



A global perspective on 5G misinformation and effective responses

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The development of mobile
telecommunications networks
in the era of disinformation

Online 9-10 December 2020

THE GSMA

14 OFFICES
WORLDWIDE



SHANGHAI



SAN FRANCISCO



BEIJING



NAIROBI



NEW DELHI



LONDON



DUBAI



ATLANTA



BRUSSELS



BARCELONA



HONG KONG



BRASILIA



BUENOS AIRES

Intelligently Connecting
Everyone and Everything to a
#BetterFuture



The mobile industry is the
first to formally commit
to the UN Sustainable
Development Goals



nearly
9.3 bn

MOBILE CONNECTIONS
WORLDWIDE
(including IoT)



The GSMA
represents
the interests
of mobile
operators
worldwide



MORE
THAN
750
MOBILE
OPERATORS



WITH NEARLY
400
COMPANIES
in the broader mobile ecosystem



Driving industry
programmes that
add value to the
digital economy

The GSMA works to deliver a regulatory environment that
creates value for consumers by engaging regularly with:



MINISTRIES
OF
TELECOMS



TELECOMS
REGULATORY
AUTHORITIES



INTERNATIONAL &
NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANISATIONS



The world's leading mobile industry
events, MWC Barcelona,
MWC Los Angeles, MWC Shanghai and
the Mobile 360 Series, together attract
nearly

200,000
people from across the globe each year



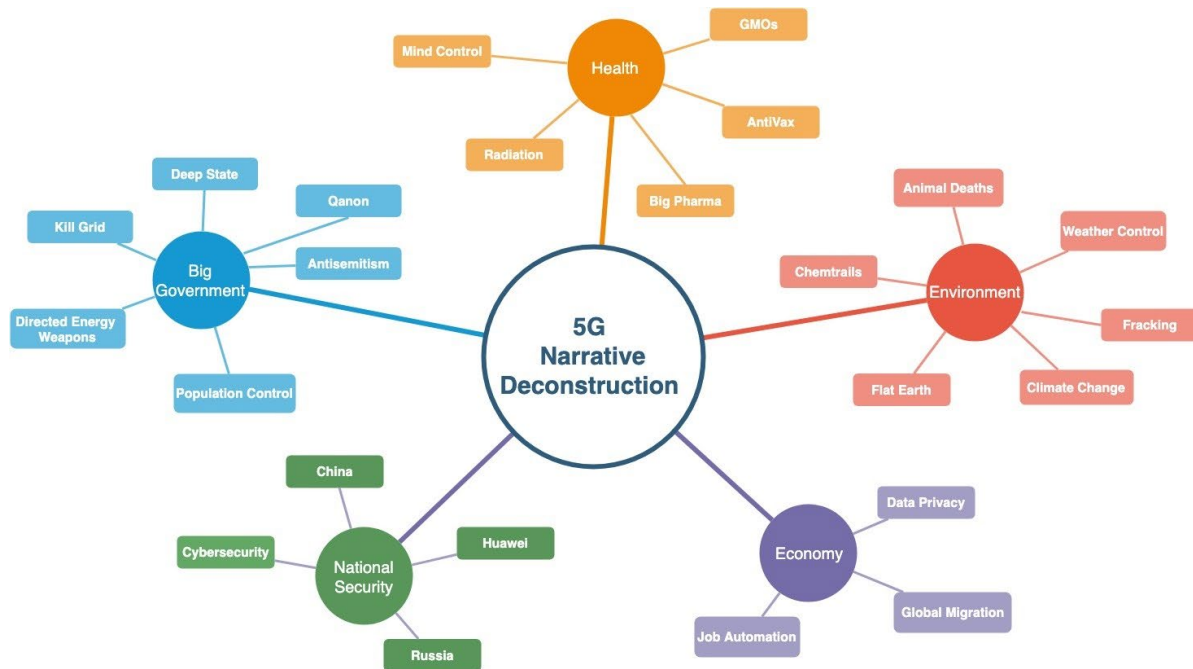
Definitions

- ‘...science and health **misinformation** as information that is contrary to the epistemic consensus of the scientific community regarding a phenomenon. By this definition, what is considered true and false is constantly changing as new evidence comes to light and as techniques and methods are advanced.’
- ‘**Disinformation** is a coordinated or deliberate effort to knowingly circulate misinformation in order to gain money, power, or reputation.’

[Swire-Thompson and Lazer, 2020](#)



5G misinformation narrative is complex



ECOLOGIST
INFORMED BY NATURE.

2016

Home » News

Wireless pollution 'out of control' as corporate race for 5G gears up

Lynne Wyherley | 27th October 2016

Reporterre
le quotidien de l'écologie

2018

CLIMAT | LIBERTÉS | COVID-19 | AMAZON | ALTERNATIVES | TOUTE L'ACTUALITÉ

Accueil > Enquête >

Avec la 5G, nous sommes tous des rats de laboratoire

Investigate Europe

2020

Real 5G issues overshadowed by Covid-19 conspiracy theories



Misinformation linking 5G to COVID-19: January 2020

ONLINE

The Wuhan coronavirus has nothing to do with 5G

29 JANUARY 2020

WHAT WAS CLAIMED

Wuhan is where 5G was rolled out first.

OUR VERDICT

Wuhan was one of the first places with 5G trials, as well as several other large Chinese cities, like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou but we don't know if it was the first.

WHAT WAS CLAIMED

5G wrecks immune systems and that is why people in Wuhan are suffering with this illness.

OUR VERDICT

There is no evidence that 5G can harm humans, or their immune systems.

WHAT WAS CLAIMED

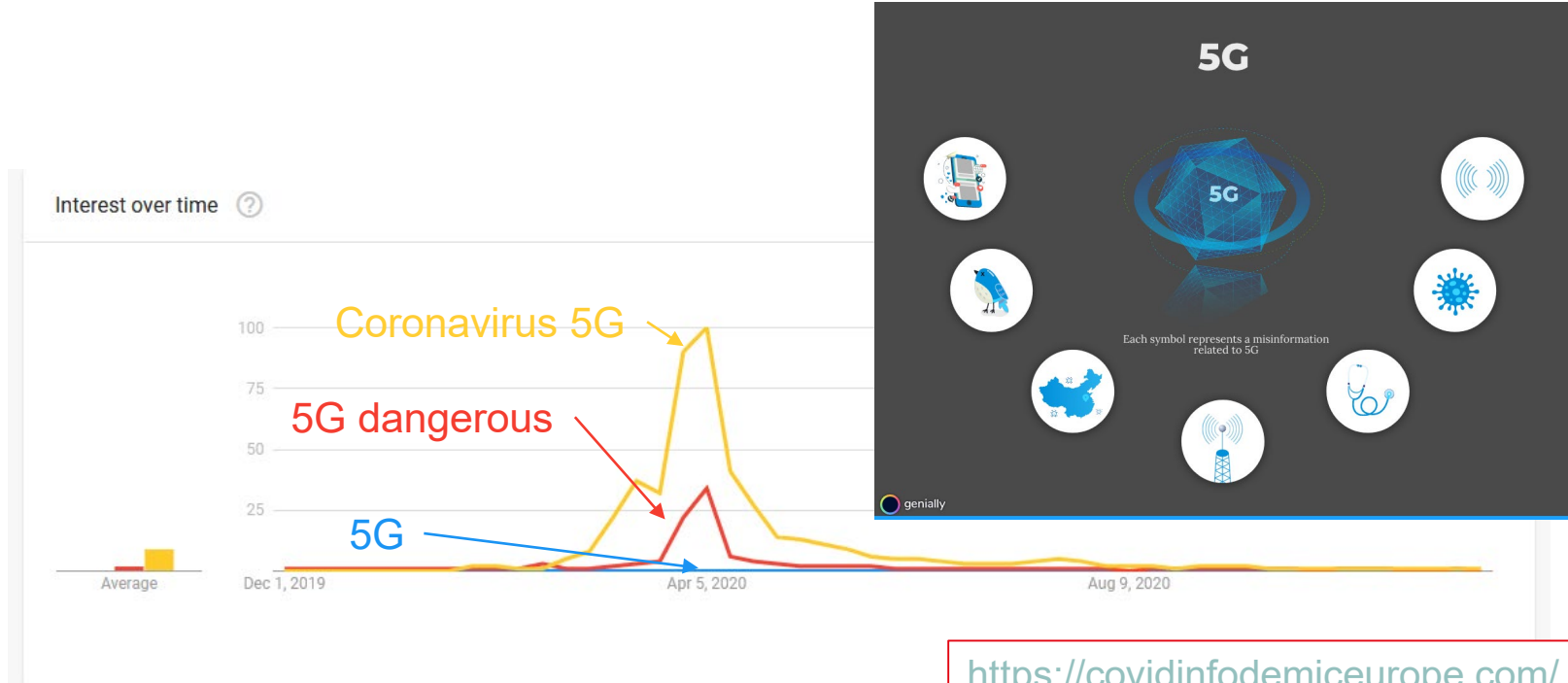
The Wuhan coronavirus is a more virulent version of the normal cold.

OUR VERDICT

The new coronavirus observed in Wuhan is a virus in the same family of viruses as the common cold, but is a different illness.

**FULL
FACT**

Increase in 5G related searches: March/April 2020



<https://covidinfodemicEurope.com/>
<https://trends.google.com/>

COVID-19 misinformation Europe: March/April 2020



The claim that the virus was man-made



Cures and remedies



Vaccine misinformation

THE MOST COMMON MISINFORMATION



Masks and PPE



5G misinformation



Avoiding or preventing infection



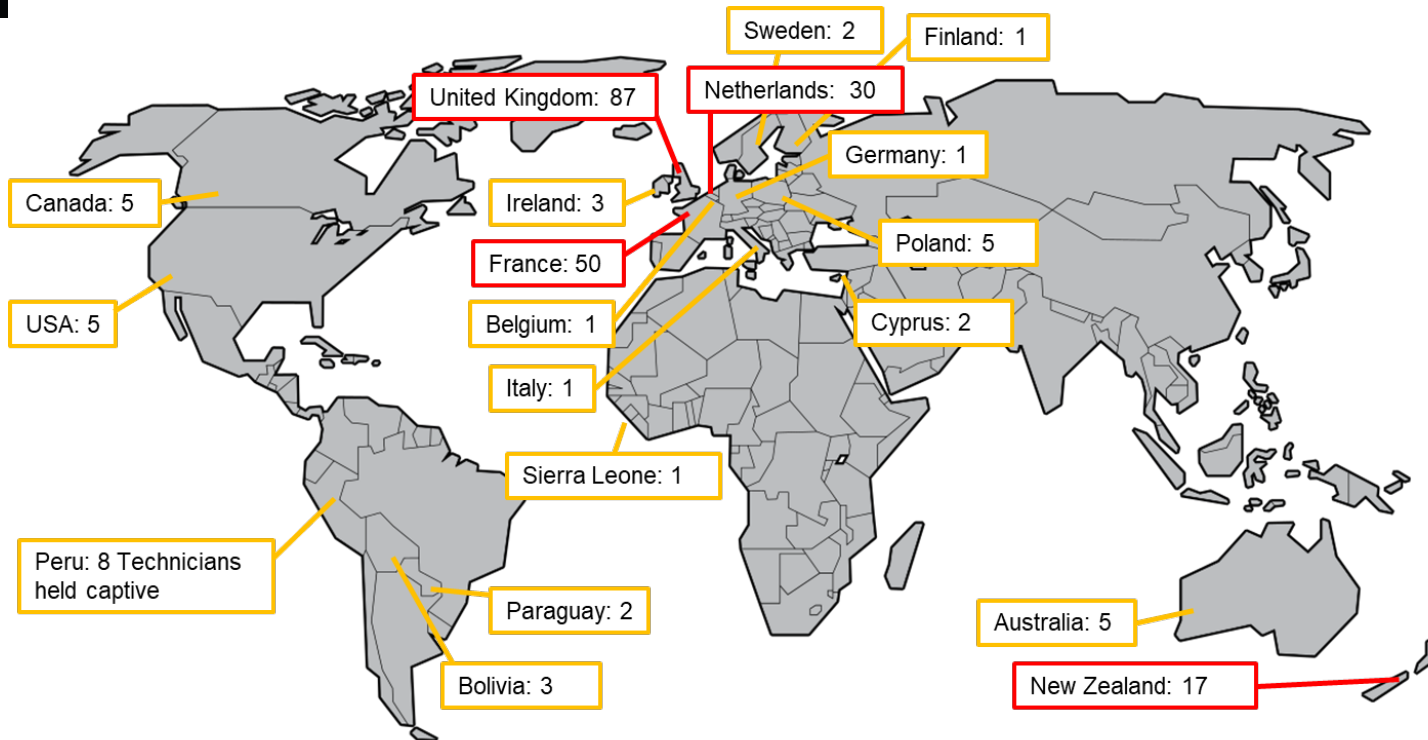
Bill Gates



Comparisons between coronavirus and seasonal flu

<https://covidinfodemiceurope.com/>

221 arson attacks across 18 countries



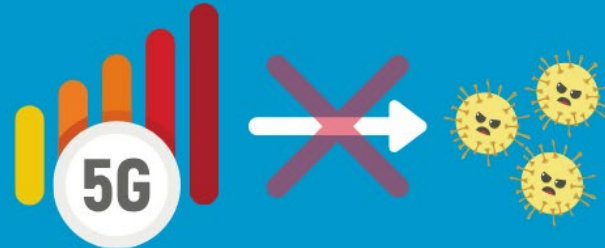
Status: October 2020



No link between 5G and COVID-19: April 2020

Viruses cannot travel on radio waves/mobile networks.
COVID-19 is spreading in many countries that do not have 5G mobile networks.
COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks.
People can also be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then their eyes, mouth or nose.

FACT:
5G mobile networks **DO NOT** spread COVID-19



#Coronavirus #COVID19

8 April 2020

Some of the key 5G misinformation actors



Stop 5G
movement



Conspiracy
theorists

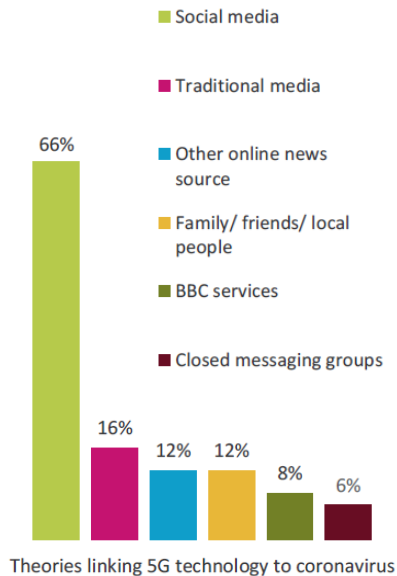
State-backed
disinformation



Commercial
interests



5G misinformation on social media

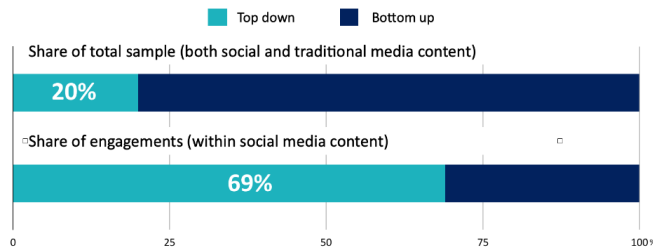


Source: [Ofcom](#) (May)

Meet the celebrities pushing 5G coronavirus conspiracies to millions of fans

Influential celebrities are responsible for spreading coronavirus conspiracy theories far and wide

Source: [.coda](#)



The **first bar** shows the share of content that was produced or shared by prominent persons in the whole sample (N=225).
The **second bar** shows the percent of total social media engagements of content from prominent persons out of the sub-sample of social media posts with available engagement data (N=145).



Source: [Reuters Institute](#) (Jan – Mar)





Traditional media also spread misinformation

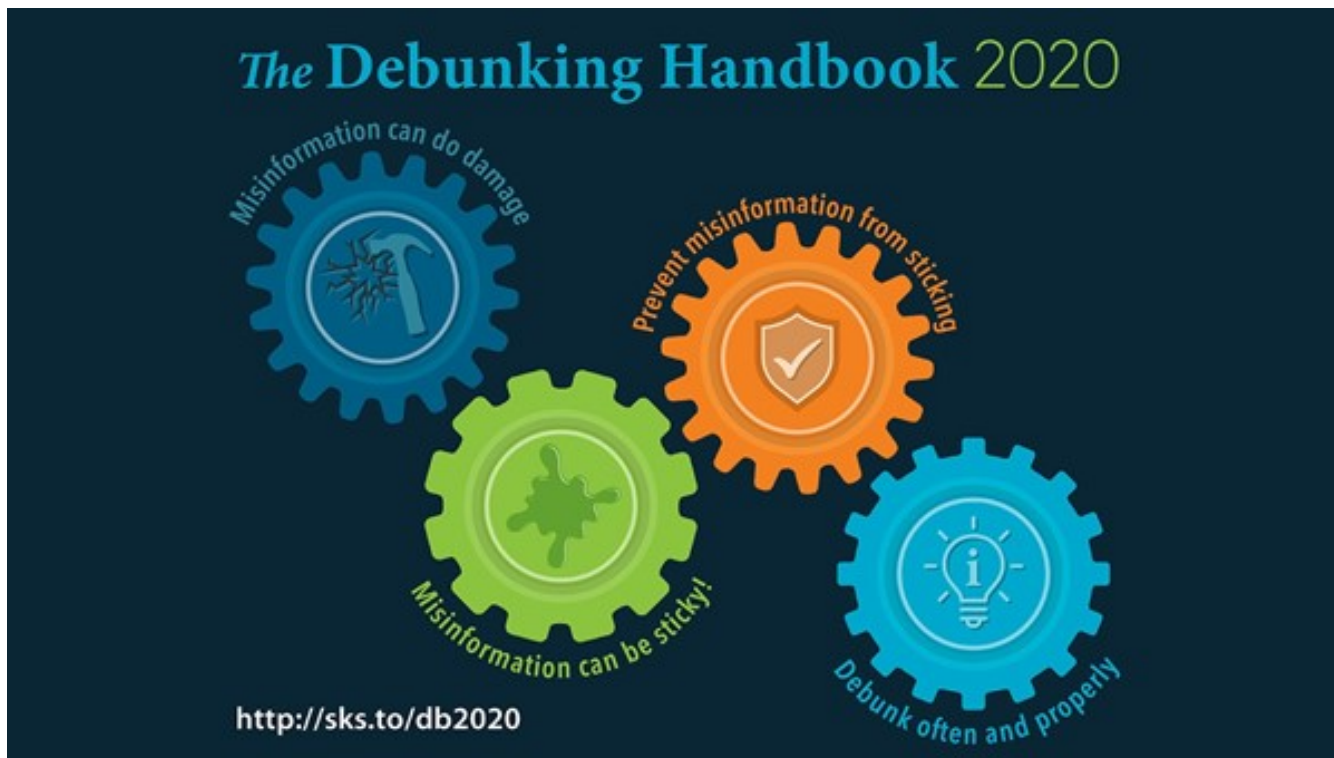
July 2018



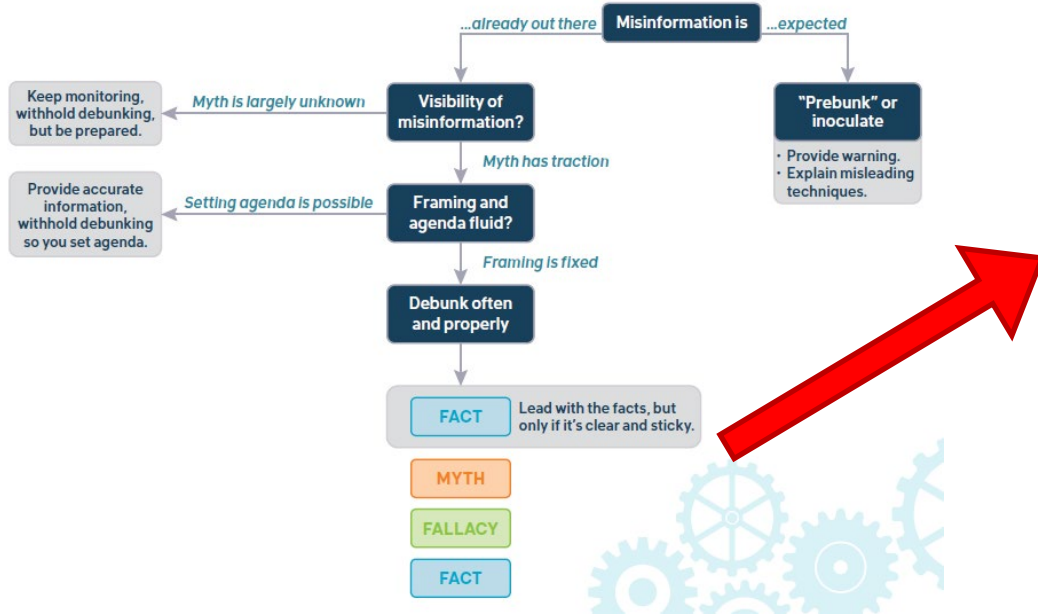
July 2019



Evidence based debunking



Evidence based debunking



FACT	Lead with the fact if it's clear, pithy, and sticky—make it simple, concrete, and plausible. It must "fit" with the story.
WARN ABOUT THE MYTH	Warn beforehand that a myth is coming... mention it once only.
EXPLAIN FALLACY	Explain how the myth misleads.
FACT	Finish by reinforcing the fact—multiple times if possible. Make sure it provides an alternative causal explanation.

<http://sks.to/db2020>

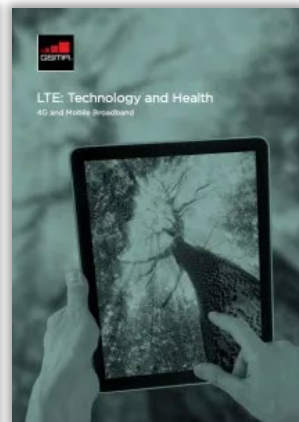
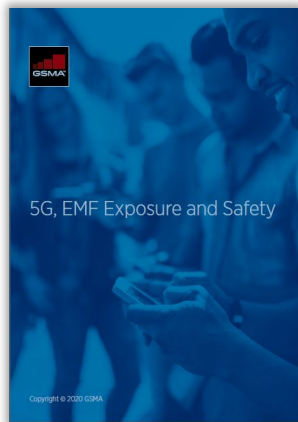
Credible sources: no health risk expected from 5G



'...the new guidelines protect against all potential adverse health effects relating to exposure to RF EMF from 5G technologies.'



GSMA information on EMF and health



www.gsma.com/emf

5G misinformation has not gone away

SEARCH RESULTS FOR: 5G



Nov 14th, 2020 Cristina Tardáguila

Magnetic fields and 5G networks activate and spread the coronavirus

Argentina
14 Nov. 2020



Oct 19th, 2020 Cristina Tardáguila

With the Covid-19 tests, microchips are implanted in the body of the person being tested, through which, with the help of 5G technology and a genetic sample of DNA, important data about the specific person are extracted.

North Macedonia
19 Oct. 2020



Oct 15th, 2020 Cristina Tardáguila

A video that affirm that the high frequencies that 5G will use are dangerous and absorb oxygen wherever it penetrates

Spain
15 Oct. 2020

Poynter.

Joint action needed to counter 5G misinformation

EU countries sound alarm about growing anti-5G movement

Brussels needs to send a 'clear and loud message' about the benefits of the technology, 15 countries tell EU chiefs.



Ms Margrethe Vestager
Executive Vice-President
European Commission

Ms Věra Jourová
Vice-President for Values and
Transparency
European Commission

Mr Thierry Breton
Commissioner for Internal Market
European Commission

JOINT INITIATIVE ON COUNTERACTING THE SPREAD OF DISINFORMATION RELATED TO 5G NETWORKS AND THE NEED OF PUBLIC AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES

Letter regarding a proposal for the European Union to create a communication strategy that provides reliable information related to EMF and radio equipment including 5G to the Member States and European Citizens by:

Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland and Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden.



Conclusions

- No health risk expected from 5G (or other radio technologies) that comply with international limits
- Existing 5G misinformation amplified by COVID-19 infodemic and given new twists
- Continued communications needed from trusted sources to support acceptance of network deployments



Thanks for listening

<http://www.gsma.com/emf>

