

# #TRENDY THURSDAY

## DIGITAL

### EU and Japan advance joint work on digital identity, semiconductors, artificial intelligence

On Tuesday, the EU and Japan reaffirmed the importance of their strategic partnership to promote their shared values and vision for a digital transformation that puts people at the centre and respects fundamental rights. They agreed on a list of new deliverables to further cooperate on core digital technologies such as AI, 5G, 6G, semiconductors, high performance computing (HPC) and quantum technology, strengthening the collaboration in data and platform economy, submarine cables, eID and cybersecurity. This partnership is another step in Europe's battle to tackle the risks of the new technological developments.

## ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

### Commission invites funding applications for clean cross-border energy projects under the Connecting Europe Facility

The Commission has launched today a new call for proposals worth €850MM to support energy infrastructure projects under the Connecting Europe Facility. This is the first funding call established under the revised Trans-European Networks for Energy Regulation (TEN-E). The revised Regulation is aligned with the European Green Deal and will help the EU to reach its ambitious climate and energy goals. Project promoters will be able to apply for EU co-financing in the form of grants. The call is open until 22 October 2024, and on 14 May the Commission will organise a virtual info day to present the call and inform stakeholders about the application and evaluation process.

## EUROPEAN UNION

### EU election campaign stresses importance of voting to protect democracy

European Parliament highlights the importance of voting and safeguarding democracy. "European Union democracy is more important today than ever. Everyone's vote matters. It will decide the direction our Union will take", says EU Parliament President Metsola. European authorities had shown their concern regarding participation in the EU Elections (aiming to improve 2019 figures of 50,6%). Latest poll developed by Eurobarometer showed an increase of 10%. The instability in the whole world highlights the importance of a common strategy for the Union regarding the next legislative period, that's why June's elections seem to become decisive for EU countries.

## ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

### Von der Leyen finally stands up for nature law – just as it may fall

EU Commission chief made a plea for her embattled bill in a letter sent to EP members, where she finally defends her own law to protect nature. Von der Leyer locates it as "the flagship proposal" of EU's biodiversity pillar. Concern grows about the fact that the law gives Brussels too much power to dictate how countries use their land. The bill's defenders argue that altering the text now would shatter valuable EU norms. After the EU elections, and with a shift towards the right becoming more possible, Nature Restoration Law defenders feel worried about the procedure to disappear from the agenda.

## HEALTH & PHARMA

### Medicinal and pharmaceutical products: Exports down in 2023

Eu's commitment to guarantee the highest possible level of availability for the general society of public health, aims to boost patient confidence in high-quality medicinal products. This vision highlights the importance of the creation of a common European Market for pharmaceuticals that will reinforce the industry's competitiveness and research capability. The most common trade impediments faced by pharmaceutical exporters are a range of burdensome and costly registration, licensing and certification procedures. The EU aims to redress these through its bilateral trade agreements or by tackling individual barriers as part of its market access partnership.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

### Commission and national consumer protection authorities starts action against 20 airlines for misleading greenwashing practices

Following an alert from the European Consumer Organisation, the Commission sent letters to 20 airlines identifying several types of potentially misleading green claims and inviting them to bring their practices in line with EU consumer law. Some common practices in aviation include the using of terms like "sustainable aviation fuels" without explaining their environmental impact, and making claims without clear commitments or verifiable monitoring systems. This is just one example of how the Green Claims directive, (tabled during this year 2024) will provide society with tools to properly understand the real impact of their actions, and eventually, increase trust on European enterprises.