

THE BETTER REGULATION & SAFE USE PROJECT (BRE&S):

Consumers' understanding of detergents and cleaning product labels

Background:

Following the introduction of the new CLP labelling requirements on household and maintenance products in June 2015, and in the context of the EU "Better Regulation Agenda", A.I.S.E. has launched a new initiative aimed at improving the effectiveness of safe use communication vis-à-vis consumers.

The first step has been to organise qualitative research among consumers to check their understanding of current labels.

Methodology

- 30 face to face interviews (1h45) in 3 countries: Belgium, Spain, and Poland
- Fair representation of buyers and users of the products
- Methodology submitted to stakeholders at 10 June 2016 workshop
- Field work in June/July 2016

Questions to be addressed

- How important is safety information for consumers?
- Is it read? Is it understood?
- Reactions when consumers are asked to focus on the back of pack?

Main consumer findings

- Safety is not the key driver when purchasing detergents and cleaning products
- Back labels are rarely checked in the stores and at home, even in case of an incident
- Consumers tend to rely on their experience and intuition when using products
- There are concerns with the current CLP labelling approach



› Consumers tend to "spontaneously" group products according to their hazard profile without even reading back labels of 3 "levels" above
(NB: brands featured here are for illustrative purpose only)

When specifically asked to focus their attention on the back labels

- CLP pictograms are not well understood and do not help to distinguish the level of hazard.
- Readability and understanding of the information (CLP icons, precautionary sentences, ingredient information) is deemed poor.
- Consumers tend to get scared, confused or... don't care.
- A.I.S.E. safe use icons are better understood and considered more useful (vs CLP ones).



Suggestions for improving labels

- Simplify the back label overall
- Provide the phone number of Poison Control Centers
- Focus on safe use advice
- Organise information campaigns
- Etc.

"when you read it, you get the impression that it's a bomb"

"honestly, that scares me"

"I'm completely lost. I don't know anymore which products are safe or not, quite confusing and even more complex to choose now between one or another product"

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