

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON THE SINGLE MARKET STRATEGY 2025

A.I.S.E. contribution

30 January 2025

A.I.S.E., representing the cleaning, disinfecting and maintenance products industry, welcomes the overarching objectives of the Single Market Strategy 2025 and is pleased to provide feedback to the European Commission's call for evidence.

We believe that Europe should have a harmonised and robust Single Market to foster competitiveness, innovation and resilience among EU businesses, especially Small Mid-Caps and Small and Medium Enterprises.

A.I.S.E. strongly supports the aim of the new strategy to remove existing regulatory and administrative barriers and prevent new ones from materialising.

An impactful and comprehensive Single Market Strategy 2025 should have these key elements as the foundation of an ambitious EU industrial strategy:

A fully integrated Single Market

For detergents and maintenance products, the Single Market is not yet a reality as national standards and regulations stand in the way of the free circulation of goods. To promote an EU internal market for all products and services, national requirements should be avoided with sectoral legislation adopted at **EU level**. For biocidal products in particular, the fragmentation of the single market is evident, and should therefore be prevented through the safe-guard of a harmonised approach at EU-level.

For example, the Biocidal Products Regulation (EU) 528/2012 (BPR), has been in place for over a decade, and despite the adoption of this Regulation to better harmonise national rules and improve the functioning of the internal market for biocides, all EU Member States continue to operate national schemes. While this consistently poses a big challenge to business, the most prominent issue in recent years is the addition of national rules for certain biocidal product types (PTs), that go above and beyond EU law. These rules have in many cases restricted or even banned the in-store advertising of certain PTs, including consumer insecticides, as well as adding the requirements for specially trained staff and locked shelves for the products, leading to many stores delisting them due to an inability to accommodate the law. This has led to a *de facto* ban of certain products from consumer shelves, running counter to the BPR and leaving consumers in certain Member States with less access to registered products than others.

Effective transposition and implementation of EU law

EU law is not always interpreted and transposed in a harmonised way by Member States, resulting in a fragmented Single Market. The concept of gold-plating (i.e. powers of an EU Directive are extended when being transposed into the national laws) by Member States,



identified in the Draghi¹ and Letta² reports, is a major concern. Additionally, provisions at European level giving Member States the possibility to adopt more stringent rules should be avoided. For example, in the recently adopted Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (EU) 2024/3019, in its Recital 3 it says: "*Member States could consider for instance applying deadlines or thresholds more stringent than those included in this Directive, reaching energy or climate neutrality more rapidly or imposing additional requirements for, **or broadening the spectrum of the application of, their national extended producer responsibility systems.***" We believe that such provisions do not establish the foundation for a fully unified market. Achieving a truly integrated market requires harmonised regulations and should not create different legal frameworks in each Member State.

To give an additional example, in the European Commission's proposed Green Claims Directive (currently in Trilogues), the proposal's requirement for Member States to establish a claim-by-claim pre-approval system of verification risks leading to market fragmentation. Such fragmentation would stem from the uneven qualifications and capabilities of Member States' competent authorities to implement the obligations on claims verification, resulting in an unequal playing field.

A level playing field in the EU Single Market

A level playing field must be ensured for companies competing on the EU market. Clear and equal rules should be set for all operators and effectively enforced. In this area, a key priority should be the efficient implementation of the EU regulatory framework for product safety when it comes to products entering the Single Market. We welcome the [joint report on compliance and enforcement of chemicals legislation](#) adopted by the high-level roundtable on the implementation of the [Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability](#) on 25 November 2021 and we call for the implementation of these recommendations.

Successful enforcement of chemical regulations in the EU must ensure that only compliant chemical substances, products or services are produced or placed on the EU Single Market, including from online sources and imports from third countries.

Avoid legislative overlaps

In order to have a consistent and genuine Single Market, legislative overlaps should be avoided. To give an example, the newly adopted revision of Regulation for Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Mixtures and Chemicals (CLP) mandates an increase in font size on packaging for certain products, limiting the available space for multiple languages on labels, and therefore, restricting the number of markets where products can be placed. The prohibitive cost of creating additional Stock Keeping Units (SKUs) for smaller markets may prevent companies from offering products in those regions. Additionally, CLP's increased information requirements will lead to larger labels and, in some cases, bigger packaging, conflicting with the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation's (PPWR) goals of waste prevention and reduction through the minimisation of packaging volumes.

Digital tools as enabler for a Single Market

Increased digitalisation, from online sales to increased online information, has opened up the single market for the detergents industry, with increased business opportunity and product variety.

¹ The future of European competitiveness Part A | A competitiveness strategy for Europe, pg. 30, https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/97e481fd-2dc3-412d-be4c-f152a8232961_en

² MUCH MORE THAN A MARKET, pg. 9, 120, 125, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/ny3j24sm/much-more-than-a-market-report-by-enrico-letta.pdf>

While A.I.S.E. supports the introduction of the Digital Product Passport (DPP), under the Detergents Regulation and the Eco-design for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), it is essential that the DPP requirements are coherent, consistent, and interoperable, and avoid any impediment to the EU Single Market for detergents. Reasonable timelines for implementation must be set. The introduction of a Detergents DPP should create opportunities, not market barriers.

To conclude, the Letta and Draghi reports emphasise the need to deepen the Single Market to enhance EU competitiveness. They highlight the importance of addressing market fragmentation, regulatory barriers, and ensuring resilience in crises. Our recommendations align with these reports, advocating for harmonised legislation, effective implementation and enhanced digital transformation and environmental sustainability.

A.I.S.E. remains committed to contributing to a sustainable and competitive Europe. We look forward to collaborating with the European Commission and other stakeholders to strengthen the Internal Market and support global companies and SMEs in achieving our shared goals. We believe that the recommendations provided, based on our previous experiences and collaborative efforts, will help create a more robust and resilient Single Market.

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, 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. 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.

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