

Independent Health Review confirms

East West Interconnector is Safe

An Independent Health Expert Opinion commissioned by Minister Eamon Ryan has confirmed that the EirGrid West Interconnector poses no health risk.

Eric van Rongen, PhD, a radiobiologist and an internationally recognised expert in health effects of electromagnetic fields confirmed that "...there are no indications that exposure to the static magnetic fields generated by the HVDC cable will in any way adversely affect human health, neither through acute nor through long term effects. The risk associated with this exposure can be considered to be as close to zero as possible".

EirGrid welcomes the report which backs up the information provided by EirGrid's independent expert Dr William Bailey, who is the international expert in electromagnetic fields who gave evidence at the An Bord Pleanála oral hearing in relation to the Interconnector, and it also backs up information which has been provided by the Irish Government.

The static magnetic field generated directly above the Interconnector is 43 microTesla which is less than the earth's natural magnetic field which is 49 microTesla in Ireland.

Mr van Rongen stated, "Everybody in Ireland and the rest of the world has been continually exposed to the geomagnetic fields throughout his or her lifetime. There are no indications at all that such exposure may lead to adverse health effects".

The East West Interconnector will operate far, far below the latest international guidelines which are set by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) which is a body of independent scientific experts in non-ionising radiation and is formally recognised by the World Health Organisation.

The ICNIRP guideline for general public exposure is 400,000 microTesla, many times that of the field from the interconnector. To compare this to everyday sources of static magnetic fields, the earphones of a portable music player generate 28,000 MicroTesla and a fridge magnet generates 22,000 microTesla, and they are accepted as perfectly safe.

EirGrid Project Director, John Fitzgerald said "The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources' Independent Expert Opinion reconfirms that the East West Interconnector is safe and poses no health risk to anyone living along the route of the cable".

Ends.

For further information contact EirGrid on Tel: +353 (0)1 677 1700

Note to the Editor:

- Eric van Rongen, PhD is member of several national and international organizations in the field of non-ionizing radiation. He has been secretary of the Non-ionizing Radiation Section of the Netherlands Society for Radiological Protection.
- He is a member of the International Advisory Committee of the WHO International EMF Project and was member of the WHO Task Groups that drafted the Environmental Health Criteria on Static Fields and on Low Frequency Fields. From 2002-2007 he was part-time seconded to WHO to work on the International EMF Project.
- He has been Corresponding Member of ICNIRP from 2001, member of the Standing Committee on Biology of ICNIRP from 2006, and member of the Main Commission of ICNIRP since May 2010.
- He was also member of the Task Group of ICNIRP that provided a first draft of the revised guidelines for exposure to static electric and magnetic fields that were published in its final form in 2009.
- He is a member of the Independent Expert Group on Electromagnetic fields of the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority, member of ICES (International Commission on Electromagnetic Safety) of IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) and member of the pool of scientific experts for the European Commission and as such has been member of the working groups that drafted the two latest EMF opinions of SCENIHR (Scientific