

# #TRENDY THURSDAY

## SECURITY

### ProtectEU-New approach to EU internal security

The European Commission has revealed its pledged Internal Security Strategy, aimed at strengthening the EU's security and preparedness capabilities. The ProtectEU strategy sets out an ambitious vision with a stricter legal framework and more effective responses to global challenges. This new approach will allow the tracking of the Commission's initiatives from the start in order to identify security and preparedness gaps, with regular reporting on the state of these initiatives to co-legislators. It will also promote more effective law enforcement by strengthening Europol, Frontex and ENISA, fostering more coordinated action between these agencies as well as with Member States.

## EUROPEAN UNION

### Von der Leyen: EU to counter US 20% tariff

Trump's announcement to include the European Union in a list of 60 countries subject to high trade tariffs has prompted the European Commission to take action. "We are prepared to respond. We are already finalising a first package of countermeasures in response to tariffs on steel, and we are preparing for further countermeasures, to protect our interests and our businesses if negotiations fail", remarked Commission President Von der Leyen. The European Union faces the toughest trade tariffs, as the US plans to impose a 20% tariff on all imports from the bloc, along with China, India and Japan, while many other countries will face a 10% tariff.

## BIOECONOMY

### Commission opens public dialogue on bioeconomy

The European Commission has launched a public consultation on the upcoming EU Bioeconomy Strategy. The consultation invites stakeholders to contribute their insights and help shape the strategy to strengthen circularity, durability and decarbonisation of the European economy across the entire value chain. It will also support ongoing work on the strategy and promote innovation in the sector. Additionally, stakeholders will be able to join prior discussions on economic circularity and participate in the European Green Week, which will take place on 10th April and from 3rd to 5th June, respectively. The consultation will be open in the Commission's "Have your say" portal until June 23rd.

## AUTOMOTIVE

### Big carmakers hit with €458 million in fines

BMW, Ford and Volkswagen are among the car manufacturers fined by the European Commission for engaging in 15 years of concerted practices and anti-competitive agreements related to End-of-Life Vehicle (ELV) recycling. The Commission's investigation revealed that 16 major carmakers, including the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), participated in a long-running cartel that profited by avoiding payments to car dismantlers for processing ELVs. Additionally, they allegedly failed to inform consumers about recycling practices for new cars and production processes. Mercedes-Benz, which disclosed the infringement, will receive full immunity.

## AGRIFOOD

### Commission revamps vital agrifood sector

The European Commission's agricultural chief, Christophe Hansen, has presented a proposal to amend the EU wine sector policy framework. The new regulatory plan aims to maintain the competitiveness, resilience and economic strength of the European wine sector by adapting it to current consumer preferences. Key changes include giving Member States more flexibility in planting and investment decisions, increasing EU financial assistance to up to 80% of eligible investment costs for investments aimed at climate change mitigation and promoting a more harmonised approach to wine labelling. The EU wine sector represents 60% of global wine production and 60% of the world's exported wine value.

## TECH

### New tech package for the next two years

The European Commission will mobilise €1.3 billion under the Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL) to foster strategic technologies until 2027. This new allocation aims to enhance the availability and accessibility of generative AI applications for businesses and the public sector, providing access to technical expertise and testing of latest technologies in private and public organisations across Europe. It will also boost cyber resilience and security of critical infrastructures. The DIGITAL work programme is the EU's first funding initiative entirely dedicated to bringing digital technology to businesses and citizens. Starting this month, more DIGITAL calls are expected to be released throughout 2025.