

France has its first radiation-free refuge in the Drôme

By Daniel ABELOUS (AFP - Agence France Presse)

EURRE (Drôme) - Those people who can no longer tolerate the radiation generated by mobile phones and the wireless Internet now have the chance to find rest and refreshment in the Drôme, where the first radiation-free zone in France has been established.

High in the hills and far from any houses or relay antennas, the refuge zone near Eurre has been open since last July for people suffering from electro-hypersensitivity (EHS), thanks to the NGO Next-Up, which has its headquarters in the area.

Since 2005 Next-Up has been sounding the alarm about the dangers to the human organism of artificial electromagnetic radiation.

At the entrance to this "white zone", which the organisation says is the first of its kind in France, and of which the exact location remains a secret, mobile phones are forbidden, even if switched off, and are kept in an insulated metal box.

"At last I've found a place where I can live," says Sibylle Gabriel, a Swiss teacher who was temporarily "paralysed" after having a rather long conversation on her mobile phone.

In the company of her companions selected by Next-Up, who include some Dutch people and a German, the 60-year-old has come for "rest and recovery" for a few days in a campsite that has several caravans with metal bodies adapted as Faraday cages and some camping cars, whose windows and walls are protected by several layers of aluminium foil designed to keep out radiation.

On one side a phone box with a land line contrasts with the rural setting, and a high metal wall shelters a central sitting area.

Serge Sargentini, spokesman for Next-Up, explains: "The phone radiation here is between 0.01 and 0.03 volts per metre (V/m), whereas in a town it is 1 V/m on average."

According to the organisation, 8% of the country's population is electro-hypersensitive (EHS).

Claire Andina, a nurse of 49, recalls her first EHS crisis in 2005: "I thought I had multiple sclerosis. My legs twitched about when I was resting, I couldn't sleep and had chest pains."

"It's a sort of burning feeling", explains Philippe, 48, who finds that "even going to get a paper in town" is often "unbearable". "You don't see your friends any more, you don't go out, it cuts you off completely from everyone," adds this ex-teacher, who takes refuge "when he doesn't feel good" in the woods near his house.



A new arrival hands over their mobile phone at the entrance to the first radiation-free refuge in France, near Crest, 2 October 2009

[ZOOM](#)



Serge Sargentini, spokesman for the NGO Next-Up that set up the first radiation-free refuge in France, near Crest, coming out of a caravan insulated with aluminium, 2 October 2009

[ZOOM](#)

As for some of his fellow visitors, "In my house everything is wired," says Mickael Heiming, 41, a German who used to be a mobile phone engineer, who adds, "It took me some time to realise there was a connection between my headaches and the work I was doing."

The action group Robin des Toits ("Robin Hood of the Roofs") declares on its Internet site that "EHS is a pathology recognised and described by the World Health Organisation (WHO). ... In Sweden it is classed as a handicap, in the UK as an illness. In France, it is simply ignored by the authorities," they protest. As a result of the recent government round-table consultation on the environment, an experiment is planned to try out relay antennas with a lower radiation level in several French cities between November 2009 and April 2010.

Last June a large group of members of the public recommended reducing the limit to 0.6 V/m (BioInitiative Group), a measure considered "unrealistic" by the Association of Mobile Phone Operators (AFOM).



Video of the first radiation-free refuge in France for EHS people, near Euree in the Drôme. .

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EUROPEAN ENQUIRY
on the biological
and health
symptoms
experienced by
people living close
of relay antennas.

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