

#TRENDY THURSDAY

REGIONS

EU's REGI Committee Calls for Urgent Action midst Devastating Spanish Floods

Floods in Spanish regions have severely affected local communities, prompting a statement of solidarity from Dragoş Benea, Chair of the EP Committee Committee for Regional Development. He expressed condolences to victims' families and highlighted REGI's commitment to supporting affected citizens and local authorities. Benea urged the adoption of the Commission's RESTORE proposal for immediate recovery support, including health services, food aid and financial assistance for workers. RESTORE will also fund infrastructure restoration and enhance regional resilience against future climate threats, demonstrating the EU's proactive approach to climate-driven crises.

AGRIFOOD

Ulferdus Schilthuis Appointed Director for Sustainability at DG AGRI to Drive EU's Agricultural Sustainability Goals

The European Commission has appointed Ulferdus Gijbertus Schilthuis as the new Director for Sustainability at the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI), with a start date to be announced. With 19 years at the European Commission, including 16 in DG AGRI, he has extensive expertise in EU agricultural policy and strategic coordination. His career has focused on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), covering agricultural markets, rural development and organic production. Previously Head of the Policy Perspectives Unit in DG AGRI and an Auditor at DG SANCO (now DG Health and Food Safety), Schilthuis holds a Master's in agricultural economics from Wageningen University.

RESEARCH & INNOVATION

European Innovation Council Allocates €1.4 Billion to Propel Deep Tech & Strategic Technologies in 2025

The EIC has announced a €1.4 billion investment for 2025 to advance deep tech research and support EU start-ups, increasing nearly €200 million from 2024. This includes €300 million for the new EIC STEP Scale-up scheme, targeting investments of €10 to €30 million in strategic technologies like digital tech, clean energy and biotechnology. The programme also allocates €120 million for emerging technologies such as autonomous robotics and €250 million for early-stage companies in generative AI, agri-tech and mobility. Additionally, the EIC will expand Business Acceleration Services and issue Seals of Excellence to improve funding access. Since its launch, the EIC has supported over 630 companies and 450 research projects, reinforcing its leadership in deep tech investments in Europe.

HEALTH

ePharma Coalition Pushes for Digital Access to Medications Across Europe

A coalition of about 15 ePharma organizations, including the Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies, has launched the "Coalition for Online Ordering & Home Delivery of Medications" to advocate for standardized online access to prescription medications in the EU. They aim to influence the revision of EU pharmaceutical legislation, specifically proposing amendments to Article 172 to encourage the 19 member states without online access to change their policies. The coalition believes e-prescriptions will enhance patient adherence, improve healthcare access and bridge urban-rural gaps. They plan to engage with EU officials, though challenges remain due to member states' reluctance to move away from traditional pharmacy models post-COVID-19.

AGRIFOOD

Agriculture Commissioner Advocates for Global Partnerships & Innovation in Sustainable Farming

In a recent lecture at IPB University in Indonesia, EU Agriculture Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski stressed the importance of global cooperation and innovation in tackling food security and climate challenges through sustainable agriculture. He outlined the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms, focusing on environmental sustainability and farmer support. Wojciechowski emphasized the need for innovation, including investments in precision and carbon farming and proposed a framework for international collaboration based on solidarity, sustainable production, fair trade and multilateralism. He urged future leaders to adopt innovative approaches for resilient food systems that ensure global stability and environmental protection.

EUROPEAN UNION

Increased Engagement: 2023 Report on National Parliaments & the European Commission

The Commission's 2023 annual report on its relations with national parliaments shows increased engagement, with 402 written opinions received—up 10% from 2022. This reflects active participation in political dialogue on the European Green Deal, democracy, the 2023 work programme, and conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. The report notes 22 reasoned opinions on perceived breaches of the subsidiarity principle, down from 32 last year. It highlights 127 meetings between Commission members and national parliaments, along with innovative approaches to enhance involvement in EU policy-making, such as issuing multiple and joint opinions, emphasizing the evolving strategic potential of this dialogue.