



Development and Implementation of European Standards on  
Prevention of Occupational Skin Diseases (StanDerm)

## Statement of

COST Action TD 1206 “StanDerm” on

### Self-testing for contact sensitization for hair dyes

This statement is being issued by the COST Action TD 1206 “Development and implementation of European Standards on prevention of occupational skin diseases” (StanDerm), which comprises over 140 experts from dermatology, allergology, epidemiology, occupational medicine and health education of 30 European countries and Turkey. It bundles inter-disciplinary research relevant for prevention of *occupational skin diseases (OSD)* in the participating countries, including basic sciences, epidemiological surveillance, translational and applied clinical research. Prevention of contact allergy is an essential task of safety and health at work.

In Europe, OSD represent up to 40% of all occupational diseases. OSD related costs vastly exceed 5 billion €/year in the EU by loss of productivity and cause extensive suffering for affected workers and may even lead to job-loss due to acquired occupational allergies and late intervention. This concerns particularly small and medium-sized enterprises as they often have limited technical expertise and lack dedicated occupational safety and health specialists.

Over the past years, different views have been voiced on the **skin testing method** recommended by the manufacturers of oxidative hair dyes.

Bearing in mind

- that the self-tests are not reliable
- that they have no accepted scientific evidence
- that they have so far not been scientifically validated
- that such non-standardized tests can increase the risk of developing an allergic reaction, which then persists for life
- that oxidative hair dyes are carcinogens
- that there are liability risks for hairdressers who perform or recommend the tests

we **believe that the self-tests are a completely unrectified action** leading consumers towards avoidable severe health risks.

We also ask for an **update** of the report of the Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS) from 2007 on Sensitivity to Hair Dyes - Consumer Self-Testing by taking into account the results of the ongoing research commissioned by the cosmetics industry.

We therefore **fully support the position of the hairdressing social partners** (Coiffure EU and UNI Europa) to abandon the self-testing method and to replace it with a scientifically based questionnaire, and where further needed, to consult a dermatologist/allergologist.

**For the members of the EU Horizon 2020 COST Action "Development And Implementation of European Standards On Prevention of Occupational Skin Diseases" (Standerm)** ([http://www.cost.eu/COST\\_Actions/isch/Actions/TD1206?management](http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/isch/Actions/TD1206?management))

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