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THE 10 KEY SECTORS FOR THE EU TO BE SAFE FROM US GREEN "DOPING"

On Thursday 9th February 2023 in Brussels, heads of government have discussed how to respond to US and Chinese subsidies without destroying the single market in the process. The following article on the Spanish government's opinion on the topic was published by the Spanish newspaper *El Mundo*.

According to Spain, the strategic sectors that will enable the acceleration of Europe's green and digital transition and strengthen the Union's strategic autonomy are broad and diverse, thus investment should be concentrated in them, and the current Community framework for State aid should be loosened :

- Accelerating the deployment of renewable energies.
- Promote decarbonization in industrial production;
- Generate renewable hydrogen.
- Recycle critical raw materials.
- Produce electric vehicles, recharging points and batteries.
- Manufacture solar panels.
- Exploring and greening the processing of critical raw materials.
- Semiconductors.
- Innovation, infrastructure and technological development in 5G and 6G applications, artificial intelligence and data economy.
- Technological development in healthcare and agri-food industries.

Rules have changed and they are going to change a lot more. What became taboo during 30 years of the construction of the Single Market may become, at least for a few years, the norm. All European capitals are preparing for a revolution in everything that affects State aid and Competition and only those who have sufficient fiscal margin, make their case and know how to adapt will come out on top, or at least will not end up being harmed. Spain's accounts are at the limit. There is still growth, but the debt and deficit are doing a lot of damage and there is limited room to support companies that have been going through crisis after crisis, so Brussels must listen to their arguments. And this time, at least, they seem to have them quite clear.



A few days ago, the European Competition Commissioner, Margrethe Vestager, asked all the capitals what they thought should be done about the rules affecting State aid. There are very different positions among the 27. There are those, such as France and Germany, who are keen to use their fiscal muscle to strengthen companies and promote pseudo-continental giants. There are those, such as the Netherlands and the Nordic countries, who are very skeptical, as they do not believe in the formula at all and call for caution.

There is more or less agreement among the 27 that a response is needed if they are not to be left behind. If companies in the US or China produce the same thing 20% cheaper, it is clear what customers will do. Nevertheless, after three years of constant relaxations of standards, first because of the pandemic, and then because of the war in Ukraine, it is clear that the biggest and richest come out stronger and inequalities multiply.

"The prospect of persistently high natural gas prices, high volatility impeding long-term investment decisions, increasing protectionism, bottlenecks and uncertainties with respect to global supply chains of key raw materials and industrial goods, as well as massive public support and other regulatory tools in other jurisdictions, are already having a significant impact on the competitiveness of European industry," Spain feels that these tectonic movements are accelerating structural changes linked to technological, economic, and social challenges, arising from digitalization, climate action, and the emergence of new global economic superpowers.

For further information, we kindly invite you to consult the original article [here](#).

SWEDISH EU PRESIDENCY PRESENTS ITS HEALTHCARE PRIORITIES

On January 23, 2023, Swedish ministers have laid out their health policy agenda for their six months at the helm of the rotating presidency of the EU Council, from measures to combat loneliness to the realisation of European Health Data Space. This article was published by EURACTIV, an independent pan-European media network specialised in EU affairs since 1999.

“This will be a very busy six months, and the Swedish presidency is ready for what is on the agenda and to deal with the unexpected,” Swedish Social Affairs and Public Health Minister Jakob Forssmed told the European Parliament’s health committee (ENVI) on Monday (23 January).

Stockholm began its presidency on 1 January with a loaded in-tray: Overstretched healthcare systems, drug shortages, the effects of the ongoing Russian aggression in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic and a packed legislative agenda including the pharmaceutical strategy and European Health Data Space (EHDS). Sweden has underlined that a coordinated approach will be key.

“It is vital to maintain a close dialogue and cooperation at the EU level and with the European Parliament being a natural and I would say crucial partner in this,” Forssmed stressed

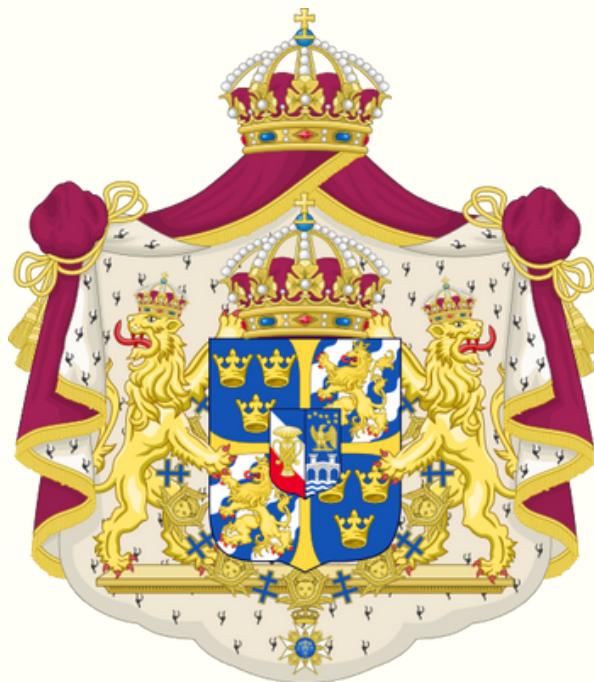
The minister added that this applies too to international negotiations when it comes to the international pandemic treaty and supplementary amendments to international health regulation.

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The healthcare priorities of the Swedish Presidency are the following:

- **Health data space** aligning the European Health Data Space with other pieces of legislation, such as the Data Act, the NIS2 Directive, the AI Act, and the proposal on national provisions on health data.
- New rules on substances of human origin (**SoHO**), which would replace the current parameters, which are over 20 years old.
- Making the **European Medical Agency's fees** more flexible to adapt to future developments and more sustainable in the long term.
- **Medical devices regulation** aiming to avoid shortages on live saving devices.
- **Pharmaceutical legislation** in order to fight drug shortages and the existence of orphan drugs.
- Preventing and fighting against **Cancer**.
- Tackling **AMR** (Antimicrobial resistance).
- **Mental health and loneliness** in order to improve public health, mental health, population's welfare, as well as social inclusion and cohesion.
- **COVID-19** for a coordinated precautionary approach.
- **Global health** to improve global health security and deliver better health for all in a changing world.



For more information about these priorities, click [here](#).

THE GREEN DEAL INDUSTRIAL PLAN

On February 1st, the Commission presented a **Green Deal Industrial Plan** to enhance the competitiveness of Europe's net-zero industry and support the fast transition to climate neutrality. The Plan aims to provide a more supportive environment for the scaling up of the EU's manufacturing capacity for the net-zero technologies and products required to meet Europe's ambitious climate targets.

The Plan builds on previous initiatives and relies on the strengths of the EU Single Market, complementing ongoing efforts under the **European Green Deal** and REPowerEU. It is based on four pillars: a predictable and simplified regulatory environment, speeding up access to finance, enhancing skills, and open trade for resilient supply chains.

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, said:

*“We have a once in a generation opportunity to show the way with speed, ambition and a sense of purpose to secure the EU's industrial lead in the fast-growing net-zero technology sector. Europe is determined to lead the clean tech revolution. For our companies and people, it means **turning skills into quality jobs and innovation into mass production**, thanks to a simpler and faster framework. Better access to finance will allow our key clean tech industries to scale up quickly.”*

The first pillar of the plan is about a simpler regulatory framework. The Commission will propose a **Net-Zero Industry Act** to identify goals for net-zero industrial capacity and provide a regulatory framework suited for its quick deployment, ensuring simplified and fast-track permitting, promoting European strategic projects, and developing standards to support the scale-up of technologies across the Single Market.



The **second pillar** of the plan will speed up investment and financing for clean tech production in Europe. Public financing, in conjunction with further progress on the European Capital Markets Union, can unlock the huge amounts of private financing required for the green transition.

The Commission will also facilitate the use of existing EU funds for financing clean tech innovation, manufacturing and deployment. It is also exploring avenues to achieve greater common financing at EU level to support investments in manufacturing of **net-zero technologies**, based on an ongoing investment needs assessment. The Commission will work with Member States in the **short term**, with a focus on REPowerEU, InvestEU and the Innovation Fund, on a bridging solution to provide fast and targeted support. For the **mid-term**, it intends to give a structural answer to the investment needs, by proposing a **European Sovereignty Fund** in the context of the review of the Multi-annual financial framework before summer 2023.

As **between 35% and 40%** of all jobs could be affected by the green transition, developing the skills needed for well-paid quality jobs will be a priority for the European Year of Skills, and the **third pillar** of the plan will focus on it.

The **fourth pillar** will be about global cooperation and making trade work for the green transition, under the principles of fair competition and open trade, building on the engagements with the EU's partners and the work of the World Trade Organization. To that end, the Commission will continue to develop the EU's network of Free Trade Agreements and other forms of cooperation with partners to support the green transition. It will also explore the creation of a Critical Raw Materials Club, to bring together raw material 'consumers' and



resource-rich countries to ensure global security of supply through a competitive and diversified industrial base, and of **Clean Tech/Net-Zero Industrial Partnerships**.

The Commission will also protect the Single Market from unfair trade in the clean tech sector and will use its instruments to ensure that foreign subsidies do not distort competition in the Single Market, also in the clean-tech sector.

For further information, click [here](#).

WHY NEW EU RULES FOR POLITICAL ADVERTISING ARE IMPORTANT

On Thursday, 9th February 2023, this article on the new rules for political advertising rules was published in the news section of the European Parliament webpage. Indeed, political advertising, offline or online, plays a key role in influencing perceptions of political systems, elected leaders and opinions, especially before elections, hence it is important to set a regulating framework.

In recent years, electoral campaigning has been transformed by digital technologies and social media that offer political actors massive reach at low cost. While this has the potential of enabling more voices to be heard, **new technologies have been misused to spread false information, fragment political debate, and manipulate voters.**

The increasing possibilities and challenges of big data play a key role. When people use social media platforms and other digital service providers, these can collect personal data. The harvested data can be used to define users' preferences, lifestyles and interests, and enable micro-targeting. Technology and data enable malicious actors to use micro-targeting to reach out to different groups, tailoring the message specifically to them. In many cases, this means targeting their fears and frustrations, often using **disinformation.**



Moreover, micro-targeting can also contribute to the creation of online echo chambers where people are exposed to only one type of information, distorting their perception of public discourse. The processing of sensitive personal data for advertising practices such as **micro-targeting** has been found to affect people's rights, including freedom of opinion; access to objective, transparent and pluralistic information; and their ability to make political decisions.

While online and offline advertising are cross-border, there is no EU-wide legislation in **this area**. Traditional rules may be ineffective, as they are often hard to enforce when applied online, where new technologies and tools create opportunities to influence and target voters.

To help create a safer, fairer digital sphere, the European Parliament adopted the **Digital Services Act (DSA)** and the **Digital Markets Act** in 2022.

In the debate before the vote, **Sandro Gozi** (Renew, France), who shepherded the proposal through Parliament, said: *"We want more transparency, we want better protection against disinformation and foreign interference, we want a true, genuine single market of political advertising."*

For further information, visit the European Parliament's newsroom [here](#).

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

The 14th of February, our President, Gaetano Stella, had a very productive meeting with the Italian Senator and rapporteur of the bill on fair compensation planned to enter into force at the end of this month, Ms. Erika Stefani. The discussion was the occasion for our President to underline the importance of this issue for the Italian Professionals and to further exchange on other concerns. The Senator was very interested by the vision and ideas of Mr. Stella as the latter insisted on the **necessity to broaden the scope of the law**, notably to the self-employed and the unconventional contracts.



You may find more information about this meeting [here](#).