

ALEXIS VAN MAERCKE, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF A.I.S.E.: 'THE FUTURE OF EUROPE IS MADE WITH INDUSTRY'



A.I.S.E. is the voice of the European detergent industry and of maintenance products since 1952. Alexis Van Maercke became Director General in January 2024.

in cooperation with Assocasa

Alexis Van Maercke, before joining A.I.S.E., was General Secretary of a trade association of the steel industry based in Brussels for more than 7 years. Previously, he was a political advisor at the European Parliament and policy officer at the European Commission, Directorate General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs. Alexis holds a Master's degree in Law (University of Leuven) and European Studies (College of Europe).

First of all, congratulations on your recent appointment as Director General of A.I.S.E.

Thank you! I am truly honoured to lead this important association that has represented our industry for over 70 years. With national and European elections around the corner and a review of much of the European legislation, this is a special moment.

challenging. The professional cleaning sector, then, is highly diversified with products and cleaning solutions tailored to a multitude of needs. From a safe food chain to a reliable health sector, millions of companies and people rely on the products and services we provide.

A.I.S.E. represents the detergent sector in Europe: can you tell us briefly how the association is structured?

A.I.S.E. represents the detergent and maintenance products industry in Europe. Based in Brussels, A.I.S.E. has been the voice of the industry at the European institutions since 1952. It has 29 national associations throughout Europe, 18 corporate members and 18 partners in the value chain. Through this extensive network, A.I.S.E. represents over 900 companies providing products and services for domestic and professional cleaning throughout Europe.



Alexis Van Maercke

Director General A.I.S.E.

A.I.S.E. in brief

A.I.S.E. represents the detergent and maintenance products industry in Europe. Based in Brussels, A.I.S.E. has been the voice of the sector in the European institutions since 1952. Its members include 29 national associations throughout Europe, 18 corporate members and 18 value chain partners. Through this broad network, A.I.S.E. represents more than 900 companies providing products and services for domestic and professional cleaning throughout Europe.

The industry contributes substantially to the European economy with an annual market value of EUR 42.8 billion, and directly employs 95,000 people and 360,000 along the value chain. A.I.S.E. has a long history of leading voluntary industry initiatives that focus on sustainable design, production and consumption, product safety and the safe use of products by consumers and professional customers.

www.aise.eu



Can you give us a picture of the current economic situation in the industry?

Our annual report on the European market shows yearly growth in most companies, with an annual market value of more than EUR 42 billion. The exceptional demand for cleaning and disinfection products during the pandemic, especially in the professional sector, disrupted many markets that are now returning to normal. However, in spite of stabilised turnover, production remains at a standstill: costs are still very high due to high raw material prices, the cost of raw materials and inflation.

What are the hot topics you are working on at European level?

The Detergents Regulation regulates our sector and A.I.S.E. is the main stakeholder in this revision. Of course, we cannot do this alone: we work in close cooperation with the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Member States and the whole network. The impact assessment of the European Commission found that the current regulation is effective, but needs to be adapted to reflect sectoral developments. Unfortunately, we see the introduction of a considerable regulatory burden during the legislative process. If the regulation is excessively burdensome, demanding or even



impossible for SMEs to implement, innovation will suffer, small companies will be in difficulty and, as a consequence, employment will also feel the effects. In addition to the regulation on detergents, the revision of REACH, the legislation on the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals, during the next term of office of the Commission and the European Parliament, the revision of the legislation on biocides, scheduled for 2025, will take place. The volume of new or revised legislation (CLP Regulation, Packaging Regulation, proposed Ecodesign Regulation) will lead to a significant number of new actions, which means an enormous workload in the coming years for the association, our members and the Member States.

One aspect of great interest is the product passport, can you explain what this is?

The European Commission has introduced the concept of a Digital Product Passport (DPP) in recent legislative proposals (e.g. in the Detergents Regulation) with the main reference for all DPPs set out in the Ecodesign Regulation for Sustainable Products (ESPR). The aim of the PLR is to make detailed product data available electronically, e.g. by helping consumers to better compare products. The PLR has the potential to be a useful tool, but there is a mismatch between the way it should work in theory and the way it should work in practice in different sectors. A.I.S.E. is pointing out to EU legislators the many practical problems that could arise with the implementation for detergent products. The PLR should function as a 'template' for information relevant to detergent products, such as compliance and environmental compliance. If companies need to create a PLR for each batch, they will create significant amounts of data that will increase burden and costs with limited benefits. For example, if a company produces the same product on 250 different days, this will mean 250 separate PLRs compared to one with the model-level approach.

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The association was a pioneer in sustainability with the Charter for Sustainable Cleaning and other initiatives. What is its position today in this regard?

A.I.S.E.'s leadership and long history of voluntary sustainability initiatives are one of our industry's greatest strengths. These initiatives, created and led by A.I.S.E., promote the safe and sustainable use of cleaning and hygiene products in and around the home. The A.I.S.E. Charter for Sustainable Cleaning shows measurable reductions in energy consumption and carbon emissions year after year, down 42% in 16 years. Charter accounts for more than 90% of production volumes in Europe. The industry must continue to focus on climate change mitigation to reach the EU's goal of zero emissions by 2050, and we are well on our way to achieving this goal.

How intelligence can be used artificial (AI) in cleaning?

Artificial intelligence has enormous power to track, monitor, train and provide cleaning programmes for key areas

such as restaurants, hospitals and hotels. Data such as foot traffic, customer surveys, occupation, etc. can be integrated to simplify and direct cleaning when and where it is needed. The prospects for efficiency are enormous.

Do you welcome the recent European directive on greenwashing?

Environmental claims and consumer choice play a crucial role in driving positive change and our association fully supports the principle that consumers should not be misled by false or unsubstantiated environmental claims and shares the EU's goal of establishing a clear, robust and credible framework to enable consumers to make informed choices. We are concerned about a possible ban on environmental claims for products with hazardous substances. Banning these claims only because of the potential hazardousness of the substances rather than the actual risk could harm the objectives of the EU Green Deal, blocking innovation and the creation of more sustainable cleaning products.

What do you see on the horizon for the future? I have been working on the European scene for many years, with experience in both the Commission and the Parliament, and I believe that we are still in a calm phase before the storm.

A.I.S.E. is monitoring what impact it will have on our industry over the next five years. It will be even more challenging than the current reviews, more complex, more technical and more difficult to influence. We will continue targeted advocacy to ensure that European legislation is realistic and implementable in all Member States, at the level of all companies. Finally, a strong internal market is a prerequisite for European industry to continue to grow and innovate. The current fragmentation of the single market is a threat to industry, consumers and European society as a whole. European companies must be enabled to stay ahead in innovation. A.I.S.E. is a constructive partner ready to implement the EU Green Deal, while ensuring that the EU remains at the forefront of innovation and industrial production. The future of Europe passes through industry.



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Bobina in Tessuto Non Tessuto di cellulosa e poliestere microforato di colore turchese.

Bobina da kg. 2 h. 24 cm. n. 392 strappi.

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La trama forata del TNT garantisce l'asportazione di qualsiasi sporco alimentare dal banco di lavoro.

Non si spappola come la normale carta in quanto si può usare sia asciutto che bagnato.

Può essere sciacquato sotto l'acqua corrente e strizzato senza rompersi.

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A norma con l'HACCP in quanto non contiene profumi e/o sostanze non a norma.

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