

## **Covenant on Health and Safety, in particular the Use and Handling of Cosmetic Products and their Chemical Agents, between European Social Partners in the Hairdressing Industry**

In 2001, Coiffure EU and UNI Europa Hair and Beauty as representative Social Partners in the European hairdressing industry agreed the “How to get along” code of conduct. In this code the following guideline was included on the working environment:

*“Bearing in mind their respective responsibilities and, acting within the framework of applicable law, prevailing labour relations and employment practises of the country in which they operate and taking the specific peculiarities of the hairdressers’ sector into account, salons and employees should provide the best possible conditions of work with respect to health, safety and dignity in their operations and guarantee the observance of regulations, concerning maximum working hours, daily and weekly, rests periods and an annual period of paid leave, taking the necessary flexibility for the operations of the businesses into account.”*

There is growing awareness of occupational diseases and the importance of the social and economic consequences of sick leave, so the European Social Partners have decided to seek European minimum standards for the hairdressing industry.

As they practice their profession hairdressers use cosmetic products and are therefore exposed to the chemical ingredients of those products, but they have no influence on their ingredients, nor were they invited to participate in the national and international bodies that deal with the requirements of cosmetic products and their ingredients.

European Social Partners want to minimize the risk of hairdressers getting occupational diseases from using the cosmetic products, such as allergies, eczemas, and diseases in their air-tubes (respiratory track).

Special attention should be paid to the key documents EU-Directive 98/24/EC: chemical agents and to the EU-Directive 89/656/EC: personal protective equipment.

## **European Cosmetics Directive for professional Hairdressers**

The existing European cosmetics directive is mainly directed towards consumers in general.

As the professional hairdressing sector was not invited to participate in the work on this directive and as they are not recognised in the cosmetics directive, the European Social Partners (ESP) in the hairdressing sector have agreed that it is necessary that a European cosmetics directive for professionals is established. The Social Partners will consult the European Commission on this matter.

The directive for professionals should be established with the intention of incorporating the following points:

- Ingredients of cosmetic products shall always be replaced by less harmful products if such products are available,
- A list of cosmetics ingredients that the European hairdressing sector will not accept for salon use due to their environmental and health and safety impact shall be prepared and incorporated into the directive as a negative list,
- Special attention shall be paid to ingredients in products that may have harmful effects upon breast-feeding mothers, reproduction and fertility, or may harm the unborn child.

It shall be clearly stated on the products if they contain substances that may imply a risk for breast-feeding mothers, pregnant women, or reproduction capacities. Provisions shall be made to have such products removed from hairdressing salons and from the market,

- The packaging of professional products shall contain instructions that clearly state the hazard level of the individual products,
- Instructions for their use shall be clear and be placed on the containers/tubes of the products,
- All information and instructions to be provided in the national language(s) of the country in which the products are sold and used, and in a font size that is legible.

It shall be stressed by ESP that it is the manufacturer's responsibility at all times to ensure that the products can be used without causing damage to the individual human being and to the environment.

## **Authorisation and certification**

As cosmetic products are made from chemical ingredients that should be used by taking specific safety precautions, the European Social Partners believe it necessary that a system for authorisation to use such products is established and implemented.

This authorisation should also be a part of the professional training system for hairdressers and included as a part of the European Hairdressing Education.

As hairdressing is the craft attracting one of the highest proportion of women, and as hairdressers are:

- taking care of consumers by direct treatment and first of all their hair and faces,
- dealing with the waste from chemical products,
- craftsmen and have a responsibility for maintaining the craft and its skills,
- training apprentices,
- vital to economy in the society,

the European hairdressing sector should establish and have recognised a health and safety certification system for hairdressing in respect of the use of cosmetic products with provisions for safeguarding the ability to meet the above mentioned demands, responsibilities, and maintain a high quality for all aspects of the craft and the sector.

The question about health and safety authorisation and certification for hairdressing should be addressed with the establishment of a European cosmetics directive for professionals.

The European Social Partners agree that in addition to the topics to be addressed in a directive for professionals, there are issues which should be part of an agreement between the Social Partners at an international level and also agreed at the national level.

## **Partner agreements at national level**

The European Social Partners agree that this covenant will not adversely affect national laws or regulations or cause a reduction in the provisions or protection already afforded to individuals by national governments and/or national social partners. The European partner agreement must not interfere with national provisions covering the responsibility of employers.

The European Social Partners will provide the material necessary to national social partners in order to enable them to implement “The Environmental Knowledgeable Hairdresser” in the salons, using any relevant means and in particular the SOFIA-project.

By implementing “The Environmental Knowledgeable Hairdresser” the Social Partners will have the duty, on a salon basis, to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of clients, colleagues, visitors to the salon and everyone affected by their activity.

It embraces on an individual national basis:

1. That suitable protective equipment is provided free of charge by all employers and that such equipment will be properly used by all workers.
2. Employers and employees will jointly ensure that adequate rest periods and holidays are taken according to provisions in collective agreements or national legislation. Where adequate rest periods are not a part of a collective agreement the national social partners are urged to create provisions for such rest periods in the collective agreements with due respect to provide the proper service to clients without creating inflexible working systems.
3. Equipment, systems and products shall be constantly monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure suitability for the intended purpose and the extent of risk to anyone who may be affected by use or application.
4. To monitor and compare current activity to best practice published from time to time by the European Social Partners.

The European Social Partners within the Personal Services' Sector will at each plenary meeting in the Social Dialogue give a report on the progress achieved under this Covenant on Health and Safety between European Social Partners in the hairdressing industry.

This Covenant on Health and Safety will not prohibit the social partners on a national or transnational level from taking initiatives that go further than this covenant to ensure the health and safety of the European hairdressers.

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Coiffure EU

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*The original language of the document is English*