

#TRENDY THURSDAY

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

VDL Congratulates Trump on Election Win, Reaffirms Transatlantic Partnership

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen congratulated Donald J. Trump on his election as the 47th President of the United States, expressing eagerness to collaborate on strengthening the transatlantic alliance. Highlighting the deep-rooted partnership between the EU and the U.S., which unites 800 million citizens through shared values of freedom, democracy, security and opportunity, von der Leyen emphasized the importance of the transatlantic relationship. She noted that millions of jobs and substantial trade and investment rely on this partnership's stability and dynamism, underlining a commitment to mutual economic growth and prosperity.

EUROPEAN UNION

European Parliament Holds Hearings for Commissioners-Designate

The European Parliament has begun hearings for Commissioners-designate to assess their qualifications. Each candidate gives a 15-minute statement, followed by a three-hour Q&A with MEPs. Responsible committees evaluate candidates, with recommendations made by coordinators, ideally by a two-thirds majority. If no consensus is reached, further questions or hearings may be requested. After all hearings, the Conference of Presidents will finalize evaluations by 21 November. President-elect Ursula von der Leyen will present the Commission for a parliamentary vote from 25-28 November, requiring majority approval before appointment by the European Council.

HEALTH

European Parliament Defines Powers of New Public Health Committee (SANT)

Leaders of the EU's centre-right, socialist, and liberal groups have clarified the powers of the European Parliament's new Public Health Committee (SANT), splitting responsibilities from the Environment Committee (ENVI) following recent negotiations. The agreement allocates oversight of food safety, chemicals and pesticide regulations to ENVI, with SANT taking charge of public health preparedness, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, mental health and WHO relations. The deal is part of a broader agreement involving the approval of Commissioners Hadja Lahbib and Jessika Roswall, who previously faced parliamentary concerns.

HEALTH

EPF to Launch Barometer for Patient Involvement in EU Healthcare

The European Patients' Forum (EPF) announced plans to develop a "patient involvement barometer" to standardize and strengthen patient engagement in health policy across the EU. At a recent event, it was noted that patient input remains inconsistent, with some governments reluctant to engage patient groups. The barometer will track and evaluate patient involvement, aiming to link it with access to care and better regulatory outcomes. Various organizations, including the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and OECD, stressed the value of integrating patient perspectives to improve trust, treatment relevance and healthcare outcomes, with an emphasis on meaningful engagement and best practices.

AGRIFOOD

Hansen Advances as EU Farming Chief, Emphasizes CAP and Climate Resilience

Christophe Hansen, expected to become the EU's next farming Commissioner, impressed MEPs during a parliamentary hearing with his strong commitment to agriculture and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). He addressed key issues such as Ukraine's EU accession and its agricultural impact, the CAP budget and resilience against climate-related disasters like the recent floods in Spain. While supporting the Green Deal, Hansen suggested simplifying certain regulations and voiced concerns about a carbon trading scheme for agriculture. He advocated for fair competition, more support for small farmers and a balanced approach to protein imports, opposing mandates on plant-based diets and pushing to update the EU's protein strategy to enhance food security.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

EU Investigates Temu for Potential Digital Services Act Violations

The European Commission has launched formal proceedings to examine Temu's compliance with the Digital Services Act (DSA), focusing on product safety, addictive features, transparency in recommendations and data access for researchers. Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager emphasized the investigation aims to ensure products meet EU standards and protect consumers, supporting a fair European market. If violations are confirmed, Temu could face liability under multiple DSA articles. The Commission will conduct a thorough investigation, which may lead to further regulatory measures or acceptance of remedial actions from Temu.