

29 October 2013

The Social Partner Agreement on Health and Safety in the Hairdressing sector was adopted in April 2012 to address the serious health risks faced by hairdressing staff. The social partners submitted the reached agreement to the Commission for its assessment and forwarding to the Council to make it legally binding.

In its REFIT Communication, the EU Commission announced that the agreement would not be forwarded to the Council during this Commission's mandate. The EU Commission delays the Council's decision on a social partner agreement that could significantly benefit both the employers and employees of the sector.

For the European social partners, UNI Europa and Coiffure EU, the decision of the EU Commission to not forward the agreement to the Council is unacceptable. During an urgent meeting with Commissioner Andor on 23 October 2013, Oliver Roethig, UNI Europa Regional Secretary said: "The European trade union movement will not stand idle in the face of this unprecedented attack on social dialogue. The EU Commission must rethink its position on REFIT and take its Treaty role seriously. Social dialogue achievements cannot be dismissed in the name of political expedience!"

President of Coiffure EU, Richard Koffijberg, expressed his disappointment over the discharge of the social partner agreement: "I regret the fact that the social partner agreement is delayed in the name of the crisis, when I am convinced that it can yield important cost savings and contribute to the welfare of the workers in the sector. It feels that the progress of Health and Safety in Hairdressing is now being crushed in a political battle of anti-European sentiments in some of the EU countries."

Social Dialogue is a tool to better working and living conditions. REFIT blocks the work of the social partners in the hairdressing sector. This is unacceptable to the social partners. The agreement should be promoted rather than thwarted and wrongly categorised as red tape and administratively burdensome.

President of the Hair and Beauty sector, Poul Monggaard, expressed his concern with these developments: "The EU Commission's decision is disrespectful of the health and safety of workers in an industry ridden with difficult working conditions and occupational hazards. We see a shift of paradigm on European social dialogue. The Commission seems to only consider matters with a narrowly defined cross-border character. Common concerns of both workers and employers across member states don't count anymore. This is a bonsai version of social dialogue and indeed of the EU as a whole."