

PERSONAL SERVICES (HAIRDRESSING)

Workers' representatives	UNI-Europa Hair & Beauty Care (2000) http://www.uniglobalunion.org/Apps/iportal.nsf/pages/sec_20081016_gbjmEn
Employers' representatives	European Confederation of Hairdressing Employers' Organisations (Coiffure EU) http://www.coiffure.eu/

Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee (SSDC)

Informal working group:	1998
SSDC:	1999
Internal Rules:	17 November 2006
Work Programme:	2007-2008

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GENERAL OVERVIEW OF SECTOR

At present, for the purposes of European sectoral social dialogue, what is known as the “personal services” sector encompasses only hairdressing and beauty care. This sector is distinctive for its large number of (small) firms, generating well over a million jobs.

There are generally estimated to be about 400,000 hairdressing salons in the European Union (Marjolein Peters, Prim van der Valk, *Le commerce de la coiffure dans l'Union européenne, en Norvège et en Suisse*, EIM Small Business Research and Consultancy, Zoetemeer, 1999). These businesses generate a large number of jobs – [1,5 million](#), according to the European Commission – yet those in the trade believe it to be a significant branch of the economy that suffers from a lack of recognition.

Hairdressing is compared with the Horeca sector in [some quarters](#), in that company structures range from a multitude of small, neighbourhood salons to some major international chains. Jobs in hairdressing and beauty care are generally regarded as highly skilled and are overwhelmingly occupied by women (more than [80%](#), according to the Commission). In the case of the major international hairdressing chains, salons are often run by a qualified manager assisted by young female entrants to the trade, who may be apprentices or even trainees. These young women therefore have to handle cosmetics and ingredients that may be harmful to their health (causing allergies or occupational diseases) at an age when they could become pregnant.

One also encounters numerous part-time jobs, self-employed workers (some operating as franchisees) and relatively low wages in this sector. Moreover, undeclared labour is widespread.

The sector has undergone some major changes over the past few years, including the emergence of new products and new techniques. But another trend worth noting is the sale of semi-professional products in supermarkets, prompting consumers to use these products themselves at home (e.g. hair dyes). This trend could pose health and safety problems, and is the reason why those in the sector argue that cosmetics should be handled by professionals only and that workers must be well trained. On this point, there is a lack of skilled personnel in some parts of the sector, particularly as a result of what is deemed to be inadequate vocational training. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that European social dialogue in the sector began by focusing on training, as well as health and safety issues.

PARTICIPANTS AND CHALLENGES

European considerations and policies might, at first sight, seem rather remote from the daily reality of hairdressing salons, yet several factors contributed to the rapid expansion of social dialogue in this sector. Since the late 1990s, this social dialogue has brought together [UNI-Europa Hair & Beauty Care](#) for the workers, and the European Confederation of Hairdressing Employers' Organisations ("[Coiffure EU](#)") for the employers.

Factors contributing to the rapid expansion of this social dialogue include the existence of very active social partners in certain countries, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, who are driven by the desire to forge a Europe-wide quality image. But also, and above all, there is a determination to operate at a European level, regarded as the appropriate level at which to draw up quality standards in respect of health and safety, vocational training and skills.

Another aspect is revealed in the conclusions of a study carried out by a firm of independent consultants, underlining "the importance of following trends regularly [in terms of fashion, product markets and education – ed.] both at national and European level to ensure that steps can be taken to anticipate or accompany such trends with training or other actions" ("New trends and developments in the European hairdressing sector", report drawn up for CIC-Europe and Uni-Europa, ECOTEC Research&Consulting Limited, March 2000). Perhaps we have here another explanation for the dynamic nature of social dialogue in this sector.

The eight texts adopted so far are:

- the European hairdressing certificate (2000);
- the code of conduct and guidelines for European hairdressers (2001);
- the joint declaration on vocational training (2005);
- the recommendation on health and safety (2005);
- the joint opinion on the "cosmetics" directive (2007);
- the Bari Charter (2007);
- the European agreement on the implementation of the European Hairdressing Certificates (2009);
- the European framework agreement on the prevention of health risks in the hairdressing sector (2010).

The first point to note here is that these documents reveal particular interest in three topics: vocational training, health and safety matters, and professional quality standards. In a joint booklet entitled "The European hairdressing certificate. Guidelines for European hairdressers - The social dialogue programme of the EU", the social partners set out five "good reasons" for adopting common European training standards:

- the labour force gets more flexible (common standards improve mobility in Europe and flexibility within the trade)
- better possibilities of working abroad (European standard training prepares hairdressers for working abroad)

- the customers can rely on high quality (high professional standards)
- hairdressers stay longer in the trade (European standard training helps ensure that hairdressers have their professional and technical ambitions fulfilled)
- a common professional starting point towards quality improvement (a common platform for the discussion and improvement of quality).

The “Bari Charter”, concluded in November 2007, sets out follow-up commitments and clarifies the links between the European hairdressers' various initiatives (the certificate, the health and safety covenant, and the “How to get along” guide). It paves the way towards an important joint agreement on the implementation of the European Hairdressing Certificates, concluded on 18 June 2009.

The purpose of this document, classified by the European Social Observatory in the “autonomous agreements” category, is to “improve the overall quality and image of the hairdressing services in the EU” through the use of European certificates and joint national-level implementation of their provisions. This is a strong reciprocal commitment, involving both the European and the national social partners. Their undertaking relates, firstly, to the integration of specific training modules (including in particular health and safety instructions) into national hairdresser training programmes; thereafter it covers the design, the production and the issuing of European certificates to those who pass the examination and/or update their qualifications. The follow-up arrangements are binding on the social partners: they are duty-bound to implement this certification system, and the national social partners are obliged to report regularly on the state of play.

Another important document is the European framework agreement on the prevention of health risks in the hairdressing sector (scheduled for adoption in 2010). One of the triggers for this joint text was the European social partners' frustration with the process for revising the “cosmetics” directive (76/768/EEC). For the record, this directive aims to ensure that all products placed on the European market are safe and comply with the same rules in all Member States. Its constituent parts are consumer safety, regulatory harmonisation, consumer information and animal experimentation. Yet health protection for workers in the sectors affected by cosmetics – primarily hairdressers and beauticians – does not feature as such. On 5 February 2008 the Commission published a draft regulation replacing the 1976 directive, but without paying any added attention to health and safety issues for workers using these products (despite a request from the social partners). Hence their decision to take up the matter themselves through sectoral social dialogue.

The framework agreement negotiated in 2009 and adopted in 2010 sets out a series of ambitious objectives related to prevention and health protection at the workplace, the working environment, safety standards, staff training, and the harmonisation of working conditions within the EU. This document puts forward a number of recommendations, for instance on the handling of materials, protection of the skin and respiratory tract, but also prevention of musculo-skeletal disorders, the environment and organisation of work, maternity protection, and the mental load. This is a fully-fledged framework agreement in the meaning of the Treaty: the social partners call on the Commission to present the text to the Council for a decision, so that the agreement becomes binding in the EU Member States.

As we have seen, therefore, social dialogue in the personal services sector relates mainly to training, quality standards for hairdressing services, and health and safety at work. Apart from these recurrent themes we also find – albeit more peripherally – a desire to take part in the debate about a reduced VAT rate for labour-intensive sectors.

OUTCOMES

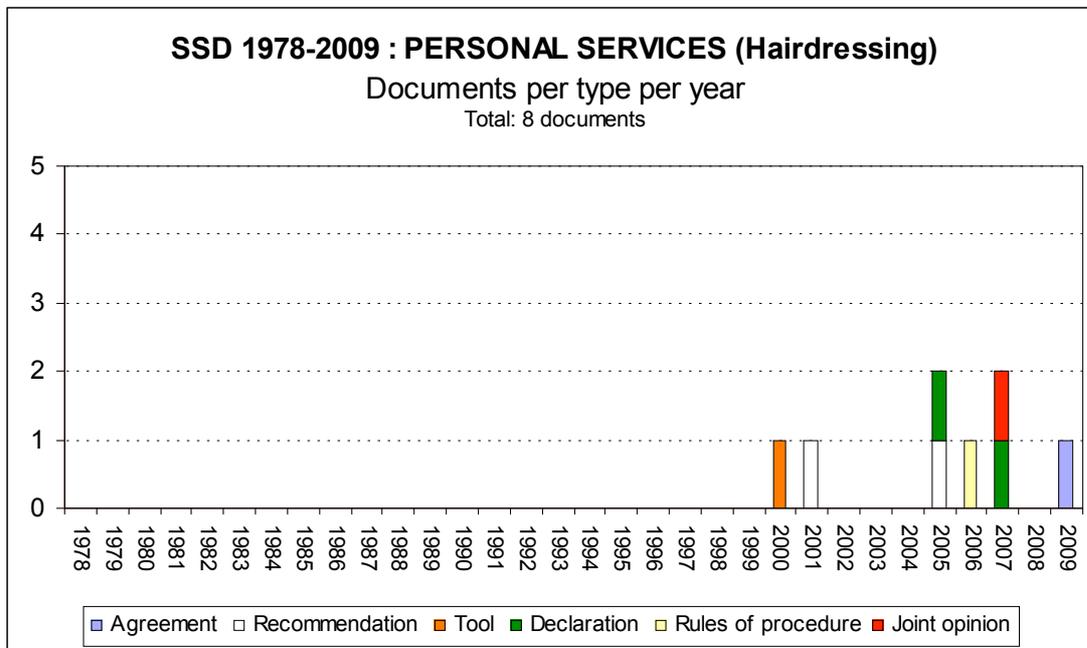
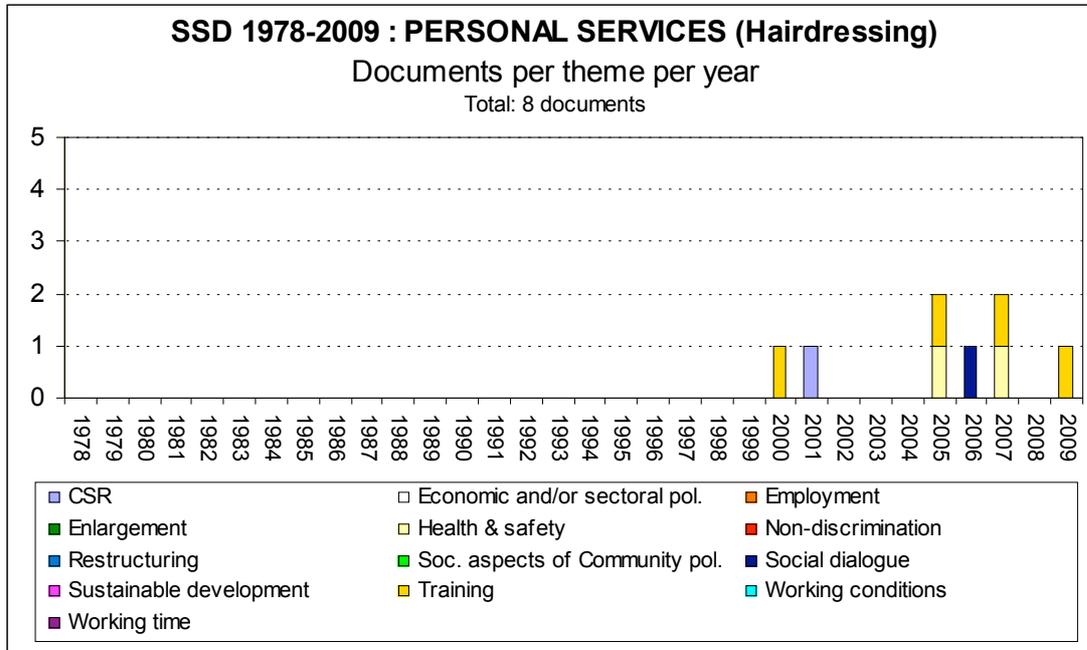
Ever since its inception, social dialogue in the personal services (hairdressing and beauty care) sector has been very pragmatic, aimed at achieving better service quality and brand image, but also at improving working conditions in hairdressing salons, workers' training, and health and safety provisions.

The desire for reciprocal commitments, both between the European social partners and towards the national social partners, is a more distinctive feature of this social dialogue than is lobbying the Community institutions. Although the revision of the "cosmetics" directive gave the European social partners an opportunity to have their voice heard by the Commission, it was ultimately by negotiating a framework agreement among themselves that they drew up and publicised their own Europe-wide health and safety standards (having been ignored by the Commission).

Social dialogue in the hairdressing sector is a very proactive and pragmatic affair. Future priorities include an analysis of the representative status of the various social dialogue players in the personal services sector, both at European level and in each of the Member States. Finally, it should be pointed out that social dialogue in this sector is also geared to better incorporating the beauty care sector, and that it has engaged in cross-sectoral cooperation with the chemicals sector on the revision of the "cosmetics" directive. Some joint seminars have been held to discuss the matter.

JOINT TEXTS

The “personal services (hairdressing)” sectoral social dialogue has resulted, since 2000, in the adoption of 8 joint texts.



Date	Title	Theme	Type	Addressee
18/06/2009	European agreement on the Implementation of the European Hairdressing Certificates	Training	Agreement	National organisations
21/10/2007	Bari Charter Draft conclusions of the European symposium on the evolution of professional hairdresser training in the Mediterranean countries	Training	Declaration	European social partners
16/03/2007	Public consultation on Simplification of Cosmetics Directive 76/768/EEC	Health and safety	Joint opinion	European institutions
17/11/2006	Rules of procedures for the European Social Dialogue Committee in the "Personal services" sector	Social dialogue	Rules of procedure	European social partners
21/09/2005	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	Health and safety	Recommendation	National organisations
21/09/2005	Declaration on the conclusions of the evolution of professional hairdresser training in Europe	Training	Declaration	European social partners
26/06/2001	"How to get along code" Code of conduct Guidelines for European hairdressers	Corporate social responsibility	Recommendation	National organisations
01/01/2000	The European hairdressing certificate. Guidelines for European hairdressers - The social dialogue programme of the EU	Training	Tools	National organisations