



## EMF policy facts: Austria

### Radio Exposure Limits

Since 2006 the reference levels and basic restrictions published by ICNIRP and recommended in the 1999 EU Council Recommendation have been mandatory throughout Austria. The reference levels are 4.5 W/m<sup>2</sup> for GSM 900 MHz, 9.0 W/m<sup>2</sup> for GSM 1800 and 10 W/m<sup>2</sup> for UMTS.

### The Radio Exposure Limits from a Legal Perspective

The Austrian constitution has assigned sole authority to the federal parliament for the specification of limits for exposure to electromagnetic fields. The official bodies assigned with the enforcement of these laws are also exclusively federal agencies. There is no leeway for diverging rules or enforcement at the provincial level.

This means that the operators of mobile communications networks in Austria are also legally required to comply with the established exposure limits. In Austria: the Telecommunications Act<sup>1</sup> mandates the protection of the health of the population in a general provision<sup>2</sup>. This requirement is defined in detail by the respective technical standards.

### The "Salzburg milliwatt" is not a limit, but a political demand

The political demand from the city of Salzburg to introduce a new limit of 0.001 W/m<sup>2</sup> (the so-called "Salzburg milliwatt") was brought before parliament but was rejected by a large majority on January 31, 2002.<sup>3</sup>

### Status assessment by the Swiss Federal Office of Communications in Salzburg

In 2001 the Swiss Federal Communications Commission (ComCom) asked the Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM) to provide a report on the feasibility of the "Salzburg model" as a precautionary measure against the possible effects of non-ionising radiation.

The Swiss OFCOM came to the following conclusion in its report: "The study shows that a limit of 1 mW/m<sup>2</sup>, recommended by the city of Salzburg on behalf of the precautionary principle, could not be achieved by the existing networks". Furthermore, the Swiss authority stated that 3D computer graphics of the exposure levels indicate clearly that in the case of heavily populated areas, exposure values at the neighbouring sites of GSM antennas are to be expected between 0.01 and 0.2 W/m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Telekommunikationsgesetz 2003 (TKG 2003), see also information from Rundfunk & Telekom Regulierungs-GmbH at [http://www.rtr.at/web.nsf/deutsch/Telekommunikation\\_Telekommunikationsrecht\\_TKG+2003](http://www.rtr.at/web.nsf/deutsch/Telekommunikation_Telekommunikationsrecht_TKG+2003)

<sup>2</sup> § 73 TKG 2003

<sup>3</sup> For information on the origin of the "Salzburger milliwatt," see "fmk dokumente 2" at <http://www.fmk.at/medieninfo/medieninfo.cfm?cat=backmat>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bakom.ch/dokumentation/zahlen/00545/00547/00548/index.html?lang=en>

## **UMTS expansion in Salzburg**

Because of public and political resistance against the further expansion of the mobile communications networks, the implementation of UMTS technology in the city was severely delayed, and came to a standstill in 2003.

In 2004, after local elections were held, the city of Salzburg and the network operators arrived at an agreement to ensure the installation of UMTS networks. Key provisions in this agreement included the following:

1. A clear and full commitment to the installation of UMTS networks on the part of the city council of Salzburg,
2. the disclosure of the plans for the mobile communications networks to the city of Salzburg,
3. the participation of the city of Salzburg in the selection of station sites,
4. assistance with the installation of the arranged sites from the city of Salzburg and
5. no further discussions about introduction of lower exposure limits between operators and policy-makers.

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in cooperation with Forum Mobilkommunikation, Austria<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The MMF is an international association of wireless communications manufacturers established to support scientific research in relation to mobile telephony and health, for further information: [www.mmfai.info](http://www.mmfai.info)

<sup>6</sup> [www.fmk.at](http://www.fmk.at)