#TRENDY THURSDAY

by **ARPA** EU AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS

TECHNOLOGY

European Commission bans TikTok from corporate devices

Commission's IT service has ordered employees to remove TikTok from their corporate and personal devices that use corporate apps due to data protection concerns. An email was sent to EU officials stating that the decision to uninstall the Chinese-owned social media app was aimed at protecting Commission data and systems from cybersecurity threats. Staff members have been given a deadline of 15 March to comply with the request, and non-compliance will result in corporate apps being unavailable.

EUROPEAN UNION

EU Parliament delegation 'hot mission' in Spain

The Parliament sent a delegation to Madrid to monitor the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Fund. The mission was marked by criticism from the mission chief, German MEP Monika Hohlmeier, who accused the Spanish Economy Minister of "passing the responsibility" for the success of the plan to the Spanish regions. The mission came after the European Commission approved the third tranche of the fund for Spain worth €6 billion, and if approved, brought the total subsidies received from the Next Generation EU fund by Spain to about €37 billion.

DIGITAL

Data Act: EU Council closes in on trade secrets, compensation

The Swedish presidency of the EU Council has proposed a fifth compromise text for the Data Act, which seeks to regulate how industrial data is accessed, ported, and shared. The new proposal permits organizations to reject data-sharing requests if they risk causing severe economic harm. The European Parliament will formalize its position on the Data Act by mid-March. Meanwhile, the Swedish presidency is hoping to finalize the legislation's text and gain ministerial approval before the end of its term. The Telecom Working Party of the EU Council will discuss the compromise on 28 February.

ENVIRONMENT

Green Deal Industrial Plan: securing the EU's clean tech leadership

MEPs have called for the EU to lead in clean energy technologies and improve its industrial base to achieve the goals of the Green Deal. They have demanded the scaling-up and commercialisation of strategic technologies such as solar and wind energy, and the bridging of the gap between innovation and market deployment. MEPs have also called for a future European Sovereignty Fund to avoid fragmentation caused by uncoordinated national state aid schemes and ensure an effective response to the crisis.

EUROPEAN UNION

Most EU countries fail to resolve rule-of-law issues, report finds

According to a report by the Berlin-based Liberties, most EU countries have made little effort to address rule-of-law issues, allowing existing shortcomings to persist or even exacerbating them. The report identifies a risk of an authoritarian turn in Italy and Sweden where far-right parties have been elected to governments in 2022, resulting in a sharp increase in rhetorical attacks against NGOs and the media by both of these new governments. The report concludes that the EU and its member states need to invest much more effort in peer pressure and building a strong support base for democracy.

INDUSTRY

Fertilisers: Ensuring availability, affordability and long-term autonomy

The Parliament have called the Commission to address the supply and pricing of fertilisers and to enhance the EU's autonomy in the sector. In a resolution approved on Thursday, the MEPs proposed short-term measures such as using part of the 2023 agricultural budget to assist farmers and extending the suspension of import duties. The Parliament also called for a long-term EU fertiliser strategy and a long-term EU soil nutrient strategy by June 2023, as well as greater use of fossil-free and recycled nutrients to produce fertilisers.