

#TRENDY THURSDAY

HEALTH

EU and WHO Europe Collaborate to Address Nurse Shortages and Enhance Healthcare Workforce

The European Commission has partnered with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, committing €1.3 million from the EU4Health programme over three years to help EU Member States attract and retain nurses amid significant shortages. The initiative will focus on countries most affected by these shortages and will include creating recruitment plans, mentoring programs, workforce impact assessments and strategies to enhance nurses' wellbeing and training opportunities. This collaboration aims to strengthen the resilience of health systems and ensure high-quality care across Europe, reflecting the EU's dedication to addressing health workforce challenges.

ENERGY

Commissioner Simson's Visit to Namibia and South Africa to Strengthen Energy and Hydrogen Cooperation

Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson is visiting Namibia and South Africa to strengthen the EU's energy relations and support the development of green hydrogen and renewable energy projects. In Namibia, she will attend the Global African Hydrogen Summit, participate in discussions on Africa's energy transition, and oversee the signing of EU-funded programs aimed at advancing clean energy and hydrogen development. Simson will also visit key energy projects, including a green iron production site and the Port of Walvis Bay. In South Africa, she will meet with government officials to discuss the green hydrogen agenda, electricity grid development and collaboration on critical raw materials and electric vehicle value chains.

AGRIFOOD

Strategic Report Outlines Vision for the Future of EU Agriculture

President von der Leyen received the final report from the Strategic Dialogue on EU Agriculture, presenting key recommendations for shaping sustainable and resilient agri-food systems. The report highlights five priorities: enhancing competitiveness, promoting sustainable practices, strengthening resilience to risks, supporting generational renewal and diversity, and leveraging innovation. Developed through broad consensus among 29 stakeholders, the recommendations aim to guide EU agricultural policy during von der Leyen's next term, balancing economic, environmental, and social sustainability while fostering cooperation across the agri-food sector.

COMPETITION

Draghi's Competitiveness Report Presentation

Mario Draghi's initial presentation of his long-awaited report on Europe's competitiveness to EU officials was criticized for lacking specific policy recommendations and being "underwhelming." While outlining key challenges such as high energy prices, innovation gaps, and digitalization, Draghi did not offer concrete solutions. EU diplomats and MEPs expressed disappointment at the vagueness of his briefing, with Commission President Ursula von der Leyen indicating she had not yet seen the full report. The detailed policy proposals are expected upon the report's release next week.

DIGITAL

EU Signs First Binding International Agreement on AI Regulation

The European Commission has signed the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence (AI), marking the first legally binding international agreement on AI. Aligned with the EU AI Act, the Convention ensures that AI systems respect human rights, democracy, and the rule of law while promoting innovation and trust. It includes key provisions like risk-based assessments, transparency and restrictions on high-risk AI systems. Signed at a meeting of Council of Europe Ministers of Justice, the agreement reflects global collaboration, with input from civil society and international organizations. The Convention will be implemented through the EU AI Act and other relevant laws.

AGRIFOOD

Stable EU Agri-Food Trade

Between January and May 2024, the EU's agri-food exports increased by 2%, reaching €97.4 billion, with a steady trade surplus of €5 billion in May. The United Kingdom remained the top export destination, followed by the U.S., where demand rose by 9%, particularly for olive oil. However, exports to China fell by 10%, largely due to reduced pigmeat and dairy shipments. Imports totaled €69.6 billion, maintaining stability compared to 2023, with increases from Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria driven by higher cocoa and olive oil prices. Key import sectors like coffee, tea, and cocoa surged by 26%, while cereals and oilseeds experienced notable declines.