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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

REGULATORY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE DANISH PRESIDENCY PROPOSAL FOR A PHYSICAL AGENTS (ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS) DIRECTIVE

A Paper by Norman Smith

Advisor(s): Mike Shepherd

Issue

1. Paper HSC/03/16 (14/01/03) advised the Commission of the Danish Presidency proposal for a Physical Agents (Electromagnetic Fields) Directive. Attached is a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) of the proposal.

Timing

2. Routine.

Recommendation

3. That the Commission notes the RIA and recent developments on the proposed Physical Agents (Electromagnetic Fields) Directive.

Background

4. The background to the proposal was set out in paper HSC/03/16. The first meeting of the Council Working Group took place on 26 February under the Greek Presidency and two further meetings have been held. Several amendments have been submitted by Member States and a revised text is emerging. We have continued to press for the Directive to be based on the concepts enshrined in the guidelines on restrictions on exposure produced by the International Commission for Non-ionising Radiation. It is unlikely that common position will be reached during the remainder of the Greek Presidency.

Argument

5. There is no evidence of ill-health from occupational exposure to electromagnetic fields in the UK and therefore the outcome of the RIA reveals a considerable imbalance in the cost benefit ratio even allowing for numerous uncertainties in the costs. However, the RIA will continue to be refined as more information becomes available. We do expect to achieve amendments to the proposal during negotiations such that costs on industry will be significantly reduced.

Consultation

6. We are continuing to consult with industry and other stakeholders as negotiations proceed in Council. The RIA will be placed in the public domain.

Presentation

7. The RIA may well attract some media interest. Press Office is being kept informed of developments.

Costs and Benefits

8. The RIA explains costs and benefits in detail.

Financial/Resource Implications for HSE

9. These remain as set out in paper HSC/03/16

Environmental Implications

10. No environmental impact expected. See paper HSC/03/16.

Other Implications

11. The impact on industry will depend on the eventual scope of the Directive.

Action

12. For information only.

Contact

Norman Smith
Health and Safety Executive (HTPD2)
Rose Court

2 Southwark Bridge
London SE1 9HS
Tel: 0207 717 6277
Fax: 0207 717 6199
E-mail: norman.smith@hse.gsi.gov.uk