

# #TRENDY THURSDAY

## ENERGY

### Baltic States fully engage in EU energy market

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have fully integrated into the European continental electricity grid and successfully joined the EU internal energy market. This marks a significant milestone for the European Commission, which has been working for the past 15 years “with unprecedented political, technical and financial backing” to fully integrate the Baltic States’ electricity grids into the EU. The synchronization of their electricity networks with those of the EU enables the Baltic States to completely reduce their dependence on Russian and Belarussian energy supplies, while also allowing them to operate their energy systems under common and transparent European rules.

## HEALTH

### EU pharma package is a priority, says SANT chair

The newly elected chairman of the Public Health Committee (SANT), Polish MEP Adam Jarubas, has warned about the potential impact of increasing geopolitical instability on the EU healthcare sector due to its “excessive reliance on pharmaceutical imports”. Having long advocated for EU pharmaceutical sovereignty and resilience, Jarubas called for restoring European manufacturing in order to achieve economic competitiveness and strategic autonomy in healthcare. Most of the EU pharmaceutical products come from Asia, particularly China, a major supplier of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs).

## EUROPEAN UNION

### EU threatened with US tariffs

The recent announcement by the US administration to impose a 25 percent tariff on all steel and aluminium imports into the US has outraged EU lawmakers. Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen, in an official statement, remarked that “tariffs are taxes - bad for business, worse for consumers” and pledged to act firmly and proportionately to “safeguard EU economic interests”. The US is the EU’s largest export partner and the second-largest import partner, with a €157 billion trade surplus in goods with the US in 2023. As a result, US tariffs on steel and aluminium would severely impact European firms, costing millions of euros at a time when the EU is expanding its trade partnerships globally.

## EUROPEAN UNION

### Commission unveils its 2025 Work Programme

The European Commission adopted its first year work programme on Tuesday, which outlines the ambitions of the EU to boost competitiveness, enhance security and bolster economic resilience. Although the programme stays the course and deepens on green transition and competitiveness, it is strongly focused on simplification and includes several measures designed to ease the implementation of EU rules in many areas. After the ‘Competitiveness Compass’ having been presented two weeks ago, the 2025 Work Programme also includes the upcoming presentation of the Clean Industrial Deal, expected to be revealed on 26th this month.

## DIGITAL

### New AI programme to boost EU tech competitiveness

At the AI Action Summit in Paris, Commission President Von der Leyen announced a new EU initiative on artificial intelligence called InvestAI, which will mobilise €200 billion for investment in AI and provide a new European fund of €20 billion for AI gigafactories. This programme, a public-private partnership, aims to improve healthcare, foster innovation and boost competitiveness by developing the most advanced AI models at EU level. It marks a step forward in the Commission’s efforts to make Europe a leader in AI. Additionally, the Commission will launch later this year an ‘Apply AI’ initiative to drive industrial adoption of artificial intelligence in key sectors.

## AGRIFOOD

### Pesticides, targeted in next Farm Vision

The European Commission will publish its ‘Vision on Agriculture and Food’ next Wednesday, however, a draft of the upcoming agrifood strategy has revealed some of its measures. Overall, the draft roadmap plans to uphold stricter standards for imports from third countries, particularly regarding pesticides and animal welfare, by strengthening controls and increasing product checks on imports. It also plans to accelerate the access to biopesticides, including a fast-track procedure for their authorisation. In addition to this, the draft extends mandatory origin labelling to more agricultural and fisheries products, while advancing a ‘Work Stream on Livestock’ to address the sector’s climate footprint.