

#TRENDY THURSDAY

DIGITAL

EU strikes hard on big tech

The European Commission has fined Apple €500M and Meta €200M for violating the Digital Markets Act (DMA). The Commission has found that Apple restricted app developers from informing users about cheaper alternatives outside the App Store, while Meta's "Consent or Pay" model failed to offer users a real choice regarding personal data use. Both companies have been found non-compliant after extensive investigations. Apple must now remove its anti-steering restrictions and Meta's revised ad model is under review, but its earlier approach was ruled inadequate. These are the first non-compliance decisions under the DMA, with a 60-day deadline for correction.

AGRIFOOD

PFAS in wine: Study demands swift EU action

A recent study by Pesticide Action Network Europe has revealed alarming levels of trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) —a persistent "forever chemical"— in European wines. Testing 49 bottles from 10 EU countries, researchers observed a sharp TFA increase in wines produced since 1988, with some containing TFA levels 100 times higher than typical drinking water. TFA, a byproduct of PFAS chemicals used in pesticides and industrial applications, is linked to potential reproductive health risks and environmental threats. The study underscores the need for stricter regulations on PFAS pesticides and calls for urgent action from EU authorities to address this growing contamination issue.

ENERGY

Von der Leyen to attend global energy summit

Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen is in London for the high-stakes International Summit on the Future of Energy Security. Co-hosted by the UK government and the International Energy Agency, the event brings global leaders together to tackle mounting energy challenges —from geopolitical tensions to climate-driven disruptions. Von der Leyen is set to reaffirm the EU's push for energy resilience, engaging with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer on deepening energy cooperation. The summit promises to shape the global roadmap for a secure, sustainable and predictable energy future amid transatlantic trade tensions and an upcoming EU plan to completely eliminate Russian energy imports.

EUROPEAN UNION

Well Schengen functioning, but work remains

The 2025 Commission's State of Schengen Report shows that, while Schengen rules are generally well applied, further efforts are needed in areas such as digitalisation, operational governance and coordination. The report outlines recent achievements and developments, including the full accession of Bulgaria and Romania into the Schengen area and a continued decline in irregular border crossings since 2021. However, it also highlights the ongoing challenges in ensuring effective Schengen governance, emphasizing the need to accelerate the implementation of the digitalisation framework and to strengthen coordination between law enforcement authorities.

HEALTH

Commission stays firm on EU pharma overhaul

Despite mounting pressure from the pharmaceutical sector, the European Commission will not withdraw or revise its proposed overhaul of EU pharmaceutical rules, which aims to boost innovation while keeping prices in check. Key industry players are lobbying for stronger intellectual property protections and reduced price controls to make the EU market more competitive with the US amid growing trade tariff tensions. However, the Commission remains optimistic about reaching a positive resolution through ongoing negotiations. This reform is designed to make Europe a more attractive hub for pharmaceutical innovation and ensure access to critical medicines for citizens.

ENVIRONMENT

EU takes bold step to protect oceans

The European Commission is proposing to integrate the landmark Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement into EU law, a key step in protecting oceans, tackling environmental degradation and curbing biodiversity loss. This agreement aims to protect 30% of the ocean by 2030 and ensure fair benefit-sharing from marine genetic resources. The proposal establishes marine protected areas, mandates environmental impact assessments for international activities, and promotes transparency and public participation. With the EU set to ratify the agreement by June 2025, this initiative strengthens governance and sustainability, driving progress toward global biodiversity goals.