

# #TRENDY THURSDAY

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### EU and China launch cross-border data flows communication mechanism

On August 27, the EU and China initiated discussions under a new Cross-Border Data Flow Communication Mechanism, established to facilitate the transfer of non-personal data for European businesses in compliance with Chinese laws. This mechanism, a result of agreements reached in 2023, aims to address European business concerns about data flow restrictions and uncertainties, particularly those stemming from China's 2022 data export security measures. The mechanism represents a significant step in EU-China cooperation on data governance, vital for sectors like finance, pharma, automotive, and ICT, with further expert-level engagement planned to assess progress.

## AGRIFOOD

### Commission proposes stricter fishing rules in the Baltic Sea, for EU rules compliance

The European Commission proposed new fishing quotas for 2025 in the Baltic Sea to address the declining fish stocks, except for herring, where increases were proposed. The proposal includes significant reductions in salmon and sprat catches, as well as mandatory reductions in cod by-catches. These measures aim to counter overfishing, a major factor behind the collapse of Baltic fish stocks. However, some scientists criticized the proposed increase in herring quotas, calling it irresponsible due to the uncertain state of stocks. The Commission also highlighted the need for stricter enforcement of EU fishing rules to prevent misreporting and overfishing, a sentiment echoed by some member states and fishing organizations. The Council of the EU will discuss the proposal in October 2024.

## EU

### A quest for a Gender-Balanced EU Executive

President Ursula von der Leyen faces challenges in her effort to form a gender-balanced EU executive, as only 7 out of 27 member states propose female candidates for the new Commission. As the deadline for European commissioner nominations approaches, von der Leyen has begun interviewing candidates to ensure her team can pass parliamentary scrutiny. Her ability to demand a more balanced gender representation is limited this time, lacking the strong support from key member states like Germany and France that she had five years ago. The EP's emphasis on gender balance and the political dynamics among EU member states could further complicate her efforts. If the new line-up fails to satisfy parliamentary requirements, the appointment of the new Commission could be delayed beyond its planned start date of November 1st.



## ENVIRONMENT

### NGOs sue Commission over 'green' targets for 2030

Several NGOs, including Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, the Global Legal Action Network (GLAN), Opportunity Green, are suing the European Commission over its environmental policies, arguing they lack sufficient scientific evidence. CAN Europe and GLAN presented a case to the EU's General Court, claiming that the EU's 2030 climate targets, which aim for a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, should be raised to 65% to align with climate science. Separately, Opportunity Green and other NGOs are challenging the Commission's decision to include aircraft and ships in the EU's sustainable finance rules, arguing that the criteria for labelling them "green" are too lenient. Both cases assert that the Commission's policies contradict environmental law and the Paris Agreement.

## AGRIFOOD

### The EU aims to adjust pesticide regulations to accelerate sustainable solutions

EU member states have until next week to submit their views to the European Commission on a proposal to establish a common definition for biocontrol products—natural solutions for pest control, such as biopesticides and biological predators. The lack of a unified definition in the EU has slowed the approval process for these sustainable alternatives to chemical pesticides, which currently takes 6-10 years, compared to just 1-3 years in the US, Brazil, and Canada. The proposed definition aims to expedite the approval process, making biocontrol products more accessible to European farmers. This move has been welcomed by industry representatives, who believe it will support the transition to more sustainable agriculture.

## HEALTH

### EU proposes to lead the distribution of mpox vaccine donations

EU Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides has proposed coordinating additional mpox vaccine and therapeutic donations to affected regions through the EU Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA). This initiative, leveraging the successful "Team Europe" approach used during the COVID-19 pandemic, will involve donations managed to the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC). While France plans to donate 100,000 doses and has established 232 vaccination sites, other EU countries like Czechia and Greece have expressed limitations in contributing due to concerns over their own vaccine supplies. Meanwhile, Bavarian Nordic reported an undisclosed European country has ordered 440,000 doses.

