



An Roinn Fiontar,  
Trádála agus Fostaíochta  
Department of Enterprise,  
Trade and Employment

# Report of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to the Oireachtas

Under Section 2 (5) of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act  
2002

for the period from July to December 2021

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
<b>Part I – Developments in the EU .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Competitiveness Council .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.1. Meetings of the Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry).....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.1.1 Informal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) - Ljubljana, 22 July 2021 .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.1.2 Formal Competitiveness Council – Brussels 29 September 2021.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.1.3 Formal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) - Brussels, 25 November 2021.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.2. Meetings of the Competitiveness Council (Space) .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.2.1. Competitiveness Council (Space) Brussels – 26 November 2021.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Foreign Affairs Council (Trade).....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1. Meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council (Trade).....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1.1. EU Trade Council - Brussels, 11 November 2021 .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3. Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO).....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.1. Meetings of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.1.1. Informal Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council – Ljubljana, 8 - 9 July 2021 .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.1.2. Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council - Luxemburg, 15 October 2021 .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.1.3. Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council - Brussels, 6 December 2021 .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4. French Presidency of the Council of the EU (January - June 2022).....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4.1. Schedule of Meetings during the French Presidency.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4.2. Overview of key issues likely to arise in relevant Councils during the French Presidency .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Competitiveness Council (Space).....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Foreign Affairs Council (Trade).....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Part II - Oireachtas Scrutiny Proposals July to December 2021.....</b>	<b>14</b>

## Introduction

Under the terms of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002, Ministers submit Reports to the Oireachtas every six months on developments at European Union level in their area of responsibility. This Report summarises the key legislative and policy developments within the remit of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment during the six-month period July to December 2021 during which time Slovenia held the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

This Report has two parts. The first part sets out the principal developments in the policy areas which fall within the responsibility of this Department at EU level and provides an overview of the incoming French Presidency. The second part provides an update on the EU legislative proposals for which information notes were submitted to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment under the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002.

### Part I – Developments in the EU

The policy areas which fall within the responsibility of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment at EU level are in the main dealt with by the Competitiveness Council under the headings of Internal Market, Industry, and Space, the Foreign Affairs Council under the heading of Trade and the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) under the heading of Employment.

#### 1. Competitiveness Council

The Competitiveness Council is normally held over two days, with Day 1 dedicated to Internal Market and Industry items and Day 2 dedicated to Space items.

##### 1.1. Meetings of the Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry)

The Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) met on three occasions during the period July to December 2021

- Informal Competitiveness Council, Ljubljana – 22 July 2021
- Formal Competitiveness Council, Brussels – 29 September 2021
- Formal Competitiveness Council, Brussels – 25 November 2021

##### 1.1.1 Informal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) - Ljubljana, 22 July 2021

Ireland was represented by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Counsellor within the Permanent Representation Brussels with responsibility for COMPET. Council was chaired by Mr Zdravko Počivalšek, Slovenian Minister for Economic Development and Technology. The Commission was represented by Ms Kerstin Jorna, Director General, DG GROW (Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs), standing in for Mr Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market.

The focus of the meeting was on how to create a circular, creative and smart future using textile and energy intensive industries in the European Union as a template.

Ministers underlined that a revised industrial strategy was the right path to recovery. Together with the Fit for 55 package and the circular economy concept, it provides an important framework. The Ministers highlighted the fact that the green and digital transition was a prerequisite for strengthening the competitiveness of the EU economy, which needs to primarily focus on the development of new technologies and innovation. The transition for energy-intensive industries must be fair, since the management and production costs of the transition will be high, while the issue of carbon leakage must also be tackled properly.

With regard to the textile industry, the need for technical norms and standards was highlighted in order to achieve a reduction in the environmental footprint, as well as the need to focus on the regionalisation of value chains. Furthermore, investment in high-quality recycling in the European Union was considered a good basis for which could be the national recovery and resilience plans.

The need to revise the emissions trading system and the carbon border adjustment tax was pointed out, which must be in line with the rules of the World Trade Organization.

The meeting also featured four guest speakers from the Slovenian business community who presented practical examples of circular, creative and smart textile and energy-intensive industries: Matea Benedetti from Benedetti Life, Giulio Bonazzi, Director of Aquafil Group, Dr Daniela Zavec, textile engineer, and Peter Čas, Director of Steklarna Hrastnik.

### **1.1.2 Formal Competitiveness Council – Brussels 29 September 2021**

Ireland was represented by Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation, Mr Robert Troy, T.D. Council was chaired by Mr Zdravko Počivalšek, Slovenian Minister for Industry, SMEs, Internal Market, Tourism and Trade and by Mr Bostjan Koritnik, Slovenian Minister for Public Administration chaired the second policy debate on better regulation. The Commission was represented by Mr Maroš Šefčovič, Executive Vice-President for Inter-institutional Relations.

Ministers had a first policy debate on the 'Fit for 55' package from an industrial perspective. Ministers broadly agreed that the availability of affordable decarbonized energy is one of the preconditions for the success of 'Fit for 55'. Ministers discussed the biggest challenges and opportunities for businesses arising from the 'Fit for 55' climate package and the transition towards climate neutrality. Ministers also looked at the possible pathways for ensuring a fair, competitive and green transition of the EU economy up to 2030 and beyond.

On the basis of a Presidency note, Ministers also held a policy debate on future-proof policy-making to improve the competitiveness of the EU and further foster the single market, which is part of the better regulation agenda. Ministers highlighted the importance of a clear, coherent and future-proof legislative framework, which they deem key in these times of pandemic and economic recovery. Ministers also expressed the need for high quality legislation, and discussed the 'one-in, one-out' approach, which was proposed by the Commission.

Any Other Business

Annual Report of the Single Market Enforcement Taskforce (SMET)

The Commission presented the Annual Report of the Single Market Enforcement Taskforce.

Joint Ministerial Declaration on Innovation Procurement in the EU

The Greek delegation, supported by the Italian, Cypriot and Luxembourg delegations, informed the Council of their views on Innovation Procurement in the EU.

Unitary Patent and Unified Patent Court (UPC)

The Slovenian Presidency informed the Council about the state of play as regards national ratifications of the Unified Patent Court Agreement (UPCA) and the protocol on the provisional application of the UPCA.

### **1.1.3 Formal Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry) - Brussels, 25 November 2021**

Ireland was represented by Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation, Mr Robert Troy, T.D. Council was chaired by Mr Zdravko Počivalšek, Slovenian Minister for Economic Development and Technology with the exception of the discussion on the Digital Services Act, which was chaired by Mr Mark Boris Andrijanič, Slovenian Minister for Digital Transformation.

Ms Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice President for A Europe Fit for the Digital Age and Mr Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market represented the Commission at Council for the morning items which included the General Approach on both the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act and AOB Items on Competition Policy (which was presented by Executive Vice President Vestager), Fit for 55 legislative package, Directive as regards corporate sustainability reporting, Directive on Consumer Credits, Regulation on general product and the Regulation on machinery products. Executive Vice Presidents Dombrovskis and Vestager represented the Commission at the policy debate on the Implementation of the Recovery Plan for Europe..

Council agreed on a general approach on the proposal for a Digital Markets Act (DMA) which aims to create a digital level playing field, with clear rights and obligations for large online platforms. Ministers emphasised the importance of the Act and pointed to the need to regulate large online platforms and to the need for a proposal that ensures legal certainty and is future proof. Trilogues commenced in January 2022.

The Council also agreed on a general approach on the proposal for a Digital Services Act (DSA). The main aim of the DSA is to keep users safe from illegal goods, content and services, and to protect their fundamental rights online. The proposal also modernises part of the eCommerce Directive from 2000. Ministers expressed their support for the proposal and emphasised the importance of having a safer digital space. This general approach will be the basis for negotiations with the European Parliament, which are scheduled to start in 2022.

On the basis of a Presidency note, Ministers held a policy debate on the Implementation of the Recovery Plan for Europe. Ministers discussed the state of play of member states

implementation of national recovery and resilience plans, as well as approaches to the preparation of the plans.

#### Any Other Business

##### Communication on a competition policy – fit for new challenges

The Commission updated Council on a communication on competition policy that should be fit for new challenges.

##### Fit for 55 legislative package

The Presidency provided Council with an update on the state of play in the examination of the different elements of the Fit for 55 legislative package.

##### Directive as regards corporate sustainability reporting

The Presidency presented a progress report regarding the examination of the proposal as regards corporate sustainability reporting.

##### Directive on Consumer Credits

The Presidency presented Council with a report on the progress made in relation to the proposal for a directive on consumer credits.

##### Regulation on General Products Safety

The Presidency provided Council with information on the state of play of the regulation.

##### Regulation on Machinery products

The Presidency provided Council with information on the state of play on the regulation.

##### Enhancing the resilience of the EU health sector and the pharmaceutical sector

The Greek delegation briefed Council on enhancing resilience of the EU health sector and pharmaceutical sector.

##### An action plan for the services sector

The Swedish delegation presented a non paper on an action plan for the services sector.

##### 2021 Annual Report of the SME Envoy Network to the Competitiveness Council

The Commission presented the 2021 Annual Report of the SME Envoy Network.

##### The work of the Industrial Forum

The Commission updated Council on the work of the Industrial Forum.

##### Workshop on the reform of REACH Authorisation and Restriction (Brdo, 9 November 2021)

The Presidency provided an update on the November workshop on the reform of REACH.

##### EU Next Generation Innovators Summit Slovenia & Investment Conference (Ljubljana, 26-27 October 2021)

The Presidency provided an update on the EU Next Generation Innovators Summit.

##### Work Programme of the Incoming Presidency

The incoming Presidency presented the main priorities of its upcoming presidency in the field of the internal market and industry.

## **1.2. Meetings of the Competitiveness Council (Space)**

The Competitiveness Council (Space) met on one occasion during the period July to December 2021:

- Formal Competitiveness (Space) Council, Brussels – 26 November 2021

### **1.2.1. Competitiveness Council (Space) Brussels – 26 November 2021**

Ireland was represented by Ms Barbara Cullinane, Deputy Permanent Representative. The meeting was chaired by Professor Simona Kustec, Slovenian Minister for Education, Science and Sport. The Commission was represented by Mr Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market.

The session on space was divided into three parts and commenced with the adoption of Council Conclusions on “Space for Everyone”.

On the basis of a Presidency report, Ministers were presented with a progress report on fostering an EU approach to Space Traffic Management including preliminary outcomes of discussions and a proposed way forward. The report was broadly welcomed. Ministers also held a policy debate on the long-term sustainability of “New Space” and considered the need for appropriate financing to allow SMEs to participate. As an increasingly congested domain, Ministers recognised the growing need for cooperation to maintain the long-term sustainability of space on an equitable basis for all.

## **2. Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)**

### **2.1. Meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)**

The Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) met on one occasion during the period July to December 2021. A second meeting was scheduled to take place in Geneva over the course of 29 November to 3 December to coincide with 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12). However, due to the postponement of MC12, this Council meeting did not take place.

#### **2.1.1. EU Trade Council - Brussels, 11 November 2021**

Ireland was represented by An Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Mr Leo Varadkar T.D. The meeting was chaired by Mr Zdravko Počivalšek, Slovenian Minister of Economic Development and Technology. The European Commission was represented by Mr Valdis Dombrovskis, Executive Vice President for An Economy that Works for People.

Ministers discussed preparations for the WTO 12th Ministerial Conference (which was subsequently postponed due to concerns regarding the omicron variant of COVID-19), and EU-US trade relations, particularly the progress on steel and aluminium tariffs and were joined for an exchange of views via videoconference with United States Trade Representative Ambassador Katherine Tai. Ministers also discussed the state of play of ongoing bilateral trade negotiations and the European Commission presented its report of the Implementation and Enforcement of EU Trade Agreements.

## **3. Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)**

### **3.1. Meetings of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO)**

The EPSCO Council met on 3 occasions during the period July to December 2021:

- Informal EPSCO Council – Slovenia, 8 & 9 July 2021
- Formal EPSCO Council – Luxembourg, 15 October 2021
- Formal EPSCO Council - Brussels, 6 December 2021

#### **3.1.1. Informal Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council – Ljubljana, 8 - 9 July 2021**

Ireland was represented by Ms Dymphna Boyle, Assistant Principal, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The meeting was chaired by Mr Janez Cigler Kralj, Slovenian Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The Commission was represented by Ms Dubravka Šuica, Executive Vice President for



Democracy and Demography and Mr Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights.

The focus of the morning session was a discussion on policies that contribute to greater resilience of the labour markets and the impacts of aging populations, digitalisation and the transition to a climate-neutral economy, coupled with the consequences caused by COVID-19 on labour markets, social protection systems and the daily lives of people of all ages across Europe.

Council also discussed inclusive labour markets for all generations that support people through the transitions they face throughout their working lives, not only resulting in greater societal well-being, but also enhancing productivity and competitiveness.

The meeting included the second EU – Western Balkans Ministerial Meeting on Employment and Social Affairs which focussed on the shared challenge of youth employment for the Western Balkans and the European Union. Views were exchanged on the challenges faced by young people in the labour market, notably in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, and the green and digital transitions. Representatives of the Western Balkans committed to gradually establish, implement and enhance Youth Guarantee schemes.

### **3.1.2. Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council - Luxemburg, 15 October 2021**

Ireland was represented by Mr Robert Troy T.D., Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation. The meeting was chaired by Mr Janez Cigler Kralj, Slovenian Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The European Commission was represented by Mr Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights.

Policy debates were held on the future of the European Semester with a strong role of the European Pillar of Social Rights and on Safety and Health at the heart of the future of work.

Ministers held a debate on the future of the European Semester with a strong role of the European Pillar of Social Rights in which there was support for a return to the pre-Covid Semester process together with the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and the monitoring of the three EU wide headline targets agreed at the Porto Summit in May.

A debate on the Safety and Health at the heart of the future of work policy took place with all Member States welcoming the Commission's communication from June 2021 on an "*EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 – Occupational safety and health in a changing world of work*" that aims to make workplaces fit for the green, digital, and demographic transitions.

In addition, Council endorsed key messages from the Employment Committee (EMCO) based on the Annual Employment Performance Report and the Employment Performance Monitor, and key messages from the Social Protection Committee (SPC) based on the Annual Review of the Social Protection Performance Monitor.

Council also adopted a Council Decision on Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States, as well as approving Conclusions on Gender Mainstreaming in the EU Budget.

### **3.1.3. Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council - Brussels, 6 December 2021**

Ireland was represented by Mr Roderic O’Gorman, T.D., Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

The meeting was chaired by Mr Janez Cigler Kralj, Slovenian Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The European Commission was represented by Mr Valdis Dombrovskis, Executive Vice President for An Economy that Works for People, Mr Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights and Ms Helena Dalli, Commissioner for Equality.

Policy debates were held on the European Semester 2022 and on Towards a Europe of Equality.

In the Semester debate, the Vice President Dombrovskis presented the main elements of the package and outlined difficulties experienced by some Member States in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the context of costs already faced by their exchequers.

The Commission also presented the Semester Autumn Package which was published on 24 November 2021. Council endorsed the EMCO key messages on the review of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee and received a presentation by the Chairperson of the Social Protection Committee on national plans under the Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed.

Council also held a policy debate on “Towards a Europe of Equality” in which key messages included the need for supports for parents such as parental leave, childcare supports and flexible working arrangements. Increased female participation in STEM was also discussed along with supporting entrepreneurship, reducing pension poverty and the need for gender mainstreaming in all policies and strategies, to be supported by good data.

## **4. French Presidency of the Council of the EU (January - June 2022)**

France assumed the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU on 1 January 2022. Under the slogan of “Recovery, Strength and a Sense of Belonging” the French Presidency has three ambitions.

### **A more sovereign Europe:**

- by strengthening the Schengen area, protecting European borders, controlling migration and improving the asylum policy, in line with Europe’s values and its international commitments;

- by building a stronger Europe which is more capable of action in the fields of security and defence;
- by taking action for the prosperity and stability of its neighbours, particularly through its engagement in the Western Balkans and its renewed relationship with Africa; and
- by bringing forth solutions to global challenges.

#### **A new European model for growth:**

- to make Europe a land of production, job creation, innovation and technological excellence; in which economic development is aligned with climate goals;
- that supports innovation and the growth of European digital players and sets its own rules for the digital world; and
- that offers high-quality, high-skilled and better-paying jobs.

#### **A humane Europe:**

- that listens to the concerns expressed by its citizens through the Conference on the Future of Europe;
- that defends the rule of law and upholds its values;
- that takes pride in its culture, trusts in science and knowledge, and is committed to fighting discrimination and securing a future for the next generation.

### **4.1. Schedule of Meetings during the French Presidency**

This schedule and the location of meetings is subject to change due to the impact of COVID-19.

#### Scheduled European Council meetings (EU Heads of State or Government)

European Council – 24/25 March (Brussels)

European Council – 23/24 June (Brussels)

#### Scheduled Competitiveness Council meetings

Informal Competitiveness (Internal Market and Industry) Council – 31 January/1 February (France)

Formal Competitiveness (Internal Market and Industry) Council – 24 February (Brussels)

Formal Competitiveness (Internal Market and Industry) Council – 9 June (Luxembourg)

Informal Competitiveness (Space Council)-16 February (France)

Formal Competitiveness (Space) Council – 10 June (Luxembourg)

#### Scheduled Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) meetings

Informal Council – 13/14 February (France)

Formal Council – 3 June (Luxembourg)

#### Scheduled Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs meetings

Informal (Employment and Social Policy) Council – 14/15 February (France)

Formal (Employment and Social Policy) Council – 14 March (Brussels)

Formal (Employment and Social Policy) Council – 16 June (Luxembourg)

## **4.2. Overview of key issues likely to arise in relevant Councils during the French Presidency**

### **Competitiveness Council (Internal Market and Industry)**

Strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy will be central to the work of the incoming French Presidency. It will seek to promote a knowledge-based and industrial Europe that is more sovereign, more innovative and that makes progress towards the digital and green transition. Drawing on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Single Market Report the French Presidency will work on deepening the Single Market. The Presidency will begin work on the Commission's proposal for a Single Market Emergency Instrument. Prioritising reform of the digital world, the Presidency will progress negotiations on the Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act.

The Presidency will continue the work on the revision of the General Product Safety Directive and on harmonising EU standards—a prime example being a proposal on a common device charger. The Presidency will capitalise on the EU's industrial strengths in the global context with a focus on Important Projects of Common European Interest, industrial alliances and a proposal for a European Chips Act. The Presidency will also continue to progress the proposal for a regulation on foreign subsidies distorting the internal market.

In respect of the area of Intellectual Property, the Presidency will start work on a Commission proposal on industrial design followed by work on an improved EU-wide system for the protection of geographical indications. The Presidency will also prioritise work on a Corporate Sustainable Reporting Directive. The Presidency is convinced of the need for first-rate European legislation and will continue with efforts to raise awareness of its benefits whilst avoiding the pitfalls of overregulation and red tape for citizens, government departments and businesses, especially SMEs. The Presidency will also make the development of reliable human-centred artificial intelligence a priority.

### **Competitiveness Council (Space)**

The French Presidency will focus on three blocks of work:

- furthering the proposed Secure Connectivity initiative,
- developing a common EU position on Space Traffic Management, and
- consideration of the future of the EU's flagship Earth observation programme, Copernicus.

### **Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)**

The Presidency has indicated its main priorities for Trade will be:

- to move forward on new autonomous trade instruments,
- the International Procurement Instrument which is currently under trilogue negotiations (between the Council, European Commission and the European Parliament), and
- the Anti-Coercion Instrument which was published on 8 December 2021.

Negotiations at Council Working Group level on a review of the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) Regulation 978/2012 is also underway. The current 2012 EU GSP Regulation will expire at the end of 2023 and France has signalled GSP as a priority legislative file for their Presidency.

The French Presidency has also indicated that the Trade and Sustainable Development agenda will be a significant policy focus under its Presidency. In this regard, the European Commission is currently conducting a review of its 15-Point Action Plan on Trade and Sustainable Development provisions of FTAs. The Commission is aiming to have an updated Action Plan for Member States in the first half of 2022 to inform its approach to the issue in its ongoing programme of Free Trade Agreement negotiations. This is a priority trade agenda item for the French Presidency with the ambition of having Council Conclusions on the matter for Ministers to debate at their June Council meeting.

There are also a number of sustainability focused legislative proposals recently published/in development outside of DG Trade that will be progressed under the French Presidency and which have distinct relevance for trade, including the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, legislative proposal on Sustainable Corporate Governance and a Regulation to curb EU-driven deforestation and forest degradation.

## **Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO)**

### **Employment & Social Policy Matters**

In the Employment, Social Affairs and Equality Opportunities area, the French Presidency will focus on areas including:

- adequate minimum wages in the EU,
- working conditions of people working through digital labour platforms,
- individual learning accounts and on the social impact and impact of the climate transition on the labour market,
- gender equality issues such as gender-based violence, equal pay and gender balance on company boards, and
- improving the social and economic participation of persons with disabilities as well as their access to rights.

The French Presidency will also encourage discussion on children's access to essential services, a principle included in the Council recommendation establishing the European Child Guarantee, as well as on the mental health of vulnerable young people and on preventing the loss of autonomy, which will be addressed through ministerial conferences.

## Part II - Oireachtas Scrutiny Proposals July to December 2021

COM Number	Subject	Section	Date Examined by Committee	Current Update on Proposal
COM (21) 346	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on general product safety, amending Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Council Directive 87/357/EEC and Directive 2001/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council	Competition Policy Unit	Not yet examined	<p>The file achieved a first reading under the Slovenian Presidency and the French Presidency has indicated it intends to achieve a Council mandate.</p> <p>Ireland broadly welcomes the proposal and there does not appear to be any major issues.</p> <p>The Department is actively engaging in the Working Party to ensure a robust piece of legislation is agreed that will benefit consumers, businesses and give extra powers to our market surveillance authorities.</p>
COM (21) 392	Proposal for a Council Regulation temporarily suspending autonomous Common Customs Tariff duties on imports of certain industrial products into the Canary Islands	Inward Investment Unit	Not examined	<p>Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2048 of 23 November 2021 temporarily suspending autonomous Common Customs Tariff duties on imports of certain industrial products into the Canary Islands.</p> <p>This Regulation came into effect 01/01/2022 and is valid until 31 December 2031</p>
COM (21) 483	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on uniform procedures for checks on the transport of dangerous goods by road (codification)	Safety, Health and	Not yet examined	<p>The introduction of this Codified Directive remains under discussion. The French Presidency have indicated they intend to discuss this matter in the</p>

COM Number	Subject	Section	Date Examined by Committee	Current Update on Proposal
		Chemical Policy Unit		coming months with an aim to finalise the proposal and submit for political approval in July 2022.
COM (21) 574	Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the 2030 Policy Programme “Path to the Digital Decade”	EU Digital Single Market and Digital Economic Policy Unit	Not yet examined	<p>The Proposal for a Decision establishing the 2030 Policy Programme “Path to the Digital Decade” was discussed at the Telecom Council on 3rd December 2021. Ministers assessed progress on the proposed decision.</p> <p>In the Council, the examination of the proposal is being carried out in the Working Party on Telecommunications and Information Society. Discussions were initiated by the Slovenian Presidency during the meeting of 28 September 2021. Member States have welcomed the initiative as well as the importance to step up efforts on digital transformation in a post COVID crisis context.</p> <p>In the European Parliament, the proposal is assigned to the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). The Rapporteur for the file is Martina Dlabajová (Renew Europe, Czechia). The ITRE Committee has not yet adopted its report.</p> <p>The Commission has stressed that while the digital targets would not be binding neither at EU nor at national level. However, the cooperation mechanism</p>

COM Number	Subject	Section	Date Examined by Committee	Current Update on Proposal
				<p>will be binding to ensure the achievement of objectives and targets by 2030.</p> <p><a href="#">Path to the Digital Decade Progress Report</a></p>
COM (21) 579	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on applying a generalised scheme of tariff preferences and repealing Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council	Trade Policy Unit	Not yet examined	Council Working Party discussions are continuing under the French Presidency. Adoption by the European Council and the European Parliament is foreseen for Q4 2022.
COM (21) 707	Proposal for a Council Regulation opening and providing for the management of autonomous tariff quotas of the Union for certain agricultural and industrial products	Inward Investment Unit	Not examined	<p>Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2283 of 20 December 2021 opening and providing for the management of autonomous tariff quotas of the Union for certain agricultural and industrial products, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1388/2013</p> <p>No further scrutiny required. Regulation came into effect EU-wide on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. This regulation is updated twice a year – January and July - to include new suspensions and delete old ones.</p>



<b>COM Number</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Date Examined by Committee</b>	<b>Current Update on Proposal</b>
COM (21) 704	Proposal for a Council Regulation suspending the Common Customs Tariff duties referred to in Article 56(2) point (c) of Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 on certain agricultural and industrial products	Inward Investment Unit	Not examined	<p>Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2278 of 20 December 2021 suspending the Common Customs Tariff duties referred to in Article 56(2), point (c), of Regulation (EU) No 952/2013 on certain agricultural and industrial products, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1387/2013</p> <p>No further scrutiny required. Regulation came into effect EU-wide on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. This regulation is updated twice a year – January and July - to include new suspensions and delete old ones.</p>