



GSM Europe

The European interest group of the GSM Association

<http://gsmeurope.gsmworld.com>

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Recommendation on network rollout good practice

Mobile telecommunications is experiencing rapid growth in Europe and efficient mobile telecommunications network infrastructures, which deliver the coverage and quality demanded by customers, are essential for continued economic development.

Due to capacity considerations and limitations in the frequencies available for mobile telecommunications networks, more radio base stations are required as customer demand increases. This is often not clearly communicated or fully understood. There is a perception that because radio base stations are already widespread, there is no requirement for more, when, in fact, additional radio base stations are essential to provide high quality service to an increasing number of users, to allow those users to make more calls and to use new products and services.

The mobile telecommunications industry recognises that there is public concern about the siting and possible health effects of radio base stations. This public concern is in contrast to independent expert reviews in a number of EU states which have concluded that there is no convincing scientific evidence of a link between public exposure to low level radio signals generated by mobile telecommunications systems and adverse human health effects. The industry acknowledges that there is a responsibility on it, with central and local government, to address community concerns about radio base stations.

GSM Europe and the mobile telecommunications industry in Europe recommends good practice in the deployment of mobile telecommunications networks and encourages dialogue and consultation with key stakeholders.

Key elements of the mobile telecommunications industry recommended good practice include:

1. Improving the dialogue with local authorities and other key stakeholders in order to increase understanding of network infrastructure requirements and local planning frameworks. The consultation process will take into account planning, environmental and community issues.

2. Considering site sharing with other radio installations or existing structures, where technically feasible and in line with competition law and licensing conditions, when decisions are being made on the most environmentally appropriate radio base station solution.
3. Sensitive siting and design, which reduces visual intrusion and can help allay public concerns. The industry recognises that the environmental impact of radio base station developments should be kept to a minimum.
4. Providing information to regulatory and planning authorities on mobile telecommunications technological developments. The industry believes that the provision of technological information is an effective means of raising awareness and understanding of the issues confronting the industry.
5. Ensuring all existing and new radio base stations comply with national exposure guidelines based on the public exposure guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), as expressed in EU Council recommendation of 12 July 1999 (Reference 1999/519/EC) "on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (0 Hz to 300 GHz)". The industry supports exposure guidelines, such as ICNIRP, which are based on sound scientific evidence and are subject to on-going expert review.
6. Providing a written declaration that radio base stations are designed to comply with national or European exposure guidelines. A signed declaration of compliance with the relevant guidelines supports openness and provides confidence to local communities that radio base stations are being operated safely.
7. Implementing a clear process to respond to complaints and enquiries about radio base stations. The industry recognises that there has often been some frustration regarding the information provided when enquiries are received on radio base station sites and that the quality of the information provided to the public needs to be of a high standard.
8. Supporting quality research programmes at the EU and Member State level, based on the WHO research agenda that will provide the basis for on-going review of established guidelines. Expert reviews in a number of EU states have concluded that there is no convincing independent scientific research of a link between public exposure to the low level radio signals used by mobile telecommunications systems and adverse human health effects. However, the industry welcomes on-going, independent, quality research programmes in order that policy can be based on substantiated scientific evidence and criteria.
9. Using clear and consistent supporting documentation when exchanging information with regulatory and planning authorities. The industry recognises that it is often confusing when presented with similar information in varying formats and therefore documentation will aim to follow defined formats.