

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS

Research digest for committees

FEBRUARY 2026



Dear Reader,

There are over 6000 so-called 'rare diseases' that affect a combined 36 million patients across Europe. These conditions place a heavy social and economic burden on patients, families, and health systems. EU cooperation is crucial to address the needs of this very dispersed patient group and improve the timeliness of diagnoses, the availability of treatment options, and the access to specialised care. The persisting gaps show the urgent need for more coordinated action, leaving no-one behind. The European Parliament has led calls for a harmonised European Rare Disease Action Plan to improve access to care, data sharing, and support for research and innovation. As Chair of the SANT Committee, I would like to thank DG ECTI's Policy Department for providing this report, which offers concrete policy recommendations to support the work on our upcoming own-initiative report.



Adam JARUBAS,
Chair of the Committee on Public Health

In-depth analysis of the results of the European Parliament's public consultation on rare diseases

SANT Policy Department for Transformation, Innovation and Health

This paper presents the findings of the public consultation on rare diseases conducted by the European Parliament in March 2025. Contributions from a wide range of participants, including patients and families, patient support groups, healthcare professionals, interest groups, international organisations, government and other public bodies, aim to guide future policy actions in the field of rare diseases.

[Read more](#)



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ECONOMY, TRANSFORMATION AND INDUSTRY (DG ECTI)

ECB task force on banking simplification – reviewing the recommendations

ECON Economic Governance and EMU Scrutiny

This EGOV briefing reviews the recommendations of the ECB High-Level Task Force on the simplification of banking regulation, supervision and reporting.

[Read more](#)



Risks and opportunities in evolving EU-US economic and financial relations

ECON Economic Governance and EMU Scrutiny

This EGOV briefing presents the main takeaways of three external studies requested by the ECON Committee to better understand the evolving EU-US macroeconomic dynamics.

[Read more](#)



Overview of the diffusion of Power-purchase-agreements and Contracts-for-difference across Member States

ITRE Policy Department for Transformation, Innovation and Health

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the adoption, design, and impact of Power Purchase Agreements and Contracts for Difference across the EU. It assesses current trends, market effects, and policy frameworks, and proposes actionable recommendations to resolve barriers to wider uptake.

[Read more](#)



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR COHESION, AGRICULTURE AND SOCIAL POLICIES (DG CASP)



The Use of Cohesion Policy in Disaster Response and Recovery

REGI Policy Department for Regional Development, Agriculture and Fisheries

This study assesses the role of EU policy instruments, including Cohesion Policy, to strengthening climate change resilience and to meeting disaster-relief and reconstruction needs. Recommendations are provided on how Cohesion Policy can be improved to support EU regions in responding to disasters.

[Read more](#)



Improving Essential Services in the EU regions: The role of Cohesion policy

REGI Policy Department for Regional Development, Agriculture and Fisheries

This study analyses the role of EU instruments, in particular Cohesion Policy in supporting the quality of essential services in remote, rural and depopulated areas. The study focuses on essential services tied to the provision of healthcare, childcare and services to people.

[Read more](#)



Assessing the impact of seafood imports on EU self-sufficiency

PECH Policy Department for Regional Development, Agriculture and Fisheries

This study examines the competitiveness gap experienced by the EU's seafood sector. Due to high input costs and low productivity, over 80% of the EU's seafood consumption is supplied by imports. The policy recommendations set out ways to make the seafood system more self-sufficient and resilient.

[Read more](#)



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR CITIZENS' RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND INSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (DG IUST)

The 1980 Hague Convention: the main differences and the added value of the Brussels IIb Regulation and the interplay with the 1996 Hague Convention

JURI Policy Department for Justice, Civil Liberties and Institutional Affairs

This study examines the added value that the Brussels IIb Regulation and the 1996 Hague Convention. This enhanced framework enables 26 EU Member States to ensure the prompt return of abducted children. The study calls for continued joint efforts at both European and international level.

[Read more](#)



Gender pay and pension gaps and new ways of working on women's mental health

FEMM Policy Department for Citizens, Equality and Culture

Executive summaries: DE, EN, ES, FR, IT, PL of study which examines how labour market inequalities, particularly gender pay and pension gaps and the rise of new forms of work, affect women's mental health.

[Read more](#)



UNCRPD Concluding Observations to EU report in view of petitions received

PETI Policy Department for Citizens, Equality and Culture

This briefing focuses on three distinct CRPD articles: accessibility, education and employment. The petitions highlight patterns of exclusion in multiple contexts.

[Read more](#)



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR BUDGETARY AFFAIRS (DG BUDG)



Transparency and oversight in the Commission's MFF proposals on a performance-based EU budget: lessons learned from the RRF

CONT Budgetary Support Unit

This briefing assesses the RRF's legal framework, confidentiality, and "financing not linked to costs" model, finding that it granted the Commission and Member States wide discretion, allowing large sums to fund national projects with limited EU-level relevance and weak scrutiny.

[Read more](#)



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES OF THE UNION (DG EXPO)



European Defence Projects of Common Interest

SEDE External Policies Analysis and Support Unit

European Defence Projects of Common Interest (EDPCIs) mark a decisive step in strengthening the EU's crisis response, competitiveness and strategic autonomy. They aim to overcome fragmented national defence efforts through joint development, production and procurement, strengthening EU governance.

[Read more](#)



EU trade in dual-use items with conflict-affected regions

INTA External Policies Analysis and Support Unit

This study finds that EU dual-use export controls lack transparency and effective oversight in conflict-affected regions. While Regulation 2021/821 covers listed items, gaps remain for non-listed goods. The study calls for better reporting, tighter licensing, and a more proactive risk-based approach.

[Read more](#)



UPCOMING PUBLICATIONS

DG ECTI

Recovery and Resilience Dialogue with the European Commission / 9 February 2026

ECON **BUDG** Economic Governance and EMU Scrutiny Unit

Impacts of the 2028-2034 MFF proposals on the climate and the environment – Assessment of the Commission proposals / February 2026

ENVI Policy Department for Transformation, Innovation and Health

A Digital Omnibus: Identifying interlinks and possible overlaps between different legal acts in the field of digital legislation to streamline tech rules / February 2026

IMCO Policy Department for Economy and Growth

DG CASP

Generational change in agriculture: comparative analysis of businesses run by young farmers in selected EU countries / February 2026

AGRI Policy Department for Regional Development, Agriculture and Fisheries

Support measures for farmers' income in different Member States in the context of inflation and rising production costs / February 2026

AGRI Policy Department for Regional Development, Agriculture and Fisheries

DG IUST

EU funding instruments for policy fields under the remit of the CULT committee / February 2026

CULT Policy Department for Citizens, Equality and Culture

DG BUDG

Natural disasters (2) Assessment of the adequacy of the post-2027 MFF proposals / February 2026

BUDG Budgetary Support Unit

DG EXPO

The impact of the energy transition on the rights of indigenous people and local communities / March 2026

DEVE External Policies Analysis and Support Unit

UPCOMING EVENTS

DG ECTI

Presentation: Feasibility of a 28th tax regime and its potential to support EU competitiveness

FISC Policy Department for Economy and Growth

Date: **16 April 2026** Time: **9:00 - 12:30**

Study presentation: Overview of the diffusion of Power Purchase Agreements and Contracts for Difference across Member States

ITRE Policy Department for Transformation, Innovation and Health

Date: **25 February 2026**

DG CASP

Study presentation: Support measures for farmers' income in different Member States in the context of inflation and rising production costs

AGRI Policy Department for Regional Development, Agriculture and Fisheries

Date: **24 February 2026**

Study presentation: Assessing the impact of seafood imports on EU self-sufficiency

PECH Policy Department for Regional Development, Agriculture and Fisheries

Date: **25 February 2026**

DG EXPO

Workshop: Human Rights and Democracy in the EU's Global Europe Instrument

DROI External Policies Analysis and Support Unit

SUPPORTING ANALYSES

[Supporting Analyses](#) are the research papers from policy departments and support units that provide high-level independent expertise, analysis and policy advice in all areas of activity of the European Parliament.



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