

# NEW EU LEADERS JOIN DISCUSSION IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON THE VITAL ROLE OF HYGIENE IN OUR DAILY LIVES

A.I.S.E. press release

5 December 2024

**Brussels, 5 December 2024** – A.I.S.E., representing the cleaning, disinfecting and maintenance products industry, hosted a lunchtime discussion in the European Parliament yesterday highlighting the importance of not taking cleanliness and hygiene for granted. The event was a collaboration with *The Parliament Magazine* and was hosted by **MEP Maria Grapini** (S&D, Romania), Vice-Chair of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) Committee.

The panel of speakers included hygiene experts **Dr. Andreea Capilna**, infection prevention and control expert, former technical officer at Integrated Health Services in WHO and part of the Clean Hospitals Platform, and **Professor Dr. Dirk Bockmühl**, Professor of Hygiene & Microbiology at Rhine-Waal University of Applied Sciences, as well as **Hans Ingels**, Head of Unit responsible for the bio-economy, chemicals and cosmetics in DG GROW of the European Commission and responsible for leading the revision of the Detergents Regulation. Guests included members and staff of the European Parliament, European Commission, national attachés from Member States and industry experts from the A.I.S.E. network. “A.I.S.E. represents an industry that brings essential products for cleanliness and hygiene to market for domestic and professional use,” **Florian Vernay**, A.I.S.E. President pointed out as he opened the afternoon.

The panel discussion and exhibition set up for the occasion included fascinating insights into how fundamental hygiene practices such as cleaning our hands and surfaces can significantly reduce the spread of infectious diseases. This is valid both in critical healthcare environments as well as at home! The experts opened a conversation about how we can collectively protect our health, untangling the difference between cleaning and disinfection, and clarifying the complex notion of ‘hygiene’ – “*In a way, hygiene is the science of the art of staying healthy, and that mostly means preventing problems before they arise. Good household hygiene isn’t magic and can be easily achieved with targeted action,*” Professor Bockmühl explained.

“*The correct application of hospital hygiene protocols, including hand and environmental hygiene, can prevent up to 70% of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs). When we estimate over 3.5 million HAIs with over 90,000 deaths in Europe annually, this is the impact of inadequate hygiene in hospitals,*” Dr. Capilna emphasised.

Hans Ingels pointed out: “*We all like to have things clean and cleaned, and we all use detergents for cleaning dishes and clothes. There is a lot of innovation happening in the field of detergents, so the Commission proposed in 2023 to update the old EU rules to take account of the fast technical and scientific evolution in this area. The revision will also address regulatory overlaps with other legislation (CLP & REACH), and it will digitalise and modernise the Single Market for detergents*”.

In concluding the conversation, **Alexis Van Maercke**, A.I.S.E. Director General reminded the guests of one of the cases highlighted: “*420,000 people die from food poisoning each year in the*



*world, and the ECDC tells us this situation is preventable through better hygiene standards. Let's keep talking about hygiene - we don't want to imagine a world where cleaning products would fail to perform as expected. A.I.S.E. is open to engaging with the legislators on all issues that will shape our society and our sector for the coming decades."*

### **More information**

- ["Let's talk about the importance of hygiene"](#) – A.I.S.E. OpEd in The Parliament Magazine
- More about cleanliness and hygiene on [www.aise.eu](http://www.aise.eu)
- Contact Aisling O'Kane [aisling.okane@aise.eu](mailto:aisling.okane@aise.eu)

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### *About A.I.S.E.*

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A.I.S.E. represents an industry that brings essential products for cleanliness and hygiene to market for domestic and professional use. A.I.S.E. represents the detergents, disinfectants & 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, 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.

