The Director-General exercising the functions of Director of the Office will take the necessary measures to secure the services of magistrates selected in each Member State. He has already recruited a number of magistrates and will recruit more to supplement the Office’s staff, on the basis of the procedures and prerogatives provided for by Commission Decision of 28 April 1999.

(4) OJ C 316, 27.11.1995.

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3391/01
by María Sornosa Martínez (PSE) to the Commission
(6 December 2001)
Subject: Scientific opinion on electromagnetic pollution

In his answer to my Written Question E-1355/01 (1) on the growth in electromagnetic pollution, Commissioner Byrne announced that:

In the face of the very rapid development of these systems and the fears to which they give rise in terms of the health of exposed people, the Commission has decided to take all the necessary precautionary measures. It has therefore asked the Scientific Committee on Toxicity, Ecotoxicity and the Environment, attached to the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection, to reexamine the matter and deliver, in autumn 2001, a new scientific opinion on the risks to human health caused by exposure and on adequate protective measures.

Can the Commission say what stage has been reached in the Scientific Committee’s work on this matter? When and how will the conclusions of this report be made public?

If a draft report already exists from which conclusions can be drawn, what specific measures is the Commission preparing in order to combat growing electromagnetic pollution, going beyond the scope of Directives 1999/5/EC (2) and 73/23/EEC (3) and in the light of the rapid scientific progress being made in the manufacture of this type of equipment, in order to guarantee its safe use?


Answer given by Mr Byrne on behalf of the Commission
(13 February 2002)

The Commission can inform the Honourable Member that the Scientific Committee on Toxicity, Ecotoxicity and the Environment (CSTEE) adopted an opinion on the matter under reference at the occasion of its 27th plenary meeting, on 30 October 2001. The text of the opinion is available on the Europa website (4). The CSTEE has estimated in its conclusions that on the basis of the information available at the time the scientific evidence is insufficient to propose alternatives to the limits set up by the 12th July Council Recommendation limiting the exposure of general public to non-ionising radiation. The Commission continues to co-operate with the World Health Organisation which is engaged with the Commission in a major epidemiological study on health effects of electromagnetic fields.

harmonization of the laws of Member States relating to electrical equipment designed for use within
certain voltage limits, the Commission would like to draw the Honourable Member's attention to the fact
that a first set of standards, covering mobile telephones, low power radio transmitters and radio frequency
identification devices (e.g. anti-theft ports) have been published. Standards for the antennas are in the final
stage of development. Their publication is foreseen for the middle of 2002. Information on these
harmonised standards is available on the Europa website (1).

(2) http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/rtte.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3395/01
by Peter Liese (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(21 December 2001)

Subject: Classification of chromates under the Biocides Directive

Hexavalent chromium compounds (chromates) have been used for about 70 years in industrial timber
preservation as an anti-corrosive and fixative, mainly in conjunction with copper compounds. Chromium
compounds, which are present in treated timber as insoluble and non-toxic chromium (III) compounds, do
not themselves have any biocidal effect. Lasting protection of timber, pylons, vine stakes, etc. is possible
without using such chromium-copper preparations, but durability and stability would inevitably be
substantially reduced. Under the Biocides Directive (98/8/EC (1)), adjuvants which do not have proven
biocidal effects do not have to be notified or identified. For reasons which have to do with competition
policy, an attempt is now being made to designate chromium compounds as biocides in order to prevent
or greatly restrict their continued use in timber preservation.

What is the Commission's position as regards the classification of the above-mentioned chromium
compounds under the Biocides Directive? Is the Commission aware that incorrect classification is bound to
have serious consequences in terms of distortion of competition and barriers to trade, to the detriment of
timber preservation methods with a long proven track record and the use of European timber varieties?


Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission
(14 February 2002)

The Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that Directive 98/8/EC of the Parliament
and of the Council of 16 February 1998, concerning the placing of biocidal products on the market does
not establish a system of classification of substances.

According to Article 2 the following definitions apply:

Biocidal Product: Active substance and preparations containing one or more active substances, put up
in the form in which they are supplied to the user, intended to destroy, deter, render harmless, prevent
the action of, or otherwise exert a controlling effect on any harmful organisms by chemical or
biological means.

Active substance: A substance or micro-organism including a virus or a fungus having general or
specific action on or against harmful organisms.

Substance of concern: Any substance, other than the active substance, which has an inherent capacity
to cause an adverse effect on humans, animals or the environment and is present or is produced in a
biocidal product in sufficient concentrations to create such an effect. Such a substance ... would be
normally a substance classified as dangerous according to Directive 67/548/EEC ... and present in the
biocidal product at a concentration leading the product to be regarded as dangerous within the
meaning of Directive 1999/45/EC.