Industry gets Prof. Lerchl to support the introduction of LTE (Long Term Evolution) with his all-clear signals. In a promotional IZMF film covering LTE, he states and we translate :

“The problem are actually not the biological effects of such fields, the problem is the perception of the risk: When does someone regard something as a risk? And then an important part plays the fact that transmitters, i.e. the base stations, are clearly visible. And after the many public discussions people are very aware of these cell towers and they start to worry, and sometimes health problems start, though they are actually not related to the fields.”

The relieved comment in the film, and we translate:

“A new age can start for an even faster data transfer.” The film was on the IZMF home page in autumn 2010.



The DStGB (the German association of cities and towns) informs in its brochure “Mehr Breitband für Deutschland” [More broadband for Germany] about the expansion of broadband in rural areas. The expansion is to be done via LTE or fiber-optic cable. In an interview even the DStGB’s manager, Dr. Gerd Landsberg, regards LTE only as a transitional solution, and we translate: “It is true that transmission based on radio waves can contribute to cover the actual gap, but in the long run we have to establish cable-based solutions.”

Instead of recommending the technically superior and safe fiber-optic solution, Prof. Lerchl campaigns for LTE. The height of impudence is an interview in which he calms down the public authorities: There are no hazardous effects from LTE, and: “Precautionary measures are not required.” And this at a time when the German government replies to a parliamentary inquiry by the GREENS that there are still no research results on LTE.

Tranquilizers for Austrian doctors

Since the Austrian and Vienna medical associations are critical opponents of mobile-communication radiation and demand precautionary measures, Prof. Lerchl gives a guest performance in Austria. In politics this would be called an undue involvement in internal affairs. Together with Prof. Caroline Herr from a Bavarian state office for health and food security, he published an article on the homepage www.hausarzt-online.at [family doctor online] in December 2010, in which both claim that until now research did not provide any evidence of negative health effects and that because of biophysical reasons these effects cannot be expected. Their advice (translation):

“For patients and persons who suspect that their non-specific health symptoms are related to radiofrequency -electromagnetic-field exposure, so far studies could not show that they - with a corresponding exposure in laboratory tests - perceived these fields more intensely than persons, who do not suspect anything. Nevertheless, the problems of these patients must be taken seriously without thoughtlessly confirming the suspected connection to their environment. Within the frame of a preferably interdisciplinary diagnosis and risk communication we must help them to accept alternative concepts regarding the cause of their problems and their illness, in order to come up with an adequate treatment.”

This can only mean psychotherapy or administering psychiatric drugs. The close relation of the authors with industry is documented by the fact that further information is available from the FMK (Forum Mobilkommunikation) home page of the Austrian mobile communication industry.

Two questions arise: When does Prof. Lerchl apply for closing down the SSK if, in his point of view, there is no risk whatsoever associated with this technology? How long will the German government still tolerate his promotional activities for the mobile phone industry? The WHO took the necessary steps which should be a sign for German politics.

We need radiation protection!

The scientific community is more and more astonished at Prof. Lerchl's activities. It is openly discussed that his research work is second rated, he is less and less cited, and his presence in science is mainly based on the patronage by the mobile phone industry and politics.

Lerchl constantly publishes in the dirty IZgMF forum, stirring up against action groups. He also published the internal correspondence with the WHO in this forum. In this way, he himself defines the scientific level to which he has degenerated. His lack of restraint shows that in the meantime he seems to be isolated in the scientific community.

In revealing documents, Prof. Adlkofer and Prof. Richter take a look at the part Prof. Lerchl plays in industry and science. The documents can be downloaded from www.pandora-foundation.eu.

A request to resign and a change of persons will not be sufficient. The German radiation protection agency must meet its huge public health challenges with a convincing programme and get rid of the influence from lobbies. This cannot be successful as long as Prof. Lerchl is involved.

The expert information service **ElektrosmogReport** (6/2009) analysed the state of the German radiation protection agency and criticized the absurd situation that the people have been for "years and still are misled by industry and politics. Scientists doing independent research and producing unwelcome results are denigrated, and the responsible representatives in the various commissions, institutions, and government departments deny any harm caused by mobile communication radiation... Moreover there is method in the way the German Federal Office for Radiation Protection distorts or does not mention the statements from scientists who observe harmful effects."

Further literature on the current role of the German Commission on Radiological Protection

Über den Umgang mit wissenschaftlichen Ergebnissen in der Mobilfunkforschung an der Medizinischen Universität Wien Teil I u. II

Prof. F. Adlkofer, Prof. Karl Richter, March 2011
Download: www.stiftung-pandora.eu
Direct link: <http://tinyurl.com/623vnha>

About the Handling of Scientific Findings Regarding Mobile Phone Research at the Medical University of Vienna

Prof. F. Adlkofer, Prof. Karl Richter, January 2011
Download: www.pandora-foundation.eu
Direct link: <http://tinyurl.com/6ygscys>

Handystrahlung - eine Gefahr für Kinder? Eine Kontroverse mit Prof. Lerchl

Dr. Joachim Mutter, 2010
Download: <http://www.diagnose-funk.org>
Direct link: <http://tinyurl.com/462wcjy>

Die Fälscher. Mobilfunkpolitik und Forschung 2008, Hrsg. Verein zum Schutz der Bevölkerung vor Elektromog e.V., Stuttgart.

Deutsche Mobilfunkforschung. Von subtiler Fälschung zur Wissenschaftskriminalität

Peter Hensinger, 2008, Vortrag
Download auf www.diagnose-funk.org
Direct link: <http://tinyurl.com/687ujw6>

Forschung tut not!

Dr. H.-P. Neitzke
Download auf: www.mobilfunkstudien.org
Direct link: <http://tinyurl.com/4nndho4>

Bewertung des Krebsrisikos durch hochfrequente elektromagnetische Felder durch die Internationale Agentur für Krebsforschung der WHO

Dr. H.-Peter Neitzke, EMF-Monitor, Februar 2011

Prof. Lerchls neuer Kampf

Elektrosmog-Report, Isabel Wilke, März 2011

More documents on www.diagnose-funk.org

The original article was written in German.

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