

**21 AVR. 2009**Brussels,  
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To the Member of the European Parliament  
Ms Caroline Lucas  
European Parliament  
ASP-8G103  
Rue Wiertz 60  
1047 Brussels

Dear Ms Lucas,

Thank you very much for your letter of 18 November concerning a request from a radio amateur in your constituency. He expresses concern that power line communications technology used by British Telecom to distribute communication signals inside the home causes unacceptable interference to users of shortwave frequencies and presents a threat to national safety. Please accept my apologies for the late reply of your letter.

Pros and cons of power line communication technology (PLC) have been discussed since long. While PLC communication has the advantage of not requiring new wiring, it has more electromagnetic emissions than technologies that rely on specific wiring. Some users of shortwave frequencies consider it unacceptable and wanted to have it barred so as to secure shortwave reception. Proponents of the technology argue that it can be deployed without any problem. Given the emerging nature of this technology the Commission concluded that a permissive but cautious approach should be followed as it would have been improper to bar a technology without giving it a chance. Hence it issued in 2005 a recommendation (2005/292/EC) to Member States to be vigilant and report on potential difficulties with this technology. Since then there have been relatively few problems in practice according to the information the Commission possesses. "Power line adapters" are covered by Directive 2004/108/EC on "electromagnetic compatibility" (EMC), which provides Member States (in the case of the UK OFCOM) with ample provisions to correct situations of interference. The relatively few problems that occurred can be handled within its context. PLC technology does not interfere into military services since they typically do not operate in areas where there is a risk of interference. Emergency services now use advanced digital radio technologies to communicate. Shortwave broadcast reception has further been substituted by internet radio.

In order to stabilise the technical requirements of the EMC Directive the Commission mandated the responsible EU standardisation organisation CENELEC to seek consensus from stakeholders on harmonised standards under the EMC Directive. Your constituent considers that the technical groups that discuss the issue are in favour of a too PLC friendly standard and do not sufficiently take into account the concern of users of short waves. The Commission does not share this view. These bodies enable any interested party to contribute and are democratic and balanced.

I do not consider that the situation for radio amateurs in the United Kingdom leads to an unacceptable assault on the shortwave spectrum which remains available for the purposes that it is best used for. Furthermore I have no indication that the United Kingdom is infringing Community law.

Yours sincerely,

*Günter Volkmann*