

Living close to HV power lines has consequences for health.

People living close to very high voltage electricity transmission lines (400,000 volts) experience more health problems (head aches, disturbed sleep, irritability etc) and more serious illnesses (leukaemia and cancers of the breast and thyroid) than others. This is the finding of a first look at the information collected from a survey in France.

France has 13,000 kms of 400KV lines and there has never been a study of their effects on people. "In the absence of such data, and given that the state proposes to build a 150km HV line to export power from the EPR to be built at Flammanville, local groups have decided to conduct their own survey" explains Jean Charles Herriau, one of the organisers of the survey and a key player in STOP THT, the co-ordinating body for communal associations over the three departments affected by the proposed HV line.

The first feedback

The final conclusions of the survey will be published in June 2008. After a partial study of 350 files some themes are evident. "Health problems focused around sleep, memory and hearing, but also headaches, irritability and depression are more frequent for people exposed to HV lines than those not exposed" says Pierre Le Ruz, doctor of physiology and scientific director of CRIIREM - Centre de Recherche et d'Information Indépendantes sur les Rayonnements Electromagnétiques. "What's more, these symptoms disappear to a significant degree when people move away from the zones affected by the HV line. More seriously, certain illnesses requiring major treatment or surgery and some cancers (leukaemia, breast, thyroid,) are more frequently found in the exposed population".

Following on these preliminary indications, the group STOP THT is requesting all successful candidates in the recent round of French local elections to use all political and legal means to impose protection zones between future HV power lines and homes and farms nearby.

About the survey

The survey covers people living or working in a zone 300 mtrs either side of two existing 400kv lines. One of about 150 kms which runs at full capacity and another shorter section that runs at about a third of capacity. The reference population is people living in the path of the proposed new line.

The creation of the questionnaire and the handling of the data are supervised by CRIIREM in association with other experts.

Between January and March 2008 volunteers whose training was supervised by CRIIREM visited 3000 addresses across 160 communes. In all over 8000 questionnaires are to be analysed.

Note to Editors

The above is translation of a communiqué presse issued in France that has been interpreted to be readable in English as well as faithful to the meaning of the original.

Save for a very few countries power lines are installed close to housing and houses are built close to power lines. The chronic as well as acute consequences for health of both humans and animals resulting from the inadequate standards of protection are now becoming apparent.

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This survey is a comprehensive look at living, working and farming conditions in proximity to HV power lines and will make a major contribution to the debate on the inadequacy of present standards of protection.

The initial findings which gave rise to this press information bear many similarities to data collected by the Trentham Environmental Protection Group in the UK and submitted to SAGE, the UK government's advisory group on electromagnetic radiation.

Orientation

Existing line Flamanville – Domloup, north – south in black runs normally at 100% utilisation

Existing Line Domloup – Les Quintes, - east – west in black runs normally at 30% utilisation

Proposed line – Project “THT Cotentin- Maine” – the proposed route parallels the existing Flamanville-Domloup line in its northern part and then follows a corridor one kilometer wide that has been designated as being of “least impact” of a number of options studied in the grey sector.

All the lines pass through predominantly dairy farming country and avoid major towns.

Further Information

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Resident of the kilometre corridor

