

NETEX: GLOBAL COMPACT Communication on Engagement 2021

Participant ID: 17107

Introduction

This “Communication on Engagement” provides an overview of activities by NETEX and her members.

Activities and results

In her role as the Dutch association of textile cleaners, NETEX is focused on developing so called Best Practises for the industry in the fields of quality, labour conditions, sustainability and environmental impact. Best Practices provide state of the art technique and working methods to ensure safe, healthy and sustainable working places and processes.

Basical principles

The association acts according the statutes (Annex A). In general the association attempts to improve the sector and the way its operating. Starting point is respecting the law.

Labour and working conditions

NETEX represents employers. Although professionalism is important and still growing, the sector still offers low-skilled labor and therefore job opportunities for people who have a distance to the labor market like immigrants and disabled people.

1. Labour and organization

NETEX initiates a broad spectrum of activities in this field. Goals are:

- Safe and healthy working circumstances for employees,
- Stimulating personal development and technical expertise
- Making the industry more attractive for potential newcomers.

To achieve safe, healthy and attractive working conditions NETEX, together with sister organization FTN, and social partners, takes responsibility for:

1. A Collective Labor Agreement with extra-legal arrangements for employees;
2. The “Catalog on Labour working conditions and safety aundries and linen rental companies” which describes protocols and means to reduce the impact of physical strain, noise, indoor environment, workload, biological agents/cytotoxic agents and improving OHS infrastructure.
3. The webbased tool “Risk inventory & evaluation (RI&E)” to identify risky working circumstances and develop a plan of action.

Both have been updated to maintain official recognition for the coming years.

Sustainable employability and flexible working hours

Together with social partners, FTN has developed pilot projects for these subjects. The pilot sustainable employability helps companies with tools and advisors how to keep (older) employees employed for a longer time at a responsible, safe and healthy way. The retirement age in the Netherlands is becoming increasingly higher to keep the pension system affordable.

The pilot flexible working hours is developed to investigate how companies can vary with working hours to, at one hand, meet market specific demands, and, at the other hand, give employees more flexibility so they can combine their job more easily with their private life.



Control body compliance CLA (for the industry).

This pilot is another initiative of NETEX. To prevent companies working in the industry evading the Collective Labor Agreement, which is officially established by governmental authority, the Control body must investigate signals and assure that companies follow the rules so employees get what they are entitled to.

Training

The industry invests heavily in safe and sound working conditions so providing knowledge about various aspects of their work to employees is stimulated. Various – large scale – companies run their own training/education program.

NETEX as social partner sector is involved in developing dedicated training programs aimed at increasing technical expertise and stimulating personal development.

The scope of courses is broad. Topics are machine safety and working with various cleaning processes and the specific chemicals used in these processes. But also language courses are offered for immigrants to improve social and working relations but also safety and health

Corona required special actions

In the first months of 2020 corona got a grip on Europe and The Netherlands. In February the first case was reported in the south of The Netherlands. The new virus raised many questions and little was known and/or certain.

NETEX started with developing protocols to ensure safe working conditions for employees:

- To protect them against infection;
- To protect them from infecting each other.

A risk analysis for each working station within the laundry operation is drafted and measurements are prescribed.

This Industry Corona Protocol is a supplement to the “Catalog on Labour working conditions and safety linen rental companies and laundries”. Frequent updates were issued to keep up with actual knowledge and developments.

The protocols also includes procedures to guarantee the delivery of hygienically clean and coronafree textiles.

In no way may contaminated textiles be delivered that can infect users! The cleaning procedures were developed in in collaboration with experts including doctor, microbiologists, infection prevention experts and specialists from the sector itself. Frequently an expert from the Dutch National Institute for Health and Environment was consulted.

Protocols and procedures are evaluated on a regular basis and updated when new insights are presented.

2. Environment

Efforts over the last decades have transformed the industry in a sustainable alternative which is confirmed by research of the independent institute TNO¹ showing that professional textile cleaning is up to three times more environmental friendly then laundering at home. Over the last period it

¹ TNO 2012: Duurzaam reinigen II: Vergelijkende vervolganalyse van de milieubelasting van textielreiniging bij huishoudens thuis en bij professionele reinigers, Projectnummer 052.02750/01.01



has become evident that washing synthetic textiles at home, causes a enormous problem since every wash cycle releases 200.000 synthetic fibres per liter which become part of the ecological system and food chain. The problem will be even bigger in 2050 when 5 billion people will own a washing machine versus 2 billion people in 2010. Also in this respect professional textile cleaning out performs home washing making professional cleaning the most responsible choice.

Research on new techniques for machineries and chemicals is conducted by the TKT² on behalf of NETEX. Projects cover optimization of cleaning and finishing processes but are mainly focused on the development of solvents and alternatives which have no or a very limited impact on humans and the environment. With Solvetex NETEX offers an international benchmark on the performance of alternative solvents and cleaning methods with a dual purpose. The first is informing the industry about the state of the art. The second is to stimulate suppliers to improve and innovate.

Professional textile care: most sustainable alternative

The research described above has recently been supplemented with additional research by Technological Knowledge centre Textilecare (TKT). The report³ substantiates the sustainable profile outlined in the research mentioned above. The additional research has a broader perspective and focuses on CO₂ emission, water consumption and plastic fibers.

The report shows that textile service:

- Emits 24% less CO₂ annually;
- Uses 35% less water per wash compared to home laundering;
- Contributes only 0,1% to microplastic fibers in nature versus 33% by home laundering.

Based on this research NETEX started a public campaign to convince consumers and stakeholders that professional textile care can immediately contribute to a more social, sustainable profile if only people start outsourcing their laundry to a professional textile cleaner.

Sustainability profile, actions and international manifest

The industry is continuous improving techniques and processes. Textile service companies and suppliers of machines, chemicals and ICT work closely together. The collaboration with manufactures and suppliers of textiles is growing to improve re-use and recycling of those textiles.

All efforts have resulted in a very sustainable profile. Compared to domestic laundering, professional textile care scores up to 80% water savings, 24% CO₂ reduction, 17% energy saving and a drastic reduction in the amounts of microfibrils that end up in nature (0.1 versus 33 %).

On November 5th 2020 the international umbrella organization CINET published the international "Sustainability Manifesto" which encourages the sector, but especially the chain, to an even higher degree of sustainability in order to drastically reduce the "footprint" of textiles and the textile industry. The Manifesto underlines the sustainable character of professional textile care. Sustainable textile cleaning to which everyone can contribute by simply outsourcing "the laundry" to the professional. Consumer behavior is changing and people are looking for sustainability. The textile care industry provides an alternative.

The Manifesto is underwritten by more than fifty organizations and companies such as Duurzaamheid.nl, the American ARTA (American Reusable Textile Association), TÜV Nederland, the Global Compact Network and NETEX.

² TKT: Technological Knowledge centre Textile care (The Netherlands)

³ TKT: Sustainability Profile Report Professional Textile Care in the Netherlands (June 18th 2019, ref 8111901002)



New business models

In an effort to expand the sustainable profile of the industry, NETEX has a focus on the entire value chain of textiles. From cradle to cradle. The demand for virgin materials is growing year by year and so is the production of textile products. The ecological footprint of the textile and fashion industry is not positive. The fact that consumers wear only a small part of their wardrobe and lots of clothing is discarded even when it is never worn, makes a turn around essential.

In this respect NETEX is building up business cases to demonstrate to its own members and the textile industry, that new business models are necessary to reduce the footprint. Rental of clothing, new or used, clever re-using clothing through a “fashion library” are some examples. Professional textile cleaning is an essential part of these models.

But also the core process of textile cleaning can be improved so the services are more within reach of consumers. Logistic services on demand are the promising development in this respect. Picking up and delivering laundry where and when consumers prefer, is the key element. This convenience makes the sustainable services of professional textile cleaners very accessible.

With frequent sessions NETEX stimulates members to develop new business models to develop the market of second hand clothing, rental concepts and re-use and recycling of textiles. When clothes are worn twice as much as today's average (3 – 5 times) the footprint will be significantly smaller. If a jeans is worn three times longer, it will save 126 kg CO₂, 16.000 liter water and 7 billion kg waste! Because professional textile care uses dedicated and optimized processes, the quality of textiles is preserved much longer.

3. Certification

Netex manages a certification system which grants an Environmental Certificate and a Quality Assurance certificate when legislation, requirements and guidelines, developed by the sector, are met. An additional program is Cerclean®.

The **Netex Environmental Certificate** focuses on safe and responsible working with detergents and hazardous substances. During audits all relevant control points are checked to ensure that all processes and working areas are safe and healthy for employees and the environment.

- When a company uses PERC, measurements are done to verify that emission of PERC does not exceed health limits established by WHO.
- The Guideline “Cleaner production” forms the basis for the certification program. It provides companies a full overview of law and regulations they have to meet. Also templates and other devices are offered.

The Environmental Certificate is a prerequisite for companies applying for the Quality Assurance certificate.

The **Netex Quality Assurance** certificate is a testimony that all working methods, machineries and tools provide in working circumstances that limit the risks of accidents and sickness. Also the certificate is a guarantee that working methods achieve a good quality level of cleaned textiles.

The international quality management system/scheme **Cerclean®** is an easy approachable program offering textile cleaners world wide a step by step approach to a. learn about quality management and b. develop a quality management system.

Cerclean® is based on internationally acknowledged best practices and standards including environmental safe and sustainable working methods, labor friendly working conditions and ISO



9001 requirements to ensure constant improvement of business processes. The program provides an e-learning tool which also provides formats/examples which can be used in the company specific quality management system.

Cerclean® offers a worldwide standard for safe and sustainable processing and managing improvement business processes and therefore the quality level.

4. Training and education:

Various courses contribute to environmentally working methods as they make people aware of the characteristics and risks of machineries and chemicals and acquire the knowledge to cope with these risks.

TCT, TrainingCentre Textile Care, offers, all round professional trainings covering all aspects of modern textile cleaning and, in association with CINET, international courses within the World of PTC Business School. These courses bring the textile care industry on a higher level by offering knowledge and support to implement sustainable working methods for the environment but also for employees. Employees can acquire the certificate Master in PTC. Companies are enabled to implement the quality management system Cerclean®. This QMS helps entrepreneurs to improve business/production processes and efficiency, and thus improve quality, and to implement safe and sustainable working methods. With e-learning courses TCT offers full support for everyone interested in becoming a Master in PTC and a qualified “quality assurance manager”.



Annex A brief introduction

NETEX⁴, the Dutch association for textile cleaners, entered the Global Compact program in May 2012.

The association has a long history of over 90 years. It was founded in 1919. NETEX represents the interests of its affiliated Dutch textile cleaners. These members represent 60% of the Dutch market. NETEX encourages the sector as a whole to become better, more modern, service-oriented and sustainable by improving quality and meeting today's customer demands. Important aspects include research, development and innovation, training, service and certification.

The company size of associated members shows a broad range. On one end of the range you will find small scale companies run by just the proprietor servicing the local area. On the other end large scale companies with a substantial staff servicing the whole country are to be found. In between are companies servicing a regional area. Core business of members is professional textile cleaning mainly for private customers. The B2B-market however is of growing importance.

Annex B

The two clauses from the associations statutes describe the goal of the association and by what means this goal is to be achieved. After the translation you will find a copy of the original text.

“Goal and means”

Clause 4

The association aims to promote textile cleaning companies in general, improvement of the circumstances and relationships in this industry, promoting cooperation of employers in this industry, the union of all companies that can be a member of this association and to represent the business interests of its members in the broadest sense.

Clause 5

The association seeks to achieve this objective through legal ways by:

- Promoting good relations between members;
- Promoting good relations between members and their employees;
- Entering into collective labour agreements;
- Settling disputes between members and between members and their employees;
- Combating unfair competition and countering false conditions that may exist in the trade;
- Issuing an association magazine
- Promoting (technical) training and disseminating general knowledge to craftsman in the trade;
- All other legal means, which may contribute to the goal.”

⁴ NETEX: Nederlandse vereniging van Textielreinigers, Dutch association for Textile cleaners