

European Commission
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
Attn. of Commissioner Mr László Andor
B-1049 BRUSSELS
BELGIUM

Common statement on “European framework agreement on the protection of occupational health and safety in the hairdressing sector” – 26 April 2012

Huizen/Copenhagen, 28 November 2012

Dear Mr Andor,

Through thorough studies based on well documented facts the European social partners in the Personal Services sector, Coiffure EU and UNI Europa Hair and Beauty have elaborated a European framework agreement on the protection of occupational health and safety in the hairdressing sector, which they consider a necessary step to improve health and safety in the hairdressing sector.

The European social partners for that reason find it regrettable that some European governments try to prevent even before the European Commission has completed their dossier that this framework agreement becomes a directive in accordance with the possibilities vested in the social dialogue-system.

It is the opinion of the social partners that European-wide regulations will strengthen their efforts to make this sector a better place to work in - to the benefit of all hairdressers in the salons, to the benefit of the European societies and the approximately 350.000.0000 potential clients in the EU countries.

The social partners urge the politicians, the governments in the European countries, to take their efforts serious.

With the number of potential clients, with about 400.000 salons and more than 1 million employed people the hairdressing industry is very important to the European Union and its citizens. Because of this, it is of vital importance that every aspect of the hairdressing industry works to the highest qualitative standards.

Occupational skin diseases are the second most common health problem in Europe. The costs of work-related skin diseases account for about 5 milliards Euros a year in the EU.

Hairdressing is a high risk profession for occupational skin diseases. A lot of hairdressers suffer from work-related skin damage such as dermatitis at some point during their career, which is at least 10 times more than the average for workers of all sectors. Hairdressers also report musculoskeletal complaints, five times more than the rate for workers of all sectors.

According to well-founded medical and scientific findings, the agreement is the best way of preventing suffering for the parties involved and, in the medium term, reducing the cost of protecting health for entrepreneurs. This has been clearly demonstrated by experiences in various member states.

Convinced of the crucial importance of preserving the good health of all persons working in the hairdressing salons and to prevent occupational risks in the sector, the European Social Partners in the Hairdressing Sector, namely UNI Europa Hair & Beauty and the hairdressing employers association, Coiffure EU, have undertaken a number of initiatives to face these challenges. The latest is:

"European framework agreement on the protection of occupational health and safety in the hairdressing sector – 26 April 2012".

This agreement represents clear guidance for hairdressers to work in a healthy and safe environment throughout their careers.

The new agreement, which is a result of an autonomous initiative on the part of the workers and employers, builds on existing national best practices in the Member States that are effective in reducing occupational health risks. It addresses, in particular, specific risks like use of materials, products and tools to protect the skin and respiratory tract and the need for sufficient space and ventilation in salons where chemical substances are transferred and mixed.

The agreement is a regulation by social partners for social partners and is tailor-made for small businesses, as hairdressing salons on average have less than three workers.

The benefits of implementing this agreement as a directive is clear for employers and workers alike in terms of lowering sick leave and absenteeism, reducing turnover of staff, and diminishing treatment and follow-up costs for health systems in treating occupational diseases.

The social partners with this agreement take responsibility for the sector and those who work in it – just as they are taking responsibility for the society.

These initiatives should be applauded by all responsible politicians. This is what the EU should stand for.

Best regards,



Richard Koffijberg
President Coiffure EU



Mr Poul Monggaard
President Uni Europa Hair & Beauty