

Research into possible health effects in Italy

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The research activities in Italy are mainly supported by European and national projects. The main project going on is funded by the Italian Ministry for University and Scientific and Technological Research (MURST) titles: "*Human and Environmental Protection from Electromagnetic Emissions*". This research programme is co-ordinated by the National Research Council (CNR) and by the Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Environment (ENEA), and involves 59 research units representing universities, CNR institutes, ENEA departments, research laboratories, and private industries.

The project draws its origin from the awareness that the exploitation of new information technologies needs an accurate control, in order to avoid harmful electromagnetic field interference and to comply with environmental safeguards and human health protection criteria. The main objectives of the research activities foreseen within the project are the following: development of analytical and numerical models for the prediction of the electromagnetic field levels, development of experimental techniques for the identification of EM field sources and for EM field level monitoring, development of experimental and numerical techniques for the evaluation of EM field levels absorbed by subjects exposed to different field sources, characterisation of the mechanisms of the interaction between EM fields and bio-systems, reduction of existing environmental field levels.

Several research groups are involved in the European activities, Italy is the only country to have participants in all the projects financed in the V FP, three projects among nine see an Italian as coordinator. The Italian competence involves all the specializations of the bioelectromagnetic area, organized and linked through ICEmB (Interuniversity Centre for the study of interaction between ElectroMagnetic fields and Bio-systems) . The centre collects and promotes activities from ten universities as principal partners, five associate universities and ten public and private research institutions. Recently ICEmB got a contract from FDA on specific research on possible cytogenetic effects of mobile phones.

Other research are directly funded from public and private organization among the other can be cited Elettra 2000: a non-profit Consortium founded in June 1998. Its purpose is to provide information to institutions and general public on biological and health effects from exposure to electromagnetic fields and to monitor and discuss new research contributions, and to support scientific research activities.

Recently, with the support of Communication Ministry, a project of continuous monitoring in specific sites of the environmental electro-magnetic fields has been promoted.