



EUROPEAN UNION

The five political priorities of the upcoming Czech Presidency: The Czech Republic will take on the presidency of the European Council from July 1 until the end of the year. The main goal of Prague during this presidency will be to create conditions of security and prosperity in the EU, always in the framework of its core values. The upcoming presidency has adopted its priorities for the current situation, given the war in Ukraine and its overall consequences for the EU, and they are listed as follows in a document to be released later this month: war in Ukraine, energy security, defence and cybersecurity, economic resilience, and democratic values.

EU budget 2023: Empowering Europe to continue shaping a changing world: The European Commission presented an annual budget for 2023 of €185.6 billion this week, which will be complemented by the NextGenerationEU budget of €113.9 billion in grants. The budget aims to continue to boost Europe's strategic autonomy, recovery plans, sustainable transition, and job creation. The draft focuses on the current EU priorities: the recovery and resilience facility, the Common Agricultural Policy, innovation, strategic investments, health developments, security, etc... The budget was designed in the framework of the long-term budget accorded by Heads of State in 2020

Parliament activates process to change EU Treaties: The European Parliament has adopted a resolution that calls on the Council to agree on the start of the EU Treaties change process. More concretely, the MEPs call for changes in the Council's voting procedures, adapting the EU's powers in issues such as health, energy or defence, fully implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, making the EU's economy more resilient, modifying European Parliament's powers and strengthening the protection of EU core values and foundations. It is now in the hand of the Heads of State to set or not a convention on the matter.

ENVIRONMENT

Divided Parliament votes down EU carbon market reform: During this week's plenary session in Strasbourg, MEPs discussed the reform of the Carbon Market and the Emission Trading system, and in the end, the proposal was rejected. The Environment Committee in the European Parliament has been given back the proposal to attempt a new draft. There was massive controversy among MEPs from different sides, one considering it too ambitious and the others too weakened by amendments. The Environment Committee chair argued that the Ukraine situation had affected the EU's plans and compromised the need to speed up the green transition with the inability to increase burdens on companies. The issue now is to find the best possible compromise in the matter.

TECHNOLOGY

Deal on the common charger: reducing hassle for consumers and curbing e-waste: The EU Parliament and Council agreed this week that the USB Type-C would become the standard charging port for all mobile phones, tablets, and cameras in the EU. This agreement is one of the EU's efforts to make more sustainable products, reduce electronic waste, and make consumers' life more manageable. The first phase of this new regulation will concern small and medium-sized electronic devices; laptops will be required to change their charging ports 40 months after their entry into force. The proposal also requires more information to be given to the customer regarding charging devices and the option to choose whether or not to buy charging devices with the purchased products.

EMPLOYMENT

Deal reached on new rules for adequate minimum wages in the EU: Earlier this week, the EU Parliament and Council agreed on adequate minimum wages, which means that they must ensure decent living standards for European Workers. The decision will affect every EU citizen under an employment contract or relationship. The Member States must assess the their minimum wages according to their socio-economic situation, purchasing power, or productivity levels. Assessment should be made through a basket of goods and services and considering gross median and gross average wage. The text also urges countries to strengthen collective bargaining and establish an enforcement system.