

# **EMF EXPOSURE LIMITS & RISK COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES**

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BEREC Workshop**

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# Discussion flow...

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- Structure of the study
- Response variations
- Introduction to the report
- Recommendations
- Concluding remarks

# The Regional Assessment

- **Objective:** to gain a regional overview of the situation and the challenges encountered by institutions responsible for EMF at the country level and identify gaps for future action of the ITU.
- **In numbers:** 31 institutions from 29 countries out of 46 countries of Europe region have responded to the questionnaire
- **Findings:** Aggregate analysis with regards to specific questions and 5 general recommendations



# Structure of the Questionnaire

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- **EMF regulations**
  - Occupational
  - General public
  - Applicable Guidelines, Directive and EC recommendation
- **Approval procedures**
  - Multiple or single
  - General challenges
- **EMF assessment**
  - Availability of the stds
  - Involvement in the development procedure
- **Public acceptability**
- **Risk communication**
  - Risk communication plan
  - Faced challenges
  - Expected role of WHO

# Introduction to the report

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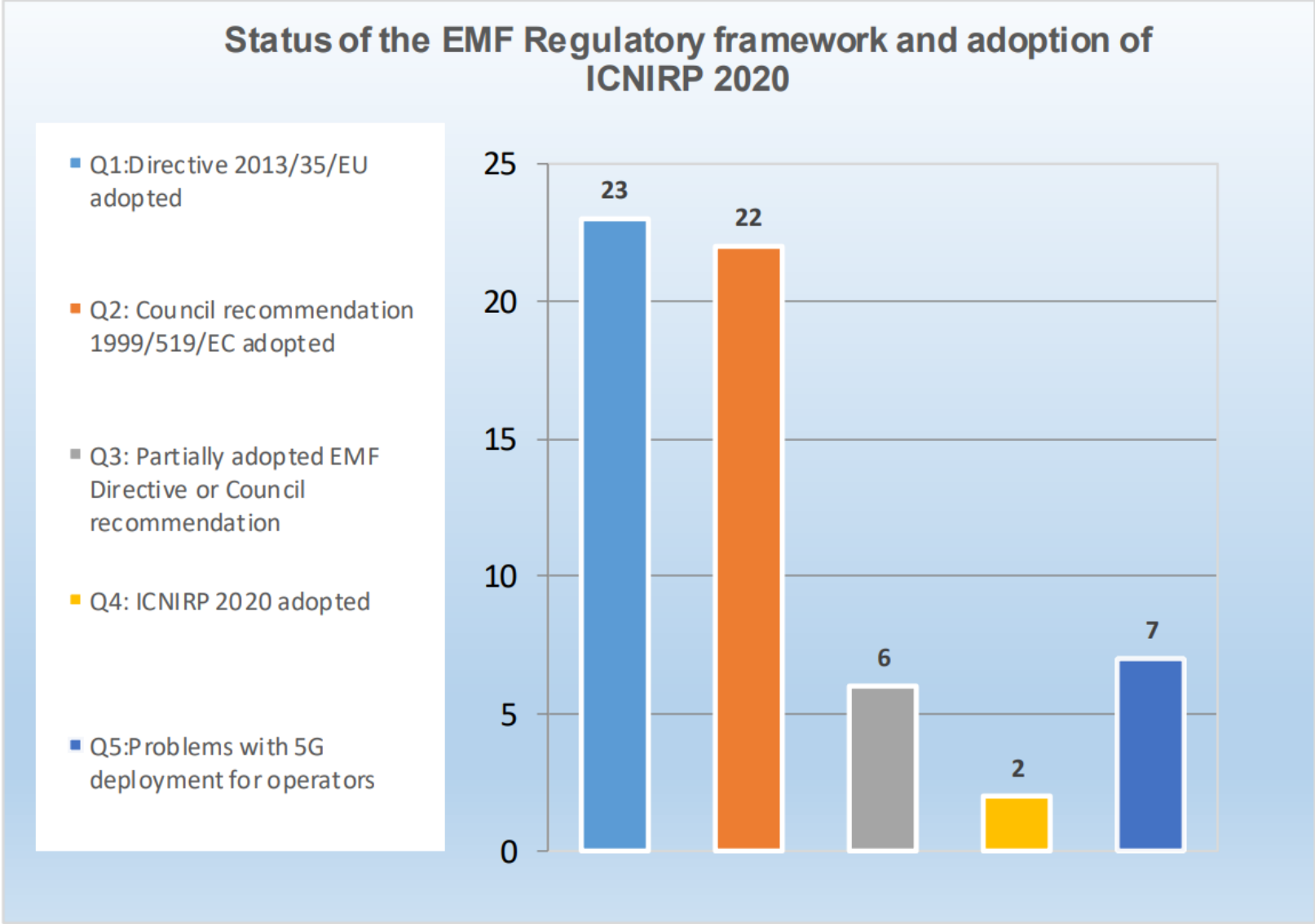
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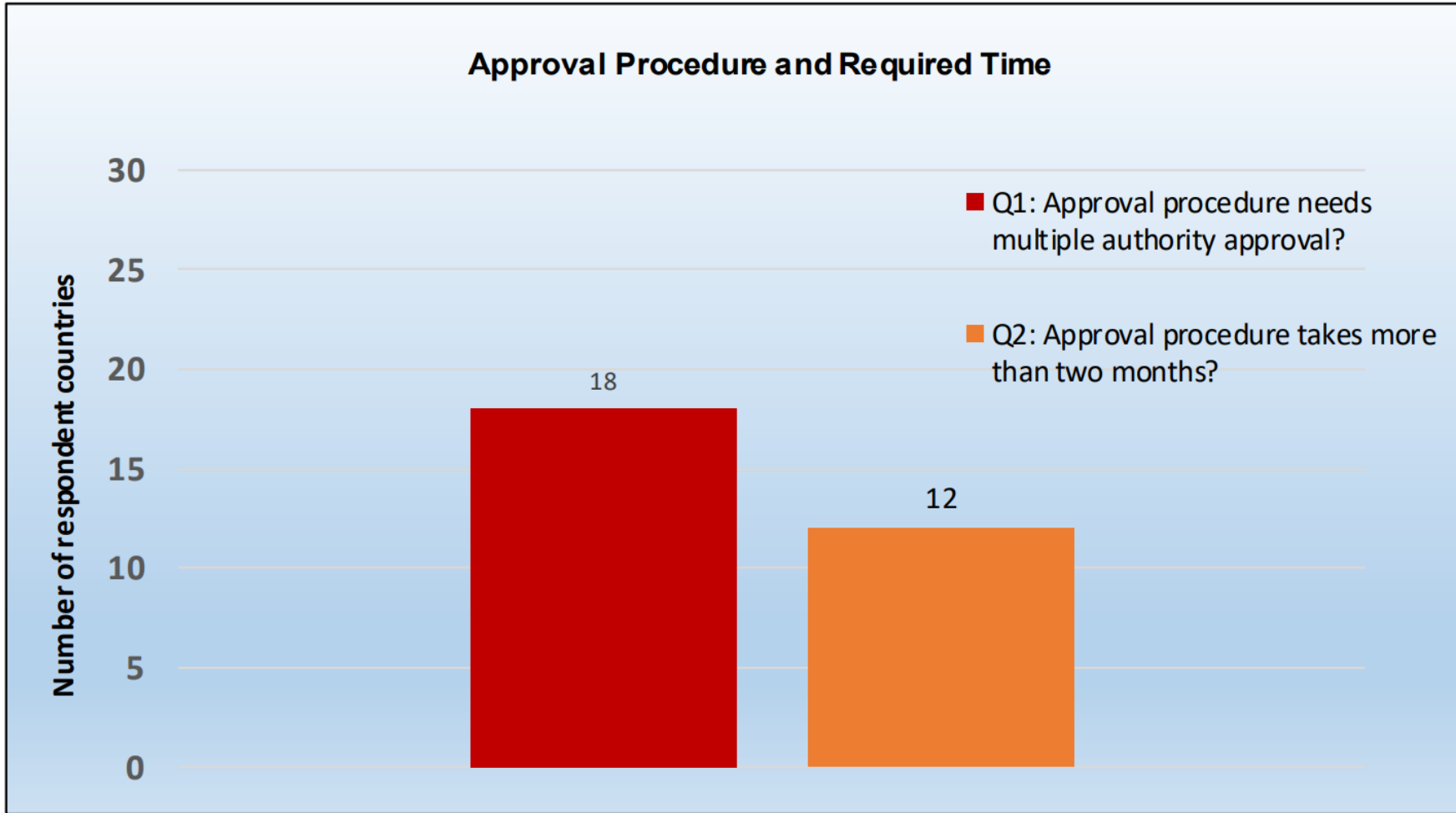
# What was out of scope of the study?

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- Any recommendation regarding EMF exposure levels or other risk management tools, including application of the precautionary principle, is beyond the scope of the Regional Assessment.
- Nor will this report fill any gap in knowledge, notably on long-term exposure or make any statement on biological effects or health effects of exposure to EMF. This report merely aims at taking stock of some selected and basic aspects of national regulations on the protection from EMF and of the risk communication strategies adopted by institutions.



**Figure 1.** Response from 29 countries showing how many have adopted the European EMF directive 2013/35/EU and 1999 Council Recommendation concerning EMF exposure limits for workers and general public.

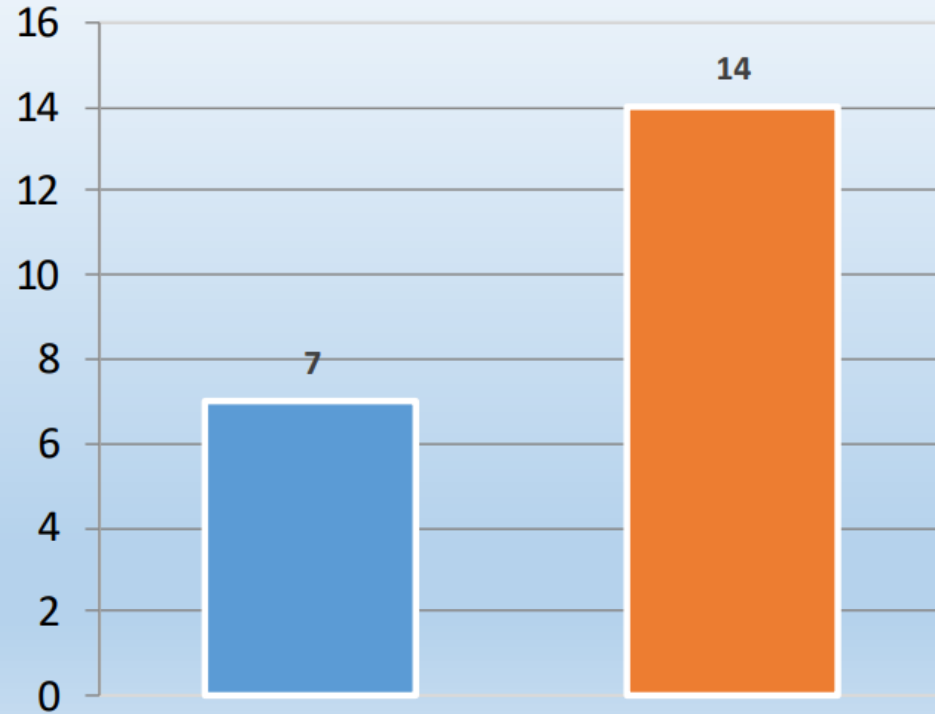


**Figure 2.** Response from 27 countries showing if multiple permits required and also how long the approval procedure for the cellular antennas requires.

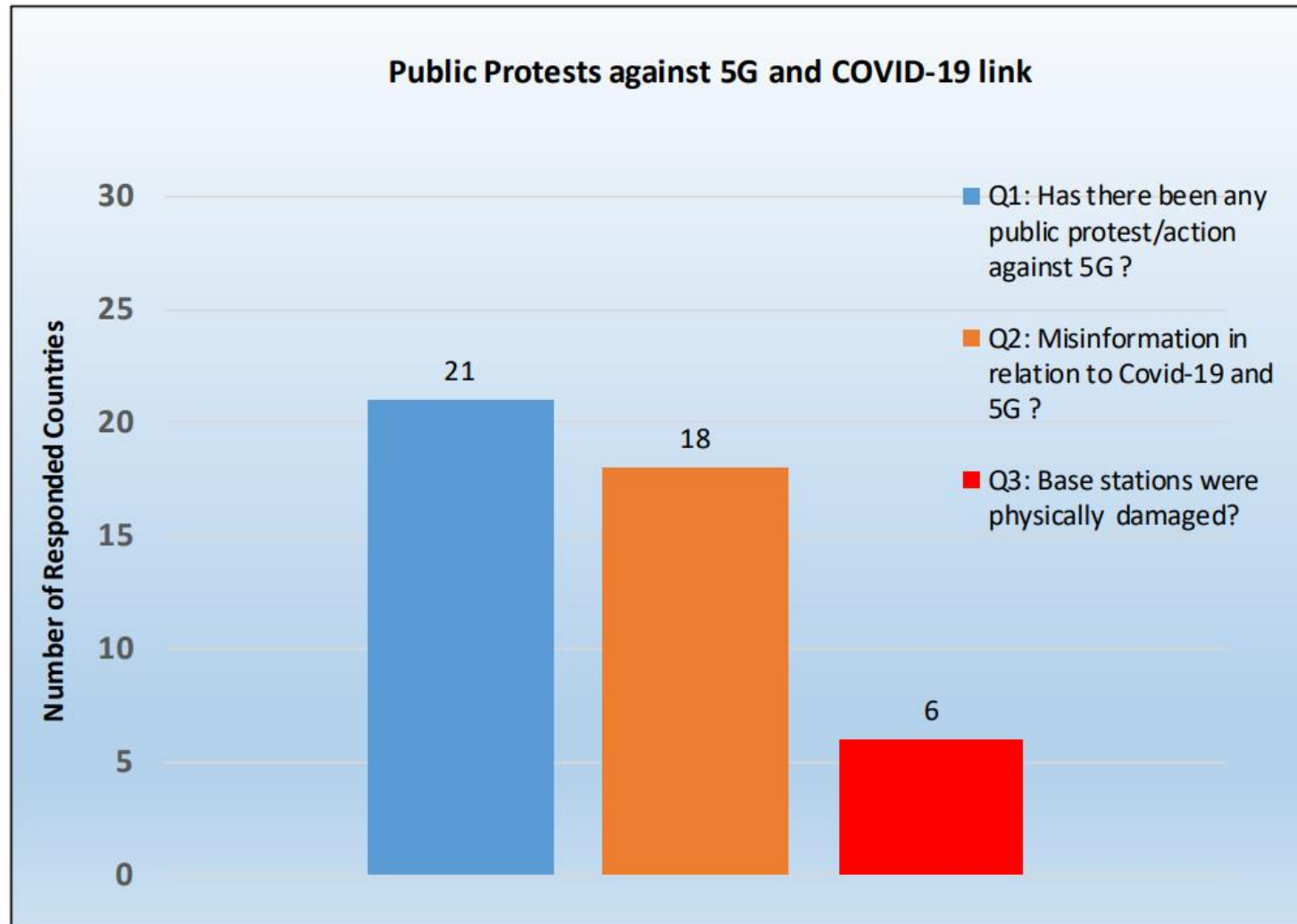


### Challenges of Availability of Compliance Assessment Standards

- Q1: Challenges on availability of EMF Compliance Assessment Standards
- Q2: Awareness of ongoing relevant standards activities



**Figure 3.** Response from 29 countries showing the number of countries having challenges with the availability of compliance assessment standards. Only half of the countries are aware of the relevant standards activities.



**Figure 4.** Response from 29 countries showing number of countries that have had protests against 5G technologies, physical damage to the base stations and also number of countries that has reported incidents relating COVID-19 to 5G technologies.<sup>8</sup>

# EMF Regulations

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**Recommendation 1:** Revision of the EMF Directive and Council recommendation 1999/519/EC to reflect the changes in the revised ICNIRP:2020 Guidelines

# Approval procedures prior to building / planning permission

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**Recommendation 2:** In support for efficient deployment of 5G, simplified procedures and shorter approval time is needed. Since other obstacle for installation of antennas/radio base stations seems to be related to the concerns with EMF exposure limits and public acceptability putting pressure on regulators, active communication between regulators and public is crucial.

# Assessment of EMF limits

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**Recommendation 3:** Regulators are recommended to assign a regulatory officer in their office to the major international Standards Development Organizations, to engage in the standardization process and specifically follow up equipment compliance assessment standards progress, get first-hand information and reflect their concerns and needs to the relevant committees.

# Acceptability by the public

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**Recommendation 4: a)** Regulatory bodies should follow evidence-based EMF protection policies.

**b)** Authorities should be more proactive in conveying information to the general public, including across the Internet and social media where misinformation spreads.

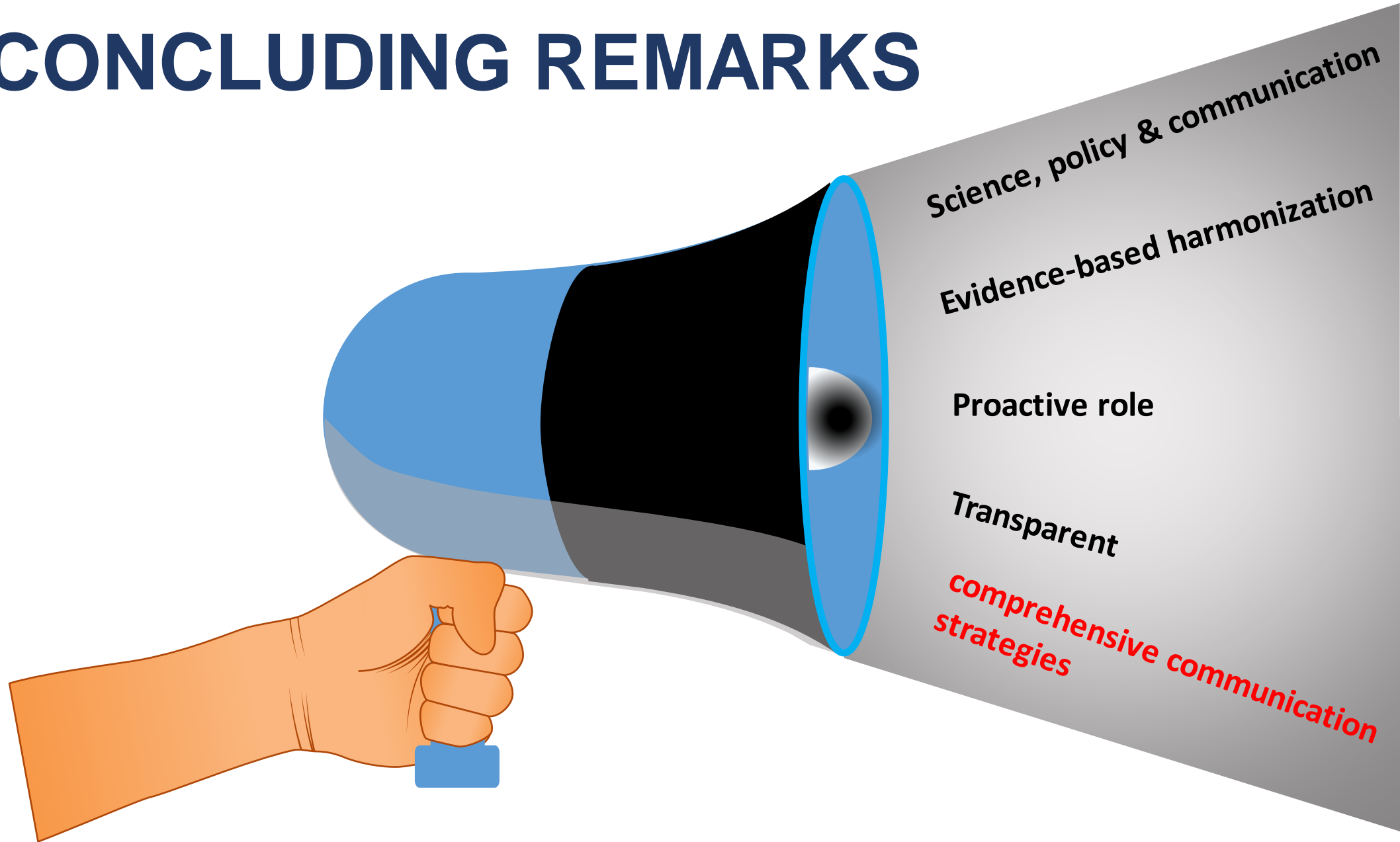
**c)** Particular attention should be given by authorities to the interplay between misinformation on EMF and other domains, including Covid-19.

# Risk Communication

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**Recommendation 5:** For the regulators it is crucial to establish a dialogue between all stakeholders concerning the deployment of 5G networks. The ingredients for effective dialogue include consultation with stakeholders, leveraging live or periodic monitoring of EMF levels, implementing capacity building activities, acknowledgement of scientific uncertainty, and a fair and transparent decision-making process. Failure to do these things can result in loss of trust and flawed decision-making.

# CONCLUDING REMARKS



Science, policy & communication

Evidence-based harmonization

Proactive role

Transparent

*comprehensive communication strategies*



