

19 November 2008

**EU experts committee SCENIHR confirms energy saving lamps
are safe for consumers**
ELC response to NGO comments on SCENIHR opinion

On 23 September 2008, the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR)¹ adopted an opinion concluding that there was no health impact of energy-saving lamps on consumers.

SCENIHR experts reviewed scientific data related to flicker, electromagnetic fields (EMF), UV and blue light radiation. No evidence was found that would indicate that either EMF or flicker from fluorescent lamps posed a risk for consumers, including people with light sensitivity diseases. Only UV/blue light radiation was identified by the experts as a potential risk factor in aggravating light-sensitive symptoms in some cases and they recommended using double-envelope lamps.

Some NGOs² have criticized SCENIHR's report and have raised concerns about energy saving lamps' impact on health, specifically related to EMF and UV.

In this context the European Lamp Companies Federation (ELC) would like to underline the following points:

- EMF emitted by energy saving lamps are well within safety limits
- UV emitted by energy saving lamps pose no risk

Today, our society uses a huge variety of electrical equipment to make life more comfortable. Every piece of electrical or electronic equipment creates EMF in the very close surrounding area of the equipment within which it operates. This also applies to electric lamps.

Energy efficient lamps comply with all applicable European legislation³ and are conformant with European consumer protection standards⁴ including the European Council Recommendation on Electromagnetic Fields⁵. Numerous comprehensive scientific studies were carried out in order to establish these European safety standards.

¹ SCENIHR is a committee of independent experts providing opinions on questions concerning emerging or newly identified risks and on broad, complex or multidisciplinary issues requiring a comprehensive assessment of risks to consumer safety or public health

² "Limit the Radiation", "Nationaal Platform Stralingsrisico's", "Stop UMTS", "Robin des Toits", "Foundation Electro Hypersensitivity" expressed their views dated 6 November 2008

³ Directive 2006/95/EC for Low Voltage Electrical equipment, Directive 2004/108/EC for Electromagnetic Compatibility, Directive 2002/96/EC for hazardous substances in E&E products (RoHS), Directive 2002/95/EC for waste from E&E equipment (WEEE), Directive 2005/32/EC for Energy using Products (EuP), Directive 89/336/EC for Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC), Directive 93/68/EC for CE marking

⁴ EN 60968, EN 55015, EN 61000-3-2, EN 61547

⁵ , ⁴ COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION 1999/519/EC of 12 July 1999 on the limitation of exposure of the general public to electromagnetic fields; http://eur-ex.europa.eu/pri/en/oj/dat/1999/l_199/l_19919990730en00590070.pdf

The European Electromagnetic Fields Recommendation sets a maximum exposure limit for the general public to energy efficient lamps of 87 volts/metre⁶. Energy efficient lamps are well within these safety limits. Therefore no risks or hazards are to be expected due to the EMF exposure of these products. In their email, NGOs mention a study conducted by the French institute CRIIREM⁷ outlining potential risks from lamps. However, the measurements from this study compared to accepted EMF limits do not demonstrate a threat to human health.

Like all fluorescent lamps, energy saving fluorescent lamps do emit a small amount of UVA and UVB. There is no risk from ultraviolet light exposure emitted by energy saving fluorescent lamps as their UVA and UVB rays are well within the limits that guarantee consumer protection. The US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) norm indicates that maximum time allowed under fluorescent lighting is 24h a day. Only UV/blue light radiation was identified by the experts as a potential risk factor in aggravating light-sensitive symptoms in some cases and they recommended using double-envelope lamps. Using halogens lamps is also a more comfortable option for UV-sensitive persons. In this respect it is important to give consumers a choice.

The lighting industry welcomes a European Union initiative to phase out inefficient lamps gradually from the market and replace them with energy saving lamps and energy efficient halogen lamps.

As a consequence, the European lighting industry is committed to provide consumers with products complying with the highest safety and environmental standards. Energy saving lamps are safe to use for consumers and workers alike. A range of stringent measures have been put in place to manage the health risks from products such as lamps. The ELC member companies comply with all relevant legislation to ensure their products do not affect the health of consumers.

⁷ Centre de Recherche et d'Information Indépendantes sur les Rayonnements ElectroMagnétiques" (Centre of Research and Independent Information on Electromagnetic Fields)