

## **FRANCE : CANCER CASES CAUSE ORANGE TO SUSPEND PHONE MAST OPERATION PARIS SCHOOL**

Le Monde - March 16 - 2003

Telecom giant Orange has suspended operations at a school phone mast site in Paris after eight cases of cancer were confirmed among children in the district. Over the past few months parents have become increasingly concerned at the presence of two transmitters on the roof of the Ernest-Bizet school complex in the Saint-Cyr-l'Ecole quarter.

Local mayor, Philippe Lavaud who has ordered the on-going health investigation to be extended to the whole district, described the suspension as " a victory for the precautionary principle." The local council recently prohibited the siting of base stations within a 300 metre radius and is also seeking to cancel contracts with telecomm operators agreed by the previous administration.

While welcoming news of the Orange shutdown PRIARTEM, the group campaigning for tighter control over mast siting, said that microwave emissions should be subject to the same tough health regulations that monitor water and air quality.

Orange says it took the decision to cease operations in "response to public concern and to allow the health inquiry to proceed in a calmer atmosphere."

Company spokesmen stressed that the emission levels have been checked and were well within safety guidelines.

Commenting on the report of the case, which appeared in Le Monde, Winchester phone mast campaigner, Karen Barratt said she was delighted that some countries were getting tough with the operators and hoped the British Government would follow suit. It has recently come to light that many operators are bypassing the planning process completely by saying permission is not required for antennae on existing buildings or those hidden inside [church towers](#) and petrol station signs. Planning Minister, Lord Rooker has promised to sort this out.

Orange's assurances about safe emission levels in the Paris case did not surprise Karen Barratt. "We are used to hearing this," she said, " Orange know perfectly well that these so-called safety guidelines are irrelevant because they don't refer to the biological effects of microwave radiation that we're all worried about. They can say it in French, English or Esperanto. It's rubbish in any language."

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