

# #TRENDY THURSDAY

## EUROPEAN UNION

### EU Budget 2025 Prioritizes Research, Health, Education & Climate Action

The European Parliament has proposed a €201 billion budget for 2025, surpassing the Commission's draft by €1.24 billion. It focuses on health, education (Erasmus+), climate action, agriculture and humanitarian aid, while also restoring €1.52 billion in cuts made by the Council. Despite rising European Recovery Instrument (EURI) repayment costs, Parliament insists on protecting essential programs by using the new "EURI cascade mechanism." Key priorities include cybersecurity, staffing for AI Act implementation and securing EU institutions in high-risk areas. The proposal now enters conciliation talks with the Council to finalize the budget.

## ENVIRONMENT

### EU Invests €380 Million in LIFE Projects to Support Green Transition

The European Commission has allocated over €380 million to 133 new projects under the LIFE Programme, contributing to the European Green Deal's environmental, climate and energy goals. This funding, which covers more than half of the €574 million total investment, aims to help the EU become climate-neutral by 2050 and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. The projects will focus on the circular economy, biodiversity restoration, climate resilience and clean energy transition. Notable initiatives include recycling battery waste, promoting water resilience in the Canary Islands and adapting agriculture to climate change. The LIFE Programme, which has funded over 6,000 projects since its inception, received increased funding for 2021-2027.

## HEALTH

### EU Health Commissioner Takes Cautious Approach on Food & Alcohol Labels

EU Health Commissioner-designate Olivér Várhelyi emphasized a cautious, comprehensive approach to addressing rising obesity and chronic diseases in Europe, downplaying immediate plans for mandatory food and alcohol labels. While acknowledging the role of food information in promoting healthier choices, Várhelyi highlighted broader measures like food reformulation and national awareness campaigns. His focus on minimizing industry burdens contrasts with earlier EU-wide proposals for front-of-pack labeling, which faced opposition from some countries. Health advocates continue to call for standardized labels like Nutri-Score to address chronic health issues.

## EUROPEAN UNION

### EU Parliament & Commission Strengthen Cooperation Through Revised Framework Agreement

The EP and Commission have agreed on new principles to enhance their cooperation, transparency and dialogue, revising the 2010 Interinstitutional Framework Agreement to ensure better coordination between the institutions. Key principles: equal treatment of Parliament and Council, stronger political accountability through regular participation of Commissioners in Parliament, improved information sharing, especially regarding budgetary matters, international agreements and urgent decision-making processes. The Commission also committed to enhancing Parliament's right of initiative and modernizing the exchange of confidential information. Technical work on these revisions will begin immediately.

## ENERGY

### EU Allocates €4.8 Billion to Net-Zero Projects Through Innovation Fund

The European Commission has awarded €4.8 billion in grants to 85 innovative net-zero projects under the 2023 Innovation Fund, focusing on clean technology manufacturing, energy-intensive industries and renewable energy. These projects, spread across 18 countries, aim to reduce emissions by 476 million tonnes of CO2 by 2030, contributing to Europe's decarbonization goals. The projects will also enhance EU clean energy infrastructure, strengthen industrial capacity and foster competition in sectors like renewable hydrogen, carbon capture and net-zero mobility. These grants align with the EU's Net-Zero Industry Act, further advancing Europe's climate neutrality targets.

## HEALTH

### Rising Drug Prices in Europe Driven by Expensive Cancer and Rare Disease Treatments

A report by the European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP) and the Medicine Evaluation Committee (MEDEV) reveals that rising drug prices, particularly for cancer and rare disease treatments, are driving up pharmaceutical spending across Europe. Countries like Germany, Spain and Belgium are experiencing higher overall drug costs, not due to increased consumption but to the escalating prices of medicines. The report warns that this trend, if unchecked, could threaten the sustainability of national healthcare systems. It advocates for balanced incentives in pharmaceutical legislation to ensure affordability and focus on unmet medical needs.