

#TRENDY THURSDAY

ENERGY

EU launches first round of tenders to jointly buy gas

The European Commission has launched tenders for gas sellers to link with EU buyers on the joint gas purchasing platform to help maintain the security of supply and tackle high energy prices. The platform aims to match up EU companies' gas needs with international buyers to ensure Europe has enough gas to make it through the winter, with the first tendering process open until 15 May to cover deliveries between June 2023 and May 2024. European companies have already submitted requests for a total of 11.6 billion cubic meters of gas, according to Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič.

ENVIRONMENT

MEPs push to dedicate 2024 as European Year of Food Sustainability

A group of MEPs has called on the European Commission to declare 2024 the European Year of 'Sustainable and resilient food systems' to emphasize the food sector's capacity to deal with COVID-19 and climate change. More than 70% of Europeans live in cities where over 70% of food is consumed, making inclusive, multi-level governance and integrated food policies essential to support urban-rural food systems.

ECONOMY

European Parliament divided in debate over new debt rules

EU lawmakers' views on the European Commission's proposal for new fiscal rules diverge widely along ideological and national lines, putting the Parliament's ability to make its voice heard in upcoming negotiations in doubt. The Commission proposed moving towards more individual debt reduction paths for EU member states to allow for growth-enhancing investments, while also proposing "safeguard provisions" to address German fears that the rules might not lead to an effective reduction of debt levels. The tight deadline to finalize deliberations before the end of the year puts pressure on co-legislators to come to an agreement.

ENERGY

Parliament votes on EU methane regulation, with stricter rules for imports

The European Parliament has approved a new law targeting direct methane emissions from the oil, fossil gas, and coal industries, as well as the petrochemicals sector. The law sets a binding 2030 reduction target for methane emissions in the EU and puts the onus on EU countries to establish their national reduction targets, while also introducing stricter requirements for gas infrastructure operators to detect and repair methane leaks. MEPs are also calling for the inclusion of imported fossil energy in the regulations.

DIGITAL

AI Act: a step closer to the first rules on Artificial Intelligence

MEPs have endorsed new rules for Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems in Europe, which aim to ensure a human-centric and ethical development of AI. The rules follow a risk-based approach and establish obligations for providers and users, depending on the level of risk the AI can generate. MEPs substantially amended the list to include bans on intrusive and discriminatory uses of AI systems and expanded the classification of high-risk areas to include harm to people's health, safety, fundamental rights, or the environment.

ECONOMY

State aid: Commission approves €837 million Spanish scheme to support the production of batteries for electric and connected vehicles to foster the transition to a net-zero economy

The European Commission has approved a Spanish aid scheme worth €837 million to support the production of batteries for electric and connected vehicles. The aid will take the form of direct grants and loans and will be partially funded through the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Under the scheme, companies producing batteries, their essential components, and related raw materials will be eligible to apply for aid, with the maximum amount per beneficiary ranging from €25 million to €300 million.