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Industry's commitment to sustainable cleaning

The UK Cleaning Products Industry (UKCPI) welcomed the support of major UK retailers for the industry's new voluntary Charter for Sustainable Cleaning.

The Charter, coordinated across the entire European Union by the European Cleaning Products Industry Association (AISE) is a voluntary initiative by cleaning product manufacturers, aiming to promote and demonstrate continual improvement in the industry's sustainability profile, at all stages in the product life cycle.

Tesco, Sainsbury's, Co-op, Marks and Spencer, Morrisons, Somerfield and Nisa have joined or are in the process of joining the Charter, giving them the right to use the Charter logo. Use of the

Charter logo on pack indicates to consumers that the manufacturer of the product has been independently verified as complying with Charter standards.

The Charter is a guarantee for consumers and professional users that the product has been manufactured by a company giving priority to further reducing environmental impact and ensuring people's safety, and to addressing other aspects of sustainability, without compromising product performance.

In addition, each year the participating companies report their performance on several key measures including CO2 emissions, water use, packaging use, biodegradability and waste.

The reporting also covers social and economic dimensions such as occupational safety and consumer information.

There are already approximately 20 regional and multinational manufacturers signed up to the scheme, covering more than half the output of cleaning products in Europe. In the UK the vast majority of products produced in both the domestic and the industrial and institutional sectors are covered by the Charter.

David Kidney MP said: "I would like to congratulate the industry for adopting such a responsible approach to the important subject of sustainable development. I am impressed with this comprehensive scheme across

Europe. I am sure it will raise standards in the sector. This initiative will, in time, help the industry to play its part in tackling climate change."

Heinz Zourek, director general of the European Commission's DG Enterprise, said: "Voluntary initiatives such as the Charter for Sustainable Cleaning are a welcome demonstration of industry adopting a pro-active attitude towards promoting sustainable development. Through concerted action in an open and transparent manner, including measuring progress across the whole sector and annual reporting, the detergents industry is providing an example of enterprise responsibility."

A spokesperson for Tesco said: "Tesco welcomes this initiative by the cleaning

industry, it is in all our interests to bring about improvements in sustainability, and we believe our customers will welcome it as well. The fact that the scheme is independently verified and aims to build a mindset focussed on continual improvement is very encouraging."

Participating companies commit to applying sustainability thinking at all phases of the life cycle, from product design, through manufacturing to use and disposal. This means companies will not only be active in reducing impacts on the environment, but also in guarding the health and well-being of customers and consumers, in operating with high ethical standards, and in contributing to economic advancement. Products manufactured by participating companies are entitled to carry the Charter Logo.

Mr Charles Laroche, president of AISE, said: "Over the years the industry has developed, implemented and overseen various initiatives designed to maintain human and environmental safety and improve environmental quality, including the Code of Good Environmental Practice, the Washright Campaign and the HERA initiative. The

Charter is part of a longstanding commitment by AISE to sustainable development and a key step in our strategy of building a sustainable mindset into everything that we do."

Dr Andy Williams, director general of the UKCPI, said: "So far, take up of the Charter scheme has been hugely positive. The producers of the vast majority of products in both the industrial and domestic sectors have already signed up to the Charter. The Charter, which offers equal support and access to all parties with an interest in cleaning products, regardless of size, builds on the main aims of European Environmental Regulatory Policies by creating a single unified pro-active strategy promoting sustainability across each of its key dimensions, economic, social and environmental. The Charter is an example of a highly competitive industry cooperating on the environment. I applaud all those cleaning product manufacturers and retailers who are committing themselves to an extensive and comprehensive set of voluntary rules for sustainable action."

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