

# Bid to secure cash for masts research

Wishaw campaigner Eileen O'Connor is to lobby the European Commission in person in an attempt to secure extra funding for research into the health effects of mobile phone masts.

Mrs O'Connor, who claims a mast in her village was the cause of her breast cancer, will visit Brussels on May 27 with scientists Dr Gerd Oberfeld and Professor Olle Johansson.

Also accompanying her will be Mike Bell, chairman of the Radiation Research Trust, of which Mrs O'Connor is a trustee.

The series of meetings with senior Commission figures was arranged by Green MEP Dr Caroline Lucas, who represents South-East

England in the European Parliament and who is also an RRT trustee.

"We are going to try to plead for them to release funds for further research," Mrs O'Connor said.

"We've got a team of scientists that we can trust and we want get funding for them."

Dr Oberfeld, based in the environmental health department of the Federal State of Salzburg, was one of 18 senior scientists who signed the Salzburg Resolution on mobile base stations in 2000.

The Resolution claimed that there was evidence that there was no threshold on levels of radiation below which neighbours of masts were necessarily safe from health

harm. But it also recommended lowering exposure limits.

Austria has the lowest radiation limits in the world.

Prof Johansson is an associate professor at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm and is an expert on electrical hypersensitivity.

He expressed a formal reservation to the World Health Organisation workshop held on the subject in Prague in October, going against the flow by claiming that the non-thermal effects of electromagnetic radiation should be taken into account before masts were sited.

Together with Mrs O'Connor, the scientists will talk with John Ryan, head of the health information unit

in the Commission's Directorate General for Health, and have lined up meetings with Minna Wilkki of the Directorate General for Research and Mark Bogers, policy officer in the Directorate General for Enterprise.

"The time it's taken to organise this has been unbelievable," said Mrs O'Connor, who revealed that making preparations for the EU visit had put paid to any hopes she had of standing for Parliament as an independent candidate.

Sutton Tory candidate Andrew Mitchell has also arranged for the delegation to meet Tim Kirkhope, leader of the Conservatives in the European Parliament.