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Commissioner  
Marianne Thyssen  
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European Commission  
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200  
1049 Brussels  
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Brussels, 13 November 2015  
Ref: 12412/OR/dt

**Subject:** Request for clarification over Better Regulation and Transparency publication

Dear President Juncker,

Dear Commissioner Thyssen,

We write to you on behalf of Coiffure EU and UNI Europa, the social partners of the hairdressing sector, following the recent European Commission publication entitled “Better Regulation and Transparency<sup>1</sup>” (30 October 2015). Page 3 of the above-mentioned publication reads “The EU must not be big on small things” and alongside this statement are two images: one of an olive oil can, and another of a hairdresser cutting hair and a pair of high-heeled shoes. Both images are crossed over implying that they are small things that ought to be scrapped.

The social partners feel that this graphical depiction is mocking their ongoing efforts to implement a European Framework Agreement on health and safety in the hairdressing sector. The images belittle the serious health and safety risks faced by the, mostly female, workers in the sector. It promotes a negative and erroneous interpretation of the ultimate goal of the mentioned Social Partner Agreement.

We, the social partners, do not understand how the protection of workers from work-related diseases is undermined and interpreted as a ‘small thing’ not worthy of the Commission’s attention. Hairdressers are at a substantially higher risk for skin diseases and more absenteeism because of musculoskeletal problems.

Irrespective of the fact that the graphic in the publication is incorrect (the Agreement does not mention high-heeled shoes), it is extremely worrying that the European Commission puts into question its own ongoing approval process of the legal transposition of the social partner agreement. We hasten to add that the revised agreement is still in progress, and the social partners are currently awaiting the last comments from the Legal Services. The relaunch of social dialogue was coined as a priority for the Commission; yet this graphic most certainly calls that into question, leaving us in doubt about the Commission’s true commitment to social dialogue.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/democratic-change/better-regulation/docs/better-regulation-1-year\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/democratic-change/better-regulation/docs/better-regulation-1-year_en.pdf)

The social partners request the official retraction of the graphic on hairdressers in the publication.

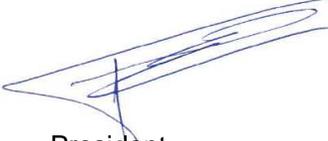
We look forward to an immediate reply and explanation.

Sincerely yours,

Oliver Roethig

  
Regional Secretary  
UNI Europa

Jef Vermeulen

  
President  
Coiffure EU