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Establishment of a "Radio frequencies and health" dialogue committee by ANSES on 15 June 2011

The potential impact of radio frequencies on health is one of the primary themes in the ANSES 2011 work programme. In addition to the existing comprehensive measures on this topic, the "Radio frequencies and health" dialogue committee will be responsible for keeping the Agency informed of societal expectations in this field. It will hold its first meeting on 15 June under the chairmanship of George Mercadal, former Vice president of the national public consultation commission.

To reply to the questions raised about the uses to which radio frequencies are put, ANSES has provided expertise on several occasions¹ to study their effects on health. Given the sustained rate of research publications and studies undertaken in this field and following the transfer of the previous mission of the Health and Radio Frequencies Foundation to ANSES, the Agency decided in 2011 to provide permanent measures enabling a global response to the issues raised by radio frequencies.

It has now set up a permanent "Radio frequencies and health" working group made up of twelve independent scientific experts who will be responsible for the real-time monitoring of scientific publications in order to update if necessary the collective expertise on the health effects of radio frequencies (2009), to respond to immediate needs for scientific and technical support and also to suggest possible lines of research. At the same time, ANSES has created a "Radio frequencies and health" research programme with an annual budget of €2 million. Led by a Scientific Board, it will issue an annual call for research projects with the same timing as that for the "Environmental and Occupational Health" programme.

The "Radio frequencies and health" dialogue committee is the latest addition to these measures. The committee, which will bring together all of the stakeholders: associations, operators and manufacturers, local authorities and unions, will be responsible for informing the Agency about societal expectations. It is thus intended to be a forum for discussion, reflection and information on the scientific issues raised by the potential effects of radio frequencies on health and on their assessment. The fact that the committee will be set up by ANSES will enable it to guide the work of both the scientific committee in charge of the specific research programme and the permanent working group. It will meet two to four times per year and its first meeting will be on 15 June. Following a public call for expressions of interest, about twenty applications were registered. The Director General of ANSES has entrusted the chairmanship of the committee to Georges Mercadal, former Vice president of the national public consultation mission.

Find out more: www.anses.fr

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¹ It published three opinions and reports on the subject in 2003, 2005 and 2009 as well as a report and an opinion specifically on radio-frequency identification systems (RF ID) in 2009.