

#TRENDY THURSDAY

AGRI FOOD

Commission unveils CAP simplification package

The European Commission has unveiled a major simplification package for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), aiming to reduce bureaucracy and enhance farmers' competitiveness. This initiative is designed to save up to €1.58 billion annually for farmers and €210 million for national administrations. Key highlights include increased lump-sum payments for small farmers, streamlined environmental rules, and reduced controls through technology. The package also introduces faster crisis response tools, new funding options to enhance small farm competitiveness and digital solutions to simplify data management.

EUROPEAN UNION

EU moves ahead with 17th sanctions blow to Russia

The EU ambassadors have endorsed a 17th sanctions package targeting Russia, set for final approval by May 20. The measures aim to disrupt Russia's ability to circumvent oil bans by blacklisting approximately 200 vessels from its so-called shadow fleet. The package also imposes penalties on 75 individuals and entities connected to Russia's military and judiciary, and restricts 30 companies engaged in trading dual-use goods. Proposed by the European Commission, the sanctions still require ratification by the national parliaments of two Member States before taking effect. Notably, both Hungary and Slovakia, despite their usual reluctance to impose sanctions on Moscow, have agreed to the package, marking a significant show of unity.

ENERGY

EU energy-saving rules now in force

As of 9 May 2025, new EU ecodesign rules limiting the energy consumption of household appliances—when switched off or in standby mode—have officially come into effect. The rules are expected to deliver annual electricity savings of 4 TWh by 2030, cut CO2 emissions by 1.4 million tonnes and generate an estimated €530 million in yearly savings on energy bills for consumers, contributing to drive greater energy efficiency across the EU market. While households will see the direct benefits, the ripple effect extends across the energy value chain—offering both opportunities and challenges for manufacturers, suppliers, and service providers. These rules will apply to all products placed on the EU market from 9 May 2025 onward.

TECH

EU boosts digital alliances with key global partners

The EU and Japan have wrapped up their third Digital Partnership Council in Tokyo, marking a major step forward in tech and digital collaboration. The two sides have agreed to deepen their cooperation on cutting-edge technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, 5G/6G, semiconductors, high performance computing and quantum tech. This strategic alignment comes on the heels of the EU's landmark Digital Trade Agreement with Singapore, further solidifying Europe's commitment to being a global leader in the digital space amid shifting geopolitical dynamics. Looking ahead, the next Digital Partnership Council between the EU and Japan is set for 2026.

HEALTH

Mental health, at the core of Parliament's health agenda

The European Parliament's Public Health Committee (SANT) has announced that, once its forthcoming own-initiative reports on rare diseases, cardiovascular diseases, women's health, and beating cancer plans are adopted in plenary, the committee will shift its focus to mental and neurological health. Notably, the committee plans to conduct further studies on emerging issues, including adolescent mental health in the digital age and the economics of health promotion and disease prevention. "As new challenges arise, the SANT Committee will continue to update its agenda to respond to the evolving health landscape in Europe", remarked Adam Jarubas, Chair of the SANT Committee in the European Parliament.

MEDIA

Council calls for updated audiovisual rules by 2026

The Council of the European Union is calling on the European Commission to bring the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) in line with the fast-evolving digital media landscape. In preparation for the directive's 2026 review, the Council underscores the growing influence of social media, video-sharing platforms, and AI-driven content, and stresses the need for updated rules to keep pace. Key priorities include tackling disinformation, protecting minors, and promoting media pluralism. The Council stresses the importance of a safe, fair and competitive audiovisual market and reaffirms the AVMSD's role in ensuring independent and culturally diverse media.

