

# A.I.S.E. AND THE EU PLASTIC STRATEGY

## Our activities to concretely support the EU vision

### A.I.S.E. Fact sheet • June 2019

Plastics are key in today's society and provide many benefits, such as light weight packaging for example. Yet, their recovery is still very low compared to their potential. In addition, littering and recent forms of leakage into the environment make us all - whether citizens, manufacturers or politicians - part of the problem, but also part of the solution...

In January 2018, the European Commission published its European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy; this followed the broader EU Action Plan for a circular economy released end 2015.

**This brochure provides an overview of the concrete activities that the detergents and maintenance products sector has undertaken to support this strategy, in close interaction with all stakeholders in the value chain at EU and national levels, to achieve a truly sustainable and circular use of plastics in Europe.**

#### A VISION FOR EUROPE'S NEW PLASTICS ECONOMY

*A smart, innovative and sustainable plastics industry, where design and production fully respects the needs of reuse, repair, and recycling, brings growth and jobs to Europe and helps cut EU's greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on imported fossil fuels.*

Extract from EU Commission Communication, January 2018

## Plastic packaging - a key contributor to a Circular Economy

A.I.S.E. is committed to achieving sustainable development through a circular economy. This can only be achieved when all the phases of a product lifecycle are considered, seeking continuous improvement in efficient designs and use of packaging materials, as well as education of consumers on sustainable consumption. A.I.S.E. supports the development of a strong market for secondary raw materials that will ensure the availability of high quality for such materials. To be successful, it is key that the whole value chain is engaged in the process.

A.I.S.E. contributes to a circular economy of packaging with the following initiatives :

#### Voluntary industry initiatives by A.I.S.E. on:

- Plastic packaging including targets by 2025, completed by guidance for sustainable design and regular reporting
- Charter for Sustainable Cleaning including optimal product and packaging design criteria
- Compaction of household laundry detergents
- Consumer engagement notably via on pack guidance for recycling

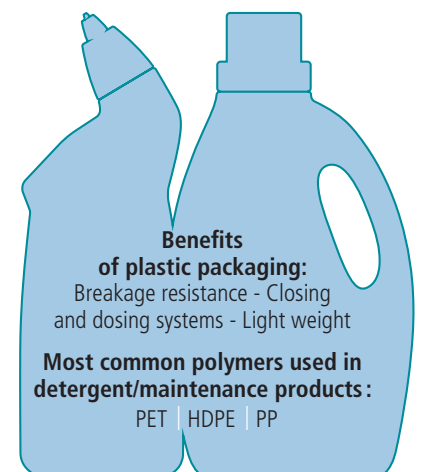
**Partnership** with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy Global Commitment

**Contributions** to notably the EU Circular Plastic Alliance on design and consumption

**Financial contributions and support** by members of our network to the various EPR schemes across the EU Member States, and close dialogue with local authorities through our National Associations

To view details on each of these initiatives as well as progress, please consult:

[www.aise.eu/packaging](http://www.aise.eu/packaging)



Packaging is key to avoid product leakage, to ensure safe use, to protect products during transport and to enable correct dosage.

#### A.I.S.E. calls on the European and National Authorities to:

1. **Promote innovation** (e.g. EPR modulated fees and economic incentives for the uptake of secondary raw materials, new technologies cooperating together to secure a shift to a circular economy)
2. **Support infrastructure and value-chain collaboration** (e.g. between manufacturing companies, collection systems, recyclers, authorities)
3. **Secure legal certainty and essential requirements** (e.g. on the concept of "recyclability") **and a truly Single Market and harmonised approach for plastics strategy and legislation**

# FOR A CIRCULAR USE OF PLASTICS ACROSS THE LIFE CYCLE: A.I.S.E. & its members lead sustainable design initiatives and science-

## Legend

- A.I.S.E. voluntary initiative
- A.I.S.E. partner
- Industry contributor
- EU policy initiative

## SOURCING



## MANUFACTURING



## PLASTIC PACKAGING

(primary, secondary, tertiary)



## PLASTIC PACKAGING

Targets by 2025 for the  
20% recycled content; all plastic packaging

**EU COMMISSION  
CIRCULAR PLASTIC ALLIANCE**

**A.I.  
GUIDE**

## CHARTER FOR SUSTAINABLE CLEANING (> 2005)



### PACKAGING DESIGN CRITERIA:

- Maximum packaging weight/dose
- All packaging to be recyclable (with 2020 update)
- KPI reporting use of packaging material

## COMPACTION

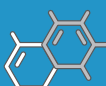
COMPACTION  
OF LAUNDRY DETERGENTS  
=  
Reduction of dose  
**-50% in 20 years**

## SINGLE USE PLASTICS



**SINGLE USE PLASTICS  
DIRECTIVE (> 2019)**

## DETERGENT INGREDIENTS



- Microplastics
- Microbeads



**WORK WITH ECHA ON DEFINITION OF MICROPLASTICS &  
CONTRIBUTION TO VARIOUS CONSULTATIONS (> 2017)**

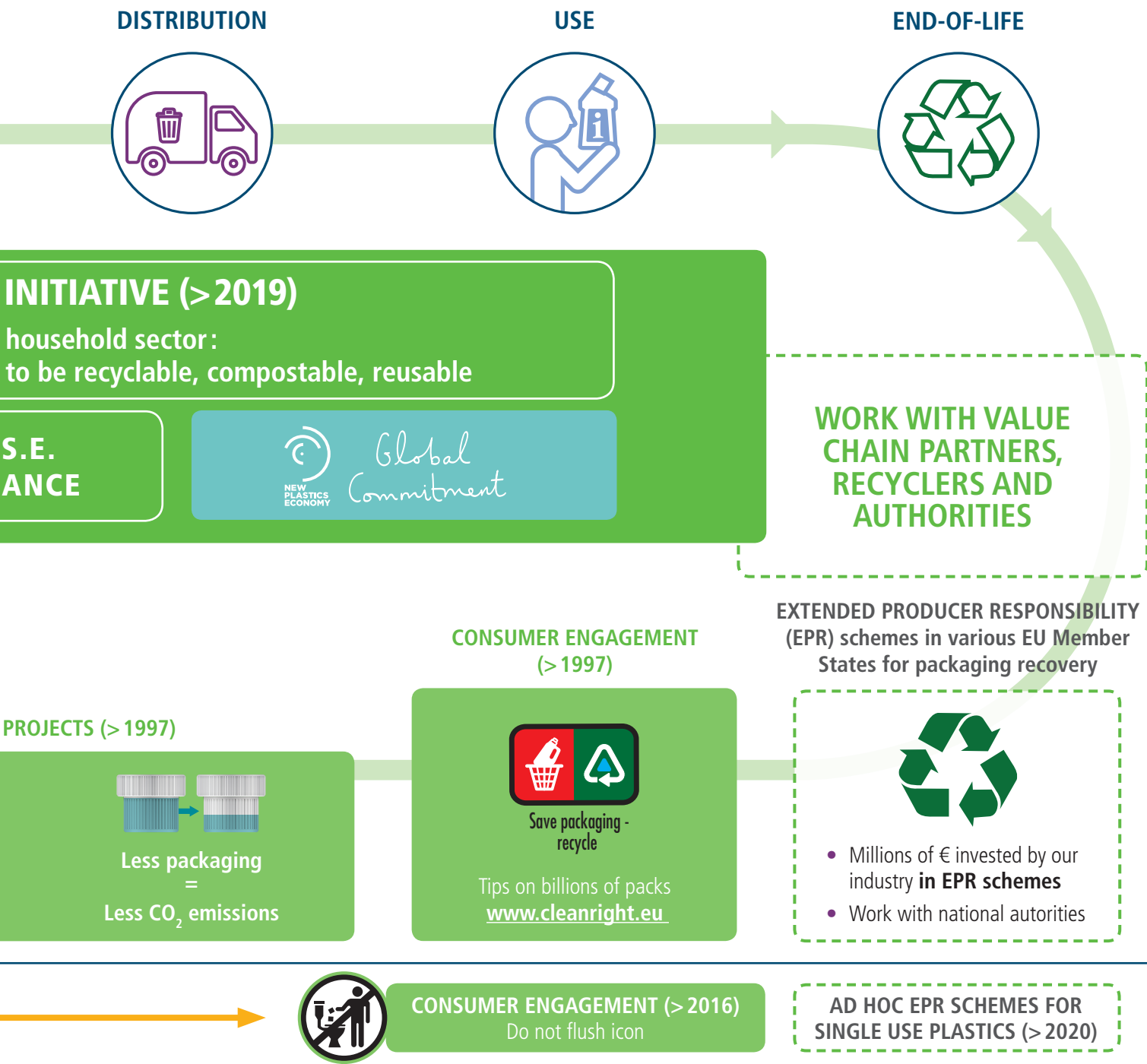
**VOLUNTARY PHASE OUT OF MICROBEADS (BY COMPANIES)**

## MICROPLASTICS RELEASE

(washing of synthetic textiles)



# based approaches with all stakeholders



A·I·S·E

**CIRFS**  
EUROPEAN MAN-MADE  
FIBRES ASSOCIATION



EUROPEAN  
OUTDOOR  
G R O U P

**EURATEX**  
THE EUROPEAN APPAREL  
AND TEXTILE CONFEDERATION

**FEI**  
Federation of the European  
Sporting Goods Industry

COALITION ON MICROPLASTIC RELEASE FROM THE WASHING OF SYNTHETIC TEXTILES (>2018)

## Single-use plastics - Engaging consumers is key



The only product category in scope of the Single-Use Plastics Directive is cleaning wet wipes intended for consumers. A.I.S.E. considers education of consumers plays a central role in addressing the littering of European beaches and ensuring these products are not flushed down the toilet or littered outside the home. To this end, various member companies already use the “Do Not Flush” symbol on packs, developed jointly with EDANA. Additional legal requirements should make sure to take on board industry’s know-how in terms of consumer education and nudging. These measures can contribute to solving the issue, but the burden on industry should be proportionate, and supported in its efforts by local, national, and European authorities.

## Microplastics - Our sector is a minor contributor but keen to act in a responsible and a proportionate way

New sources of plastic leakages in the environment – via microplastics and microbeads from various origins – are a serious issue. A.I.S.E. and the detergent and maintenance products sector have been keen to contribute to the various consultations proactively and want to act responsibly on this topic and in a proportionate way. Political discussions and science evidence are evolving at a very fast pace. A.I.S.E. shares the following position:

- Scientific evidence clearly indicates that the vast majority of microplastics present in the world’s seas and waterways derives from the breakdown of larger plastic materials, e.g. secondary microplastics from plastic bags, tyres, synthetic fibres etc.
- The detergents and maintenance products sector traditionally makes limited use of materials that could qualify as microplastics according to the new definition provided in the draft ECHA restriction. This draft definition is a very broad and we believe that it actually targets several materials going beyond the scope of microplastics prevention and pollution. A.I.S.E. is still in a phase to assess the related consequences for its sector.
- As regards microbeads, our sector has already proactively substituted them and the residual quantities are very low as alternatives have been found (cf Case study 1).
- As regards microplastic release into the aquatic environment during the washing of synthetic textiles, A.I.S.E. is a founding member of a cross industry agreement that has been acknowledged by the Commission’s EU Strategy for Plastics (see below).
- For other polymers used to deliver important functions, the industry is currently assessing the scope of the restriction and the availability of alternatives (cf Case study 2). Our sector is investigating the biodegradability profiles of such substances but further analysis and R&D activities are needed at this stage before any conclusion can be reached on potential substitution.

### Case study 1 : MICROBEADS

In the past, specific products which needed abrasive properties (e.g. for the gentle cleaning of hard and delicate surfaces such as ceramic or glass) have used intentionally added plastic microbeads.

R&D measures and availability of alternatives (such as natural ingredients e.g. silica) have allowed a significant decrease in tonnages used due to the availability of alternatives \*



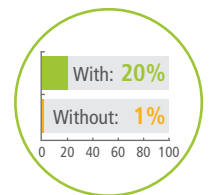
► **Industry supports the phase-out of microbeads as an abrasive by 2020 as proposed by ECHA.**

\* Source: A.I.S.E. survey 2018, with companies representing about 70-75% of the total EU A.I.S.E. market

### Case study 2: ENCAPSULATED FRAGRANCES

Fragrances are key for consumers when choosing laundry detergents. Perfume microcapsules were developed to get perfume material on fabrics in a more effective way, thereby reducing waste through the wash cycle.

- This contributes to a reduced environmental discharge of perfume material (30% less perfume) in line with the EU Commission’s strategy for the non-toxic environment and enables cost savings for consumers.
  - Only **1%** of the perfume oil added to a detergent, and 10% in fabric enhancers survive the washing, rinsing and drying process. In contrast, encapsulated perfumes are retained at much higher levels: **20%** (detergents) and 50% (fabric enhancers) is retained on fabrics when added as an encapsulated perfume.
  - Alternatives to perfume encapsulate technologies in laundry applications may result in substitutions with a larger environmental footprint (more perfume, inefficient pro-perfume carriers)
  - The use of encapsulated fragrances results in a significant reduction in washes (clothes stay fresher for longer). This helps to achieve a greater reduction in the synthetic fibres released into the environment than encapsulating polymers potentially affected by the restriction.
- **Adequate alternatives are not yet available. The potential ban of such ingredients could result in a loss of performance and an environmental burden shift; it should therefore be considered carefully or derogations should be granted.**



**Perfume oil added to a detergent that survives the wash process, with and without encapsulated fragrances**

**A.I.S.E. calls on the European and National Authorities to ensure that our sector’s contribution to the issue on microplastics is proportionate to the actual impact caused and based on a workable definition and relevant derogations, taking all parameters into account including potential environmental burden shifting threats and loss of performance.**

## Joint research on release from synthetic textiles during washing

A.I.S.E. participates since early 2018 – together with four other European industry associations - in a voluntary initiative related to secondary microplastics. This “Cross Industry Agreement” supports the need for further investigation and a better understanding for the prevention of microplastic release into the aquatic environment during the washing of synthetic textiles together with a community of researchers and scientists. It aims to find feasible solutions based on science and research, which can effectively be applied. Its three objectives are to define a test method, share knowledge and support industrial research.



**A.I.S.E. aisbl** • Boulevard du Souverain 165 • 1160 Brussels • Belgium

Phone: +32 2 679 62 60 • Fax: +32 2 679 62 66 • Email: [aise.main@aise.eu](mailto:aise.main@aise.eu) • VAT: BE 0538 183 615

[www.aise.eu](http://www.aise.eu)