

21 - 25 October 2024

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I. Political and Policy Developments

1. Commission publishes written answers to MEPs ahead of hearings

The European Commission has [published](#) responses from Commissioners-designate to MEPs' questions before their confirmation hearings, which will take place from 4 to 12 November. The responses provide an overview of some of the policy initiatives the new Commission will work on.

Industrial Policy

- **Clean Industrial Deal**, to support industry in accelerating decarbonisation and innovation.
- **New State Aid Framework**, to facilitate the creation of European champions and the achievement of industrial policy objectives.
- **Industry Decarbonisation Accelerator**, to support and scale up European cleantech.

Tech

- **Biotech Act**, to position EU biotech as a global leader.
- **Cloud & AI Development Act**, to drive innovation and cut red tape.
- **Single EU Cloud Policy**, to unify cloud policy for public sectors.

Energy

- **Strategic Roadmap for Digitalization and AI**, to accelerate the digitalisation of the energy system.
- **Social Climate Fund**, to support vulnerable households, particularly regarding energy poverty.
- **Support for nuclear power**, to boost EU decarbonisation efforts.

Environment / Climate

- **2040 Climate Target**, to drive emissions reduction efforts.
- **Circular Economy Act**, to strengthen the economics of the circular transition.
- **Bioeconomy Strategy**, to scale sustainable biomaterials production.

Agriculture

- **Commission Vision for Agriculture**, outlining a vision to enhance long-term competitiveness, sustainability, profitability, and attractiveness of the sector.
- **Future CAP**, aiming to reduce red tape, better reward farmers for environmental services, and accommodate an enlarged Union.

Chemicals

- **Chemical Industry Package**, to stimulate investments and support sustainability efforts from industry.
- **REACH Revision**, to streamline the regulatory framework, including by overhauling the dual system of authorizations and restrictions, and improving information requirements.
- **PFAS Restriction**, to ban PFAS in consumer products like cosmetics, food packaging, and outdoor clothing, while allowing industrial use under strict conditions where no alternatives exist.

Health

- **Tobacco**, updating the Tobacco Product Directive to focus on “emerging tobacco products” and implement the Recommendation on Smoke and Aerosol-Free Environments.
- **Food Labelling**, improving front-of-pack labelling for healthier choices.

Trade

- **Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships**, strengthening the link between trade and climate / energy policy.

The European Parliament will allocate questioning time by political group size, with the centre-right European People's Party (EPP) getting the most time. Nominees will be evaluated in a closed-door session within an hour after the hearing, where committee coordinators can approve the commissioner, request further written questions, or arrange a new hearing.

2. 'Venezuela majority' gaining ground in European Parliament

The EPP is increasingly aligning with far-right groups such as the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), Patriots for Europe (PfE), and Europe of Sovereign Nations (ESN) to advance its political agenda.

Ahead of the hearings, the EPP leadership has been shielding ECR commissioner-designate Raffaele Fitto from centre-left MEP criticism, despite his ties with Poland's Law and Justice party (PiS), staunch rivals of prominent EPP figure Donald Tusk. It has also broken away from its traditional centrist allies to back far-right amendments for EU funding on border infrastructure. The EPP-ECR-PfE-ESN majority also played a role in scheduling the commissioners-designate hearings, and pushed a [resolution on Venezuela](#) - Brussels insiders have started labelling the right-wing majority as a 'Venezuela majority'.

3. New cooperation deal between Commission and European Parliament

The European Commission and the European Parliament have reached a new [agreement](#) to strengthen their relations and promote greater transparency and dialogue. The deal introduces nine principles that will underpin a revised version of the 2010 Inter Institutional Framework Agreement, focussing on equal treatment between Parliament and the Council of the EU, timely information sharing with Parliament, and reinforcing the Parliament’s right of initiative.

The agreement has sparked concerns within the Council, with ambassadors warning against disrupting the balance of powers set by EU treaties.

II. Key institutional milestones

Date	Event
4 - 12 November	European Commissioners-designate hearings
25 - 28 November (exp.)	European Parliament vote on the new Commission
1 December (exp.)	New European Commission takes office
1 December	New European Council President takes office