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MINUTES OF THE ERGOHAIR PROJECT WORKSHOP

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Date : Thursday 12 April 2018
Time : 09.00 – 13.00
Location : Collège St. Bernardins – Paris

01. Introduction: Bernard Gaisset and Franck L'huédé, Senior Project Manager of the Consumption and Enterprise Division of CREDOC, France

02. 'Cross-cultural communications within the European Union'

Michel Dalonneau, Inter-cultural communication and management Consultant of Itinéraires Interculturels, France

Mr Michel Dalonneau pointed out we represent several different countries. An inter-cultural situation that implies that we need to look more closely at issues than may seem apparent.

When drawing up plans for the tunnel between the United Kingdom and France, engineers on both sides of the channel were instructed to draw up a plan. Both groups of engineers drew up plans in their own measurement units. The result was that it was very difficult to compare the two different sets of plans.

The more obvious something seems, the more we need to concentrate and ask ourselves whether other parties will be able to understand us. In Europe for example we do not all understand things in the same way, take the term 'beauty' for instance. The speaker showed a film that demonstrated how each country places the emphasis differently.

Europe is a small geographical area with a dense concentration of people. This may cause people to imagine that everything is very obvious but actually the reality is far from being that simple. It is always important to take the necessary time and to check whether everyone understands clearly what is being said and that everyone is talking about the same thing.

In response to the question about which European country – Greece, Hungary or France – has the lowest percentage of internet users who subscribe to social media, the answer was not what one would naturally assume. The answer is in fact France.

The notion of culture can be compared with an iceberg, where only the top – food, clothing, language, music, architecture, etc. – are visible. The part that is concealed beneath the surface is made up of communication styles, behaviour, beliefs, values and norms, etc.

Different icebergs can sometimes meet – in meetings for example. When you bring different personalities together in one room, it is important to make allowances for their differences. In spite of the fact that people are likely to clash, we still need to ensure that we reach a commonly accepted solution. It is not possible to dismiss the differences in personalities in order to create the ‘perfect’ neutral European. We need to learn to accept each other with all our different personalities. This means that we cannot simply ignore the differences or base ourselves on obvious assumptions.

Which country out of Ireland, Lithuania or the Czech Republic has the highest readership of newspapers online? The answer is Lithuania.

Communications are transmitted via different media and in different ways. There are a host of different ways of communicating. One can communicate emotionally, following a clear communication plan or by avoiding confrontation.

So, even if we want to set up a European norm, we need to be aware of the different cultures involved. We will be able to avoid making value judgements if we follow certain rules.

0.3 Questions

There is no average European model for communications. Is it better to set something like this up per country or per group?

If we have a common basis, we can indicate the different limits within that framework. Communicate exclusively with words and images, but avoiding body language.

As soon as a norm has been defined, we need to apply it. This means not only following up on the rules, but also taking account of the culture in each country.

0.4 Discussion in small groups

Conclusions

Group 1: hairdryers

- Create a video with good examples
- Draw up a list of everything that is available within Europe

Group 2: wash basins

- We need to ask ourselves whether the target group is made up of hairdressers or consumers.
- Because hairdressers make up the largest proportion of people using wash basins, we think that hairdressers should make the decision, whilst taking account of the comfort of the customers of course.

- Defining a norm takes longer than coming up with a recommendation. But we opt for rules to ensure healthy lifestyles.

Group 3:

- Proposal for integrating rules governing health and safety into the EHC.
- Organise a follow-up workshop with groups of experts

Group 4:

- Room for chairs, breaks and work space were all discussed.
- Norms will probably lead to some hairdressing salons having to close. This is why we would opt for recommendations.
- We have to take account of the legally binding breaks and perhaps offer additional breaks.
- Because some salons are small, it is difficult to define recommended work space. Recommendations are necessary for this topic too.

Group 5:

- Do norms represent an obstacle or a hindrance? Is it possible that they may be too strict?
- Clarification should be provided regarding drawing up norms.
- We need to map out everything that has been discussed in all the different European countries on the subject of ergonomics.
- We also need to look at existing norms in place for the beauty care sector.
- There should be a norm governing the ergonomic aspect of equipment and salon interior design and layout.
- If a decision is made to draw up a norm, this should preferably be carried out via a major country such as France, Germany or Italy.
- When drawing up the norm, the big players from the hairdressing sector such as those in Germany, Italy, etc. should be involved.

0.5 Results and recommendations - François Laurent

We need to make sure we take account of the vulnerability of people. Salons have an economic function, but we also need to take account of social and ecological aspects.

We have sufficient scientific research. This is why we now need to tackle the issue of prevention. During the workshop steps about how to set up the layout and equipment of a hairdressing salon were certainly taken, as well as hairdressing equipment and eventual corresponding standards.

One important observation is that hairdressers really love their profession. Hairdressers are creative in spite of the low salaries and the flexibility that is required of them. 61% of employees would advocate a prevention policy. It is also very important to gain a good understanding of what we want to do and why, before we actually set about doing it. The role and responsibility of employers in terms of evaluation, discussion and carrying out exercises

was emphasised. This can already be implemented in small actions such as exchanging views, patting oneself on the back. It is also important to relax and to be able to work without stress. Customers notice when hairdressers are feeling stressed, and the stress transfers to them.

With regards layout and equipment, he referred to the table by Anne Bertrand. We need to first think long and hard about the effective needs before we start changing layout and equipment. When designing the layout of a hairdressing salon people need to be able to exchange views. There are currently no norms in place governing equipment. Some countries are already working on this. When setting up norms, we can call on the industry, the trade unions, the social partners, etc. We can also look into other norms that have already been introduced. When drawing up norms, we need to base ourselves on scientific and ergonomic surveys. One positive aspect is that Olymp wants to work on this. Norms are not compulsory, but it is important that they are followed and respected.

French research reveals that it is also possible to obtain good results without having to put in too much effort.

The Safehair project has also already revealed that changes in behaviour are something that has to be implemented on a daily basis. The fact that the employer should set the example is fundamental to this. Employees also need to accept this. Social partners also play an important role in this.

We are perhaps the second biggest investor in health and safety after the building sector. It is important to focus on all the different factors. In order to ensure that we are working effectively, we also need to speak openly and constructively about the different issues.

In terms of norms, we note that there are advantages and disadvantages. In a first instance, the social partners must reach a consensus. Then we need to think about the costs associated with this. We also need to be aware that norms are non-binding, but that we should really stick to them as best we can.

With regards the third seminar in Brussels, we need to think very carefully about the communications to be sent out. Mr Dalonneau has referred to the different ways of communicating. We need to start with younger people. During the workshop in Hamburg, we also discovered that we should not impose things, but that we need to work on the emotions of people and to emphasise the issue in a positive manner. We do not always need to do things in a theoretical and rational manner. The aim of these effective communications is above all to improve the organisation of hairdressing salons. To achieve this we need to call on the services of a professional organisation. We need to have a common basis in which we believe and on which we all want to collaborate.

0.6 Official final word - Stéphane Coigné

Thanks to everyone involved.

Lunch / end of the workshop