



## European Parliament Committee and Political Group Meetings, Brussels Coming Week Highlights

**President's diary.** EP President Roberta Metsola will meet the Venice Commission's President Claire Bazy Malaurie, its Vice-President Michael Frenco, and Secretary Simona Granata-Menghini, as well as the President of Austria's National Council Wolfgang Sobotka, on Monday.

**Deforestation.** MEPs will try to reach a deal with the Council on the regulation for deforestation-free products. The new law would make it obligatory for companies to verify (so-called "due diligence") that goods sold in the EU have not been produced on deforested land anywhere in the world. This would guarantee to consumers that the products they buy do not contribute to deforestation and reduce the EU's contribution to climate change and biodiversity loss (Monday).

**European Year of Youth closing event.** To mark the end of the European Year of Youth 2022, a closing event will take place in Parliament. Around 700 participants, including MEPs, Commissioners, civil society and a large number of young people, will take part in thematic sessions on education and mental health, meet EU decision makers, and discuss the Year's achievements (Tuesday).

**Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children.** The Special Committee on COVID-19 is expected to debate the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of children and teenagers, school closures and remote learning conditions, the situation of disadvantaged youth and the protection of children's rights, as well as vaccination policies (Thursday).

**Batteries.** Parliament and Council negotiators will try to reach an agreement on the final shape of EU rules for the design, production and disposal of batteries. The new rules will help the EU's transition to a circular and climate-neutral economy and increase the EU's competitiveness and strategic autonomy. The draft bill includes measures to make batteries more sustainable and easier to remove as well as on waste management (Friday).

**Plenary preparations.** MEPs and political groups will prepare for the 12-15 December session, during which the 2022 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought will be awarded to the brave Ukrainian People represented by their president, elected leaders, and civil society. MEPs will also outline their expectations for the 15-16 December EU summit, debate and vote on plans to boost the deployment of renewable energy power plants, and on prospects for the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. Plenary will also discuss strategies to defend democracy from foreign interference, assess the outcome of the climate change conference COP27, and hear from Slovenia's Prime Minister Robert Golob as part of the "This is Europe" debate series.

**LUX Audience Award in 2023.** The five films that will compete for the European Audience Award in 2023 will be announced at the 35th European Film Awards ceremony in Reykjavik, Iceland. The LUX Audience award promotes the distribution of quality European cinema that addresses the values that the EU is built on - human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, inclusion, tolerance, justice, solidarity (Saturday).

Link to all committee meetings [here](#)



## European Commission

### Coming Week Highlights

<b>Wednesday</b>	College meeting
<b>Thursday</b>	Commissioner Mairead McGuinness in Dublin, (8-9/12): meets with Ms Helen Dixon, Data Protection Commissioner for Ireland.
<b>Friday</b>	Commissioner Mairead McGuinness in Dublin, meets with Ms Jane Howard, CEO of Ulster Bank Ireland DAC.
<b>Saturday</b>	President Ursula von der Leyen accepts the European Sustainability Award – Prix Film4Climate in the context of the 35th European Film Awards, via videoconference, on behalf of the European Commission.

## European Council and Council of the European Union

### Coming Week Highlights

<b>5 December</b>	<a href="#">Eurogroup</a>
<b>5 December</b>	<a href="#">Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Transport)</a>
<b>6 December</b>	<a href="#">EU-Western Balkans summit in Tirana</a>
<b>6 December</b>	<a href="#">Economic and Financial Affairs Council</a>
<b>6 December</b>	<a href="#">Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (Telecommunications)</a>
<b>8 December</b>	<a href="#">Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Employment and social policy)</a>
<b>8 December</b>	<a href="#">Justice and Home Affairs Council, 8-9 December 2022</a>
<b>9 December</b>	<a href="#">Justice and Home Affairs Council, 8-9 December 2022</a>
<b>9 December</b>	<a href="#">Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (Health)</a>
<b>11 - 12 December</b>	<a href="#">Agriculture and Fisheries Council</a>



## Highlights 28 November to 4 December 2022

### European Parliament.

### Highlights Week 28 November to 4 December

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#### EU rules to better protect online shoppers and vulnerable consumers

On Monday night, negotiators from Parliament and Council reached a provisional political agreement to update the EU's rules on product safety of non-food consumer products. The new regulation on General Product Safety (GPSR) aims to address product safety challenges in online shopping (in 2021, 73% consumers bought products online).

##### Background

In June 2021, the Commission presented its proposal to update the 2001 General Product Safety Directive to address challenges linked to new technologies and online sales.

The new rules are projected to save EU consumers around 1 billion euro in the first year and approximately 5.5 billion over the next decade. By reducing the number of unsafe products on the market, the new measures should reduce the harm caused to EU consumers due to preventable, product-related accidents (estimated today at 11.5 billion euro per year) and cost of healthcare (estimated at 6.7 billion euro per year).

##### Next steps

Parliament (in March 2023) and Council need to endorse the agreement, before its publication in the EU Official Journal and entry into force. The GPSR would apply 18 months after its entry into force.

Link to EP report [here](#)

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#### Common position on GSP

Rapporteur on the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Heidi Hautala (Greens/EFA, FI) issued the following statement on Wednesday after Council's failure to agree on its negotiating position.

##### Extract:

"Today's failure of the Council to find agreement on the review of the Regulation on a Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) means a worrying prospect for millions of people in the global south who look to the EU for support in promoting trade, human rights and sustainable development. The credibility of the EU in trade and development is now at stake.

##### Background


The European Parliament has been waiting for the Council to launch negotiations about the final shape of the new GSP legislation since May when it adopted its own position.

In place since 1971, the EU GSP covers more than 60 countries and two billion people. The new regulation is set to be in effect between 2024 and 2033.

Link to EP Report [here](#)

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#### Waste shipments:



On Thursday, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) adopted a report on the reform of EU procedures and control measures on waste shipments, on Thursday with 76 votes in favour, none against and five abstentions.

### **Next steps**

The report is scheduled to be adopted during the January plenary sitting and will constitute Parliament's negotiating position with EU governments on the final shape of the legislation.

### **Background**

On 17 November 2021, the Commission tabled a proposal to reform the EU rules on waste shipments, laying down procedures and control measures for the shipment of waste, depending on its origin, destination and transport route, the type of waste shipped and the type of waste treatment applied when it reaches its destination.

In 2020, EU exports of waste to non-EU countries reached 32.7 million tonnes, representing about 16% of global trade in waste. In addition, around 67 million tonnes of waste are shipped between EU countries every year.

Link to EP Report [here](#)

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## **Voting in European Elections**

MEPs adopted a series of proposals to reinforce the right of mobile EU citizens to vote and stand in European elections in the EU country in which they reside.

The Constitutional Affairs Committee adopted its draft proposals to make European elections "more accessible, more competitive, and more European" with 18 votes for, 4 against, and 0 abstentions.

### **Next steps**

This report is set to be tabled at the December plenary session in Strasbourg to finalise the process on time for the 2024 European elections. Article 22 TFEU sets out a special legislative procedure for these rules: unanimity-based vote in the Council, after a consultation with the Parliament.

Link to EP Report [here](#)

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## **European Commission.**

### **Highlights Week 28 November to 4 December.**


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### **State Aid**

**Evaluation of State aid rules.** The Commission has published a [Staff Working Document](#) summarising the results of the evaluation of the EU State aid rules for services of general economic interest ('SGEI') applicable to health and social services, and to small amounts of aid. The evaluation concludes that, overall, the existing rules are fit for purpose. However, some adjustments may be needed to clarify and further simplify the existing rules to reduce red tape.

**Germany.** The European Commission has found a €557 million German support measure in favour of [Deutsche Bahn](#) to be in line with EU State aid rules. The measure, which will take the form of an equity injection, aims at compensating Deutsche Bahn for the damage suffered by its subsidiary DB Fernverkehr between 1 November 2020 and 16 May 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic and the restrictive measures in place.

**Slovakia.** The European Commission has approved a €600 million [Slovak scheme](#) to support companies facing increased energy costs in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine. The scheme was approved under



the State aid Temporary Crisis Framework, adopted by the Commission on 23 March 2022.

**France.** The European Commission has approved a €1 billion [French scheme](#) to support companies in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine. The scheme was approved under the State aid Temporary Crisis Framework. The Commission has also approved, under EU State aid rules, a [French scheme](#) to partially compensate energy-intensive companies for higher electricity prices resulting from indirect emission costs under the EU Emission Trading System ('ETS').

**Lithuania.** The European Commission has opened an in-depth investigation to assess whether the compensation granted by [Lithuania](#) to Litgas UAB ('Litgas') for supplying a mandatory quantity of liquefied natural gas ('LNG') to the LNG terminal in Klaipėda between 2016 and 2018 is in line with EU State aid rules.

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## **Drone Strategy 2.0: Creating a large-scale European drone market**

The European Drone Strategy 2.0, adopted on Tuesday by the Commission, sets out a vision for the further development of the European drone market. It builds on the EU's safety framework for operating and setting the technical requirements of drones, which is the world's most advanced. The new Strategy lays out how Europe can pursue large-scale commercial drone operations while offering new opportunities in the sector.

Link to Commission report [here](#)

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## **Intellectual property: New rules will make industrial designs quicker, cheaper and more predictable**

The Commission is presenting revised rules that will make it cheaper, quicker and more predictable to protect industrial designs across the EU. The revised rules will help to further improve the conditions for businesses to innovate. At the same time, the rules also introduce a more balanced approach to design protection. This ensures that designs can be reproduced for spare parts, allowing consumers more choice in repairing complex products such as cars in particular.

Link to Commission report [here](#)

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## **Non-transposition of EU legislation:**

The Commission is adopting a package of infringement decisions due to the absence of communication by Member States of measures taken to transpose EU directives into national law (referred to as 'non-communication infringements'). The Commission is sending a letter of formal notice to those Member States who have failed to notify national measures transposing directives, whose transposition deadline expired recently. In this case, there are 15 Member States who have not yet notified full transposition measures for 14 EU directives in the fields of environment and transport. Member States concerned now have two months to reply to the letters of formal notice and complete their transposition, or the Commission may decide to issue a reasoned opinion.

Ireland is mentioned in the context of Road Safety: updated requirements for technical roadside inspections


Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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## **e-Evidence: Commission welcomes political agreement to strengthen cross-border access for criminal investigations**

The European Commission welcomes the provisional political agreement reached today by the European Parliament and the Council on the new rules for sharing of e-evidence across the EU. This agreement will lead to the formal adoption of a Directive and a Regulation to govern these provisions, following the Commission's proposal. Currently, the Member States' authorities must rely on lengthy judicial cooperation procedures to





obtain electronic evidence, with the related risks of the sought data being moved or deleted, or on procedures of voluntary cooperation with service providers involving a lack of reliability, transparency, accountability and legal certainty. The new rules will provide national authorities with a reliable channel to obtain e-evidence, while establishing strong safeguards to ensure a high level of protection of the rights of the persons affected.

### **Next steps**

The European Parliament and the Council will need to formally adopt the political agreement.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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### **Putting an end to wasteful packaging, boosting reuse and recycling**

The Commission is proposing new EU-wide rules on packaging, to tackle this constantly growing source of waste and of consumer frustration. On average, each European generates almost 180 kg of packaging waste per year. Packaging is one of the main users of virgin materials as 40% of plastics and 50% of paper used in the EU is destined for packaging. Without action, the EU would see a further 19% increase in packaging waste by 2030, and for plastic packaging waste even a 46% increase.

The new rules aim to stop this trend. For consumers, they will ensure reusable packaging options, get rid of unnecessary packaging, limit overpackaging, and provide clear labels to support correct recycling. For the industry, they will create new business opportunities, especially for smaller companies, decrease the need for virgin materials, boosting Europe's recycling capacity as well as making Europe less dependent on primary resources and external suppliers. They will put the packaging sector on track for climate neutrality by 2050.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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### **European Health Union:**

On Wednesday, the Commission published its first State of Health Preparedness Report. The Report highlights the progress made in the fields of preparedness and response since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing in particular on medical counter measures.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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### **Commission finds that Hungary has not progressed enough in its reforms and must meet essential milestones for its Recovery and Resilience funds**

The Commission has presented an assessment under the conditionality procedure to Hungary.

The Commission finds that, notwithstanding steps taken, there is still a continued risk to the EU budget given that the remedial measures that still need to be fulfilled are of a structural and horizontal nature.

While a number of reforms have been undertaken or are underway, Hungary failed to adequately implement central aspects of the necessary 17 remedial measures agreed under the general conditionality mechanism by the deadline of 19 November, as it had committed to. These relate, in particular, to the effectiveness of the newly established Integrity Authority and the procedure for the judicial review of prosecutorial decisions.

The Commission has concluded that the conditions for the application of the regulation remain and that further essential steps will be needed to eliminate remaining risks for the EU budget in Hungary. As a result, the Commission has decided to maintain its initial proposal of 18 September to suspend 65% of the commitments for three operational programmes under cohesion policy, amounting to €7.5 billion. The Commission equally maintains its proposal that no legal commitments may be entered into with any public interest trust.

The Council will now have until 19 December to vote on the matter, requiring a qualified majority for the suspension of funds to enter into force.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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## **Ukraine: Commission presents options to make sure that Russia pays for its crimes**

The Commission has presented different options to Member States to make sure that Russia is held accountable for the atrocities and crimes committed during the war in Ukraine. The Commission is proposing to create a new structure to manage frozen and immobilised public Russian assets, invest them and use the proceeds for Ukraine. The Commission, while continuing to support the work of the International Criminal Court, is ready to work with the international community on setting up an ad hoc international tribunal or a specialised 'hybrid' tribunal to investigate and prosecute Russia's crime of aggression.

### **Next Steps**

The options will now be presented by the Commission to the Member States for discussions and to decide on the next steps.

Link to Commission statement [here](#)

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## **Address by President von der Leyen to the Joint Houses of the Oireachtas**

Link to President's address [here](#)

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## **Speech by President von der Leyen at the Peter Sutherland Leadership Award**

Link to President's address [here](#)

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## **European Council and Council of the European Union Highlights Week 28 November to 4 December.**

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### **Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council, 28-29 November**

The Council adopted a recommendation on pathways to school success.

Ministers also approved conclusions on supporting well-being in digital education.

**European Year of Youth:** Ministers assessed the implementation of this European Year and discussed how to ensure its legacy beyond 2022. A special focus of the exchange was on how to make the youth dimension an integral part of all the EU's policies and policy making.

Link to Council report [here](#)

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### **Foreign Affairs Council (Development), 28 November**

Development ministers discussed the follow-up to the EU-African Union Summit, which took place in Brussels last February. Ministers also addressed issues of global interest, including the impact of the Russian aggression on Ukraine on the global food insecurity situation and energy prices.

Link to Council report [here](#)

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### **Competitiveness Council (Internal market and industry), 1 December**



Ministers unanimously adopted a negotiating position ('general approach') on the regulation establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's semiconductor ecosystem, better known as the 'Chips Act'.

### **Corporate sustainability due diligence**

Ministers adopted a negotiating position ('general approach') on the corporate sustainability due diligence directive. This directive will enhance the protection of the environment and human rights in the EU and beyond.

Ministers unanimously adopted a Council position ('general approach') on the regulation on geographical indication (GI) protection for craft and industrial products.

The Council adopted conclusions setting out a European agenda for Tourism 2030.

Link to Council report [here](#)

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## **European Court of Auditors Highlights Week 28 November to 4 December**

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### **Annual report assessing any contingent liabilities arising as a result of the performance by the Single Resolution Board, the Council or the Commission of their tasks under the Single Resolution Mechanism Regulation for the financial year 2021.**

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) has published the [specific annual report assessing any contingent liabilities arising as a result of the performance by the Single Resolution Board, the Council or the Commission of their tasks under the Single Resolution Mechanism Regulation for the financial year 2021](#).

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### **"European statistics: Potential to further improve quality".**

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) has published special report 26/2022 ["European statistics: Potential to further improve quality"](#).

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## Interparliamentary Meetings with National Parliaments Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union Second Semester

Date	Meeting	Presidency, EP Committee	Location
8 December	Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the gender mainstreaming	FEMM	EP Brussels
6 February 2023	Meeting of the Secretaries General of the European Union Parliaments (EUSG)	Prague (Senate in charge)	Prague
April– 24 and 25 2023	Conference of the Speakers of European Union Parliaments (EUSC)	Prague (Senate in charge)	Prague

**Sources:** Websites of: European Parliament European Commission, European Council and Council of the European Union Council, European Court of Auditors and European Ombudsman.