

MEMBER STATE AUTHORITIES GET INSIGHT INTO CHALLENGES FOR SMEs TO IMPLEMENT EU DETERGENTS REGULATION

Press release

21 May 2024

On the 17th May, the European and Belgian associations for the detergents sector, A.I.S.E. and Detic, organised a visit to a detergents manufacturing facility for the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU together with attachés from five other Member States. The visit was hosted by Realco, a Belgian SME that specialises in hygiene solutions. The visit was an excellent opportunity to discuss the revision of the Detergents Regulation directly with national legislators, while exploring the practicalities and challenges of implementing EU legislation.

A.I.S.E. and its members have been actively engaged in the revision of the Detergents Regulation since it started. However, challenges for implementing key aspects of the revision came to light during the visit. For European SMEs such as Realco, a Digital Product Passport (DPP) can only be implemented at model level and with sufficient transition time, once all the implementing acts of both the Detergents Regulation and the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) have been adopted. A.I.S.E. emphasises the need for coherence and interoperability with existing regulations, as well as a pragmatic approach to DPP implementation.

“The vast majority of Europe’s manufacturing, over 80% of some 700 plants, is run by SMEs. It’s essential that the revised Detergents Regulation can realistically be implemented without taking resources from small teams focussed on research and development for example. This is the core message of the Antwerp Declaration, which calls for a smarter innovation framework, and a new spirit of law-making”, Alexis van Maercke, A.I.S.E. Director General points out. “We are delighted to be able to showcase Belgian manufacturing to the authorities today.”

Realco points out that innovation, which helps them realise their vision to accelerate the ecological transition, is essential to continue enabling the development of new technologies and processes. Realco's CEO, George Blackman adds: *“It’s crucial that we cultivate an environment free from additional administrative burdens to allow creativity and efficiency to thrive and ensure that innovation is not blocked by over-regulation. Consumer preferences are increasingly leaning towards products with reduced environmental impacts, and Europe’s SMEs have the flexibility to meet these demands and drive the industry towards sustainability.”*

The open exchange between industry experts and the authorities was much appreciated by all present. Other topics raised during the visit included the versatility of enzymes that enable sustainability through increased efficiency of cleaning products; the current degradability test criteria for surfactants which are unsuitable for complex ingredients such as polymers; and the role of microorganisms in cleaning products. Several of the Member State authorities had attended A.I.S.E.’s webinar on the subject on 7 May.

“The discussion on the use of micro-organisms in detergents is extremely important because it clearly raises the question of the potentially negative impact of legislation on innovation” comments Françoise van Tiggelen, Secretary General of Detic. *“Innovation is the driving force*

behind the development of companies like Realco, which rely on the latest scientific knowledge in the field of sustainability."

About Realco

Realco is a Belgian company based in Louvain-la-Neuve that employs 55 persons. The company aims to co-create strategies that promote high performance and propel us towards a greener future. Its mission is to develop, produce, and market hygiene products using green chemistry. Realco utilises advanced technical and scientific expertise to deliver products prioritising high performance, safety, and sustainability. With a commitment to innovation, Realco aims to redefine industry standards and contribute to a cleaner, healthier planet. www.realco.be

Contact: Valentine Neiryndck | valentine@realco.be

About Detic

Detic is the Belgo-Luxembourg association of producers and distributors of cosmetics, detergents, cleaning and maintenance products, adhesives and sealants, biocides and aerosols. Detic works to create and maintain a positive and sustainable image in its industries. Its central mission is to support, accompany and advise its members regarding the responsible way to bring their products, services and solutions to market. Detic provides expertise on regulatory and technical issues as well as in the field of communication and sustainable development. www.detic.be

Contact: Frédéric Warzee | fwarzee@detic.be

About A.I.S.E.

A.I.S.E. represents the detergents & maintenance products industry in Europe. Based in Brussels, A.I.S.E. has been the voice of the industry to EU regulators since 1952. Membership consists of 29 national associations across Europe, 18 corporate members and 18 value chain partners. Through this extensive network, A.I.S.E. represents over 900 companies supplying household and professional cleaning products and services across Europe. Committed to promoting sustainable practices and innovation, A.I.S.E. collaborates closely with European institutions, industry stakeholders, and the public to enhance the sector's environmental protection, consumer safety and regulatory compliance efforts. www.aise.eu

Contact: Aisling O'Kane aisling.okane@aise.eu

