



Brussels & 5G

The Brussels Capital Region in Belgium introduced arbitrarily low EMF exposure limits more than a decade ago, which has caused problems for both 4G and 5G deployment. The EMF limits introduced lacked any scientific rationale and were done so for political purposes. These actions were undertaken contrary to the advice of the World Health Organization (WHO) which stated:

“Considering the very low exposure levels and research results collected to date, there is no convincing scientific evidence that the weak RF signals from base stations and wireless networks cause adverse health effects.”¹

After having to adjust the limits to overcome the difficulties for 4G deployment, in July 2021, they had to do the same again to allow for the deployment of 5G. While the limits have been increased to 14.5 V/m from 6 V/m they are still below the limits recommended by the WHO.

Rather than moving to science-based limits like those adopted in most of Europe the regional government has continued to play politics with the limits.

As we have seen in Brussels, these arbitrary exposure limits impede the deployment of networks at the expense of users and the economy because they:

- make compliance distances unnecessarily large,
- reduce the possibilities of co-location and site-sharing, and
- reduce the output power of existing antennas which affects network coverage and results in the need for more antennas

The MWF believes that the best strategy to reconcile public health protection and the need of working mobile communication services is for science-based exposure limits to be implemented. Such limits are recommended by respected health authorities such as the WHO and, in the European context, are incorporated into the relevant European Council Recommendation.²

For further information: [Implications for Mobile Communications Infrastructure of Arbitrary Radio Frequency Exposure Limits](#) and our brochure: [5G and EMF Explained](#)

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¹ <https://www.who.int/peh-emf/publications/facts/fs304/en/>

² Council Recommendation 1999/519/EC on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields (0 Hz to 300 GHz)