

Let's talk about the importance of hygiene



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Hygienie is a complex topic, but one which is more familiar in everyday conversation today, than pre-pandemic. In our modern society, the speed at which illnesses spread is alarming and this is amongst the reasons why the need for hygiene must be prioritised.

One of the key focuses of the European detergents and maintenance products industry is to ensure the availability of efficient detergents and disinfectants for cleanliness and hygiene in our homes and in public spaces such as hospitals, hotels and restaurants. Imagine a world when we don't have access to such products! What we learnt from the covid pandemic is that it is fundamental to prioritise hygiene to support public health.

Cleaning is essential for delivering hygiene, a cornerstone of public health

Hygiene is the practices or conditions that break the chain of infection – in practical terms, this means preventing the spread of an illness, by cleaning and disinfecting surfaces to remove and kill germs for example, washing our hands, or wearing a mask. Just think of the importance of ensuring kitchen utensils are hygienic before preparing food - foodborne illnesses caused by pathogens can lead to serious food poisoning.

420,000 people die from food poisoning each year in the world. According to ECDC, this is preventable through better hygiene standards.

The detergents industry enables many other industries to function by supplying products for diverse applications. Let's talk about food: this industry supplies every step of the food chain with appropriate products, processes and training, from the milking of the cow to the churning of the cheese, to ensure a safe food chain. In our homes, consumers have

access to a wide range of performant cleaning, maintenance and disinfection products for different applications around the house such as cleaning floors and surfaces, bathrooms, the kitchen and doing the laundry.

During the covid pandemic, the most sought-after products were those that could protect us, notably hand and surface disinfectants. The public became very aware that everyday hygienic practices were essential to move out of lockdown and circulate freely and safely again. Behaviours like washing our hands after sneezing or after using the public transport became commonplace. However, research tells us these practices have been dropped again, even though we know that more than 90 000 people die annually in the EU/EEA following a healthcare acquired infection! There are 3.5 million cases of health acquired infections in the EU and EEA each year (ECDC).

Hygiene matters, and it is fundamental to maintaining public health. The first line of defence to protect our health is to ensure the availability of effective cleaning, maintenance and disinfection products, inside and outside our homes, and not take hygiene and cleanliness for granted. The European Parliament will play a crucial role in driving positive changes for our sector over the next five years, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing competitiveness and resilience in such a critical sector as the new political cycle begins.

Please join our event at the European Parliament on 4th December to discover more about the indispensable role of our sector. Register here:



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, 19 corporate members and 23 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