

Electromagnetism and work: towards less stringent standards

by **Claire Avignon**

On Friday 26th October, the European Commission proposed postponing for 4 years the introduction of a directive on the exposure of workers to electromagnetic fields (1).

(Nex-up File : [MRI and Problematic](#))

If the postponement is accepted, the directive will come into force on 30th April 2012 instead of 30th April 2008. This would give the Commission time to study criticisms by the medical community, which fears that application of the directive could call into question the use of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

This postponement provides the Brussels executive with the opportunity to prepare a "substantial modification" to the draft legislation.

In effect, by the end of 2008, the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) should be in a position to recommend less stringent limit values for professional exposure in terms of static and low frequency electromagnetic fields (including MRI).

(1) Directive 2004/40/EC of 29th April 2004 on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (electromagnetic fields).

[Electromagnetic fields associated with breast cancer](#)