#TRENDY THURSDAY

by **ARPA** EU AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS

CONSUMER PROTECTION
9th International Product Safety Week Opens in Brussels

On October 14, 2024, EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders opened the 9th International Product Safety Week in Brussels. The event gathers over 700 experts from 65 countries to discuss product safety challenges and share best practices. The focus is on the upcoming EU General Product Safety Regulation, effective December 13, 2024, which addresses the impact of digitalization on product safety. Highlights include sessions on regulation enforcement, third-country importers and workshops on circularity, inclusion, technology, and innovation. The event also features an exhibition of EU Product Safety Award winners and an international safety symposium.

RESEARCH & INNOVATION
Experts Urge Increased Investment to Boost Europe's Research & Innovation Leadership

An independent group of 15 experts has presented 12 recommendations to the European Commission to enhance Horizon Europe and its successor programs. Their report, 'Align, Act, Accelerate: Research, Technology and Innovation to Boost European Competitiveness', emphasizes the need for more impactful research, innovation and technology scale-ups to increase Europe's global competitiveness and sustainability. Key proposals include aligning R&I with EU strategies, boosting industrial competitiveness, expanding funding for top talent, creating councils for industrial and societal challenges and simplifying processes. The experts call for a larger, more focused budget to position Europe as a global R&I leader.

HEALTH
Czech Proposal Aims to Incentivize Pharma Innovation and Production in Europe

The Czech Republic has proposed a plan to incentivize pharmaceutical research & manufacturing within the EU, as part of ongoing discussions on the pharma package. The proposal, to be discussed on October 21, seeks to extend regulatory data protection (RDP) for companies that conduct at least 30% of clinical trials within the EU and manufacture products locally. Companies would gain six months of extra RDP for EU-based research and an additional year for manufacturing that can meet EU-wide demand. This initiative is aimed at curbing the outsourcing of R&D and manufacturing outside the EU, particularly to the U.S., while addressing concerns over reduced RDP periods. Argument: this approach would help offset costs and improve access to innovative treatments across Europe.

HEALTH
Push for Independent European Parliament Health Committee Faces Challenges but Gains Momentum

The push for a fully independent European Parliament Health Committee with legislative powers is stalled, despite support from Polish MEP Adam Jarubas (EPP). While the Subcommittee on Public Health (SANT) is set to be upgraded in January 2025, internal disagreements within the EPP have slowed progress. Jarubas argues that a dedicated health committee is essential, as health issues are overshadowed by environmental concerns in the ENVI Committee. The final decision depends on defining the new committee's competencies and approval by the Parliament. Poland's 2025 EU Council presidency offers an opportunity to shape EU health policy, with priorities like the Pharmaceutical Strategy in focus.

ENERGY
Europe's Lithium-Ion Battery Industry Embraces Sustainable Growth and Innovation

At the 2nd Lithium-Ion Battery Europe Conference in Brussels, industry leaders highlighted the rapid evolution of Europe's lithium-ion battery sector, driven by technological advancements, sustainable energy demands and EU regulations. Key discussions focused on falling battery costs, the shift towards electric vehicles (EVs) and the importance of collaboration between the EU and China. The EU Green Deal is set to reshape industrial practices, mandating sustainability and driving innovation. Companies like Tianqi Lithium are advancing in areas like solid-state batteries, lithium recycling and enhancing battery technology, supporting the global transition to clean energy.

DIGITAL
New Cybersecurity Rules for EU's Critical Entities and Networks

On October 17, 2024, the European Commission adopted its first implementing rules under the NIS2 Directive to strengthen cybersecurity across critical digital services in the EU. These rules detail cybersecurity risk management and specify when incidents should be reported to national authorities by providers such as cloud services, data centres, online platforms and social networks. Member States are required to transpose the NIS2 Directive into national law by October 18, 2024. The directive aims to enhance cybersecurity, improve reporting and strengthen the resilience of critical sectors like health, energy and communications.