PRESERVATIVES: KEY BIOCIDAL INGREDIENTS TO PRESERVE LIQUID DETERGENTS

A call to secure their future availability

A.I.S.E. Fact sheet • December 2017

Product portfolio concerned: Water-based liquid detergents in the household care business and for professional cleaning and hygiene usages.

About 70% of the total household market (laundry detergents, laundry aids, fabric conditioners, surfaces cleaners, hand dishwashing, insecticides, air fresheners etc).

And about 30% of the professional cleaning sector

PRESERVATIVES: KEY INGREDIENTS IN A GROWING LIQUID DETERGENT MARKET

• The current market trend – in line with consumer choices – shows an increasing preference for liquid formats; those also enable compaction and sustainability savings.

In 10 years, the household liquid laundry detergent market (used here as example) has taken over sales vs powders.
(source Euromonitor - EU 28 - Retail Sales Prices)

• Water-based liquid detergents need a method of preservation; without this, they would be contaminated by micro-organisms’ proliferation.

• Preservatives are biocidal substances which play a fundamental role in tackling this point and thus:
  › have a durable shelf and storage life
  › thereby reducing product losses
  › and eventually, support sustainability by optimising use of resources.

After some time, liquid detergents with no preservatives start to degrade.
THE ISSUE:
FUTURE AVAILABILITY SERIOUSLY THREATENED UNDER BPR

• Whilst many preservatives are available, in practice, only a handful of these are actually technically compatible with detergents and maintenance product formulations.

• The detergents’ industry is concerned that authorities – in the context of the Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR) – take very conservative decisions that unnecessarily restrict (or ban) the use of preservatives.

• The downstream consequences of hazardous classification (Classification & Labelling Regulation vs Biocidal Products Regulation) drive industry into reformulation whilst some ingredients can be safely used in detergent & cleaning products.

INNOVATION CHALLENGES

• The development of new substances is a very challenging and costly process which is not in the hands of downstream users. In addition, other means to preserve products are not conceivable nor sustainable (for example storing liquid detergents in fridges throughout the supply chain and even at home).

• Finally, delivering products and/or services without preservatives may be subject to long-term innovations but:
  › would require time as well as major R&D investments – challenging for SMEs;
  › will need market acceptance and drastic habit changes… for quasi the entirety of the product portfolio;
  › will very likely lead to issues due to more severe classification of products.

A.I.S.E.’S REQUEST:

A.I.S.E. seeks to ensure that decisions taken by Authorities (ECHA, Commission, Member States) do not critically disrupt the market to the point where no safe preservatives remain available.

A.I.S.E. considers that the BPR review process should integrate both:

• the reliance of industry on specific substances;
• the societal role that these biocidal ingredients play in the delivery of cleaning products, enabling to provide a sustainable, clean and hygienic environment.