



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion DG

Employment and Social Legislation, Social Dialogue

Social dialogue, Industrial Relations

Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Personal Services

Steering group meeting on 13 September 2011, Brussels

Minutes

The meeting was chaired by Poul Monggaard (UNI Europa), who welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda. He also pointed out that one of the purposes of this meeting was to prepare the plenary meeting of the personal services social dialogue committee in December.

1. European Framework Agreement on the Prevention of Health Risks in the Hairdressing Sector

Mr Vos (Coiffure EU) reiterated the position of Coiffure EU already expressed at the 21 June plenary meeting. While there is understanding for the position of the Commission with respect to the self-employed, Coiffure EU is profoundly disappointed that a directive comprehensively applying to all hairdressers would not be possible. While the implementation of the agreement would bring costs for some, others would not be held to the same high standards of professionalism.

Faced with this situation, Coiffure EU is unsure as to how to proceed. Coiffure EU will therefore start a comprehensive survey of its members and will report on the results at the plenary meeting on 13 December 2011. Only then will it become clear whether Coiffure EU will be able to sign the draft agreement.

The Chair wondered whether a differential application of the directive by Member State would be possible.

Mr Schwarz (European Commission) replied that a directive on the protection of workers' health and safety would apply equally to all Member States. To explain the political context, he highlighted that some Member States had already approached the Commission to express their concerns about some aspects of the draft agreement in the hairdressing sector.

Mr Röhr (Coiffure EU) enquired about the legal value of a recommendation.

Mr Schwarz answered that there is a distinction between a formal Recommendation of the Commission or of the Council, and a recommendation by the social partners. In the present case, the European social partners would call upon Member States to take into account self-employed hairdressers when transposing the directive. The Commission would refer to this recommendation by the social partners in its explanatory memorandum accompanying the draft directive. It would therefore have a high political, rather than legal, value.

2. European Hairdressing Certificate

The Chair gave an update on the implementation of the agreement on European hairdressing certificates. He presented the new website www.euhaircert.eu and explained its different components. The main item that is still missing is the logo for the hairdressing certificate. Coiffure EU's Dutch member ANKO will take care of this task. However, national social partners do not need to wait for the adoption of a logo before submitting their request for European Hairdressing Certificates.

Mr Vos (Coiffure EU) congratulated those that worked on the website for its implementation. He also pointed out that there was no explanation of level A on the website, so this should also be added.

The Chair emphasized that comments on the website were very welcome. Further modifications would be made to the website in time for the working group meeting of the social dialogue committee on 24 October.

3. Increase of chains and growth of self-employment

The Chair introduced the topic by asking what should be discussed at the plenary meeting under this heading. He suggested inviting national experts to share their experiences.

Mr Vos (Coiffure EU) cautioned that this did not work too well in the past. The social partners have already written to Eurofound, asking for assistance in collecting data and analysing the developments in the hairdressing sector.

Mr Schwarz (European Commission) pointed out that Eurofound had recently issued an overview of studies published in the framework of its "stakeholder enquiry service". Any work undertaken in the personal services sector would likely take place under this service, as well.

Mr Vos highlighted the ongoing change in the hairdressing sector, and cautioned that the situation could become dramatic in a few years if current trends continue. Possibly, the only employment then left in the sector would be in the salons belonging to chains. He suggested that Coiffure EU and UNI Europa could develop a joint questionnaire, which would be distributed at the working group meeting in October. The answers would then be available for the plenary meeting in December.

The Chair supported Mr Vos' suggestion. Both sides agreed to develop such a questionnaire.

4. Evaluation of the functioning of the sectoral social dialogue

The Chair proposed establishing a small group of persons that have been active in European sectoral social dialogue only since a short time ago. The idea is to gather fresh perspectives on the functioning of the sectoral social dialogue.

Both sides agreed to this proposal.

Mr Vos (Coiffure EU) also wondered whether it was possible to learn from the best practices of other sectoral social dialogue committees.

Mr Schwarz (European Commission) responded that experience has shown it to be rather difficult to establish direct formal linkages and exchanges between sectoral social dialogue committees. Each of them is different and has their own topics that are discussed and their own working methods. The personal services committee is unique in that it is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises, which is not the case in other sectors. Mr Schwarz pointed out that one important area for review could be the timing and the rhythm of social dialogue meetings throughout the year, of course within the logistical constraints set by the Commission.

Mr Vos recognised that it was difficult for the Commission to help directly in this matter, yet it was his hope to have a more open discussion of the functioning of the sectoral social dialogue.

The Chair closed the meeting and wished the participants a safe trip home.