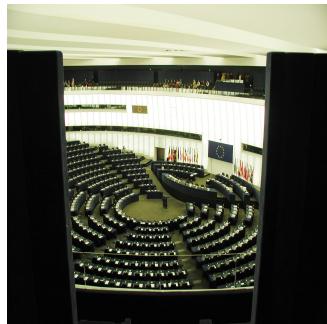

EU Action on MRI Exposure Limits Welcomed by Alliance for MRI



The Alliance for MRI has welcomed recent action by a European Parliament committee that guarantees continued patient access to Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), a critical tool for detecting and treating disease.

The Committee for Employment and Social Affairs exempted workers who deal with MRI from exposure limits contained in the "Directive on Protecting Workers from Exposure to Electromagnetic fields." The committee-approved draft will be used as the basis of informal negotiations with Council. If agreement is reached, it will be voted on next year by the full Parliament.

"Today's vote is an important step that reverses an earlier detrimental decision. Without this change patients could not have benefited from MRI in the diagnosis and treatment of life-threatening diseases," said Gabriel Krestin, president of the European Society for Radiology.

The safe use of MRI is regulated through the Medical Devices Directive. During almost 30 years MRI has been used to create images of more than 600 million patients, without any evidence that workers have been harmed by exposure to electromagnetic fields.

The parliamentary committee's action corrects problems with the original Directive and endorses an updated proposal by the European Commission on Protecting Workers. By subjecting MRI to overly restrictive limits the original version would have curtailed MRI-guided brain surgery and made MRI difficult to use in situations where close patient contact is required, including imaging of vulnerable patients and children. The exemption is also necessary for research and development and for routine cleaning and maintenance of MRI equipment.

Patient Group Representative Mary Baker (European Brain Council) said: "The derogation for Magnetic Resonance Imaging that was endorsed will ensure that serious medical conditions such as cancer will be diagnosed and treated to the benefit of patients in Europe. I am calling on all Members of the European Parliament to follow the example of their colleagues and to support the MRI derogation in the plenary vote in early 2013".

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