



COUNCIL

French EU Presidency kicks-off in Paris with common vision of priorities: The French EU presidency met with the commissioners in Paris. The meeting has been positively assessed by both Macron and von der Leyen, seeing that priorities and vision for the next months are shared. Both leaders talked about strengthening the Schengen area and the sustainable green transition. They were also concerned about other major challenges as EU defence development, the Ukrainian border or key partnerships with Africa and western Balkans.

DIGITAL

2022: The turning point in EU's digital policy: The European Union's policy agenda for 2022 is full of ambitions and proposals in the digital sector. Among them, the Digital Markets Act and the Digital Services Act are the most noteworthy. Even if the DSA is currently being discussed in Brussels, the French presidency is committed to reaching an agreement in both initiatives before the French presidential elections in April.

ENERGY

EU plans to label gas and nuclear energy 'green' prompt row: The European Commission started the year with a proposal to label gas and nuclear power as green. This plan is expected to become law from 2023 onwards if supported by the majority of Member States.

The proposal brought along a debate among Member States namely, Germany and France. The German Minister Robert Habeck affirmed that Brussels' plan undermines the good label for sustainability while France pushed for the inclusion of nuclear power. Brussels has extended the consultations to Member States to the 21st of January.

BUDGET

Brussels riven by splits over proposed EU budget rule reform: The EU budget reform has brought into place a clash of opinions. On one side that of those who defend "debt is debt" in any of its forms and therefore neither green nor digital investments should be taken away from debt calculations. On the other side, that of less conservative ones, which call for investments like such to be supported, meaning that key investments for the future should be incentivised and, with the due regulations, be disregarded when assessing EU target compliance. The debate is to be continued on Monday by finance ministers.

SECURITY

With Russian guns pointed at Ukraine, West and Moscow dive into talks: Last Monday, January 10th, marked the beginning of the diplomatic talks between the US and Russian officials that will be followed by Russia-NATO talks in Brussels and an OSCE meeting in Vienna over the course of the week. Although the first round of talks with USA officials acquired a hopeful tone, the main issues remained unresolved as the two countries attempt to defuse the ongoing tensions over the Russian military build-up on the border with Ukraine.

MEMBER STATES

Government commits to regulate lobbies in the Transparency Law: The Spanish government made a positive assessment of the first half of the legislature. It pledges to approve 368 new laws over the course of 2022, which aim to guarantee economic growth and improve living conditions. Among these laws are the Labour Reform, the Housing Law and 61 others that make up a recovery plan with European funds. Referring to the former, Presidency Minister, Bolaños, stated that they will talk to every political group to promote this law and modify the 2012 law, which he qualified as unbalanced. The government also committed to include the regulation of "lobby" groups, a sector that due to the lack of regulation is negatively seen and lacks legal base. This regulation will grant transparency and accountability in decision making.

