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December-January Edition

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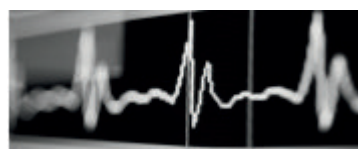
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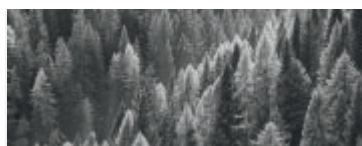
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The Outlook

Economic ([jump to](#)).

Economic experts evaluate global progress on measuring and developing e-commerce standards. [Read more](#)

December and January are pivotal period for the world of international trade as it fully focuses on trade ministerial February 2024. [Read more](#)

Political, business and civil society leaders come back to snowy Swiss Alps for their exclusive annual gathering, for the 54th time. The World Economic Forum in Davos is to focus on global challenges from energy and environment to frontier technologies. [Read more](#)

Standards and Regulatory ([jump to](#)).

A new legal instrument on automated cars on the horizon? A group of experts convenes to develop a framework for the evolving industry of autonomous vehicles for everyday use. [Read more](#)

Fasten your seatbelts—amendments to vehicle passive safety standards are considered. [Read more](#)

Warning! United Nations seek to improve the process for classifying and labeling chemicals and hazardous materials. [Read more](#)

Environmental experts hold a key discussion to analyze the global impacts of methane, ammonia and other gas emissions, with a view to develop mitigation measures and standards. [Read more](#)

Various international organizations come together to discuss cooperation and coordination between user groups to allocate resources to electronic business regulations. [Read more](#)

Telecommunications experts convene in January to discuss regulation strategies for broadband deployment across member states. [Read more](#)

Communications and Digital ([jump to](#)).

Lights, camera, action! The European Broadcasting Union tackles the challenges and opportunities of AI in the public service media industry. [Read more](#)

Digital economy on high alert as eWeek 2023 brings stakeholders together to consider key questions that will shape the future of digital and its role in sustainability and development. [Read more](#)

World Meteorological Organization workshop will meet to establish guidelines for international satellite data sharing. [Read more](#)

A technology-oriented forum in Geneva begins a new series discussing the importance of cybersecurity as countries across the world begin to take the same aim. [Read more](#)

As the U.S. looks to amplify its quantum efforts, quantum experts in the EU look to follow suit. [Read more](#)

Health ([jump to](#)).

Discover how the Fight the Fakes Alliance is addressing the critical global issue of substandard and falsified medicines through their upcoming “Fight the Fakes Week” with a focus on Africa. [Read more](#)

Gain insight into the 154th session of the WHO Executive Board, where health experts shape the agenda and key global health resolutions ahead of the crucial annual session of the World Health Assembly. [Read more](#)

Environment and Sustainability ([jump to](#)).

Money talks: discussions on funding and financing transboundary water cooperation due to transpire. [Read more](#)

Environmental intersections: the road ahead on water, food, energy and ecosystems. [Read more](#)

Environmental rights are human rights: experts meet to consider just that amid a rise in environmental legal action. [Read more](#)

To EV or not to EV: discussions on global regulations on emissions of vehicles—light- and heavy-duty. [Read more](#)

Science and Technology ([jump to](#)).

Geneva’s metaverse experts look to build on their efforts from last month to continue addressing the innovative potential and possibilities of the metaverse. [Read more](#)

Further guidance on the development of automated vehicles and exactly how far their capabilities may go, or how tightly they may be restrained. [Read more](#)

Social ([jump to](#)).

Unprecedented referral of a dispute over the right to strike to the International Court of Justice and continued discussions over the various conventions and regulations. [Read more](#)

Private and public sector joining in projects are discussed, particularly where current efforts to reach sustainable goals have gone wrong and where public-private-partnerships can improve. [Read more](#)

Labor researchers from across the globe gather for an inaugural exercise to analyze trends in youth employment over the past two decades. [Read more](#)

[Youth and Sports](#) ([jump to](#)).

The future of sports and human rights to be discussed by private and public actors in the sports community. [Read more](#)

[Humanitarian and Human Rights](#) ([jump to](#)).

The largest international gathering on refugees meets in Geneva to assist in easing pressure on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance or improving conditions in countries of origins. [Read more](#)

The global community comes together to celebrate 75 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. [Read more](#)

The International Code of Conduct Association continues to provide a platform for conversations about human rights due diligence and supply chain security. [Read more](#)

Questions? As you read the below, please do not hesitate to [contact one of the authors](#) for more information.

Economic

The [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development](#) (UNCTAD) Working Group on Measuring E-Commerce and the Digital Economy will hold its [fourth meeting](#) on November 30 and December 1, where it will discuss the progress of international organizations in developing standards of [measuring e-commerce](#), as well as the value of doing so. As Congress grapples with various aspects of e-commerce regulation, such as tax reporting requirements and a regulatory regime for cryptocurrencies, any indicators of where the global community stands on the issue is likely to be of interest.

The [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO) is gearing up to its [13th Ministerial Conference](#) (MC13) scheduled for late February 2024. In the lead up to it, the WTO gathers for its last formal General Council in 2023 on December 14-15. The organization's [Director-General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala](#) is also expected to convene number of ad hoc negotiations to ensure a successful MC13. A late November mini-ministerial virtual meeting on agriculture was a case in point, to salvage the crumbling agricultural negotiations conducted by officials. There are number of topics that have an ambition to deliver at MC13, but several stand out as the most crucial for members and the organization itself. This non-exhausted and fluid list includes reform of the WTO's dispute settlement system, its deliberative function or a second stage of the Fisheries subsidies agreement. Agriculture and public stockholding programs, moratorium on duties on electronic commerce and transmissions, TRIPS waiver extension to therapeutics and diagnostics, work policy space, industrial policies and tech

transfer, among others, are being pushed to the spotlight. Closely following are necessary or expected ministerial decisions, for example on sanitary and phytosanitary measures, non-violation and situation complaints in TRIPS, or the accession of Timor Leste and Comoros to the organization. The [World Economic Forum annual summit in Davos](#) traditionally presents an opportunity for trade ministers to meet. This will be a crucial moment just a month ahead of MC13.

From January 15-19, 2024, the [World Economic Forum](#) (WEF) holds its [54th Annual Meeting](#) in Davos, Switzerland. The forum plans on addressing topics such as energy and the environment, inflation and the economy, frontier technologies and much more. The event will serve as a common ground for world leaders, business moguls, academics and other stakeholders to meet and discuss the future of their respective lines of work. Proceedings at the WEF often have great implications on the international landscape, including the Geneva-based organizations. This year, over a hundred governments, most major international organizations, over a thousand global companies, relevant academia, as well as the media will be in attendance. The list of very, very important person (VVIP) attendees will crystalize only closer to the event. Nonetheless, the week is sure to feature not only the official meetings and conferences, but—more importantly—behind-the-scenes discussions and deal-making.

Standards and Regulatory



On November 30 and December 1, the [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe](#) (UNECE) convenes a [Group of Experts](#) to begin drafting a new legal instrument on the use of automated vehicles in traffic. As experimentation in this regard is conducted with varying results throughout the world, considerations made during this meeting will inform an ever-evolving industry that continues its efforts to develop a product that is thought to open wide doors for transportation innovation, yet still faces safety concerns.

On December 4-8, 2023, the UNECE gathers for the [74th biannual convening](#) of the [Working Party on Passive Safety](#) (GRSP). This group will debate various amendments and proposals regarding passive safety requirements for vehicles, including topics such as pedestrian safety, [hydrogen fuel cell vehicles](#), electric vehicles, safety belts and the frontal and lateral impact of collisions. Discussions will also be held on broader topics including [children in buses](#), children left inside cars, equitable occupant protection and intelligent transport systems. The session will close with the election of officers for the 2024 sessions, as well as with the setting of the working group's priorities for the upcoming year.

On December 6-8, 2023, the [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe](#) (UNECE) [Economic and Social Council](#) (ECOSOC) holds [the 45th Sub-Committee Meeting of Experts](#) on the [Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals](#). The meeting will begin with the consideration of various proposed amendments to the Globally Harmonized System (GHS), including questions regarding the transportation of dangerous goods, the use of [non-animal testing of potential hazards](#), the classification for germ cell mutagenicity and other practical classification issues. The session will then shift into questions of implementation, focused on providing a status report for the System, laying the groundwork for collaboration with other international organizations and discussing the

creation of a list of chemical guidance on the application of the GHS. Finally, the sub-committee will aim to provide guidance regarding classification and labeling issues, before moving into discussions on the work of ECOSOC and the [Agenda 2030](#).

The [UNECE](#) Executive Body for Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution will [convene](#) from December 11-14. This executive body will draft guidance documents on technical measures for reduction of methane emissions from landfill, the natural gas grid and biogas facilities, as well as technical measures for the reduction of air pollutant emissions from shipping. Additionally, the executive body will discuss the co-mitigation of methane and ammonia emissions from agricultural sources. Full agenda can be found [here](#).

From December 12-13, the 45th [meeting](#) of the [International Electrotechnical Commission](#) (IEC), [International Telecommunication Union](#) (ITU), [International Standards Organization](#) (ISO) and the [UNECE](#) Electronic Business Memorandum of Understanding Management Group ([eB-MoU/MG](#)) will be held. The meeting aims to coordinate relevant work programs with the user groups to maximize resources for regulations in electronic business. Earlier the year, the eB-MoU/MG held a [meeting](#) in January 2023, and the upcoming meeting will aim to build on the efforts made then.

The [Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group](#) (TSAG) is comprised of the (ITU)-T working groups, with the goal monitoring cooperation between the groups, the group's working methods, and the restructuring of the ITU-T study groups. TSAG will hold its upcoming third [meeting](#) from January 22-26, 2024. The agenda for the meeting has yet to be determined, but the group will attempt to build on last meeting's priorities with building out next year's telecommunications strategy.

Communications and Digital



On December 1, 2023, public service media stakeholders, artificial intelligence (AI) professionals and news executives gather for the first [AI Summit](#) hosted by the [European Broadcasting Union](#) (EBU). This gathering will address both the challenges and the opportunities presented by AI in the broadcasting world. The morning session will tackle the impact of AI on public service media strategy, with speakers including [Sir Nigel Shadbolt](#), renowned AI professor, [Jean Philip De Tender](#), the EBU Deputy Director General, and [Eric Horvitz](#), the Chief Scientific Officer of Microsoft. The afternoon sessions will center around the ethical and regulatory questions posed by AI, as well as how AI can be integrated into media production and distribution. Speakers for this session include [Dr. Jean-Marc Rickli](#), Head of Global and Emerging Risk for the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, and journalist [Jennifer Baker](#). Throughout the day, other members of EBU will demonstrate various AI projects they have undertaken.

The UNCTAD hosts [eWeek 2023](#) from December 4-8. The theme for eWeek 2023 is 'Shaping the future of the digital economy' and the event is organized in collaboration with UNCTAD's [eTrade for all initiative](#) partners. During the week, stakeholders come together to answer three key questions: "what does the future we want for the digital economy look like?", "what is required to make that future come true?" and "how can digital partnerships and

enhanced cooperation contribute to more inclusive and sustainable outcomes?" The [eWeek's program](#) points to sessions on building inclusive and sustainable digital economies and levelling the playing field, on unlocking digital trade for inclusive development and the role of partnership for a more inclusive and sustainable digital future, and on shaping the future of the digital economy. Other sessions throughout the conference include discussions regarding AI in the digital economy, as well as the competition law, regulation, and trade implications of the digital economy. The [Commission on Science and Technology for Development](#) (CSTD) meets at the end of the week to open consultation on the [World Summit on the Information Society \(WSIS\)+20](#). The implementation of WSIS+20 is currently being reviewed, and the [WSIS+20 Forum High-Level Event](#) is scheduled for May 27-31, 2024.

From December 5-7, 2023, the [World Meteorological Organization](#) (WMO) [Core Satellite Data Workshop](#) will meet to identify an initial list of core satellite data for global Numerical Weather Prediction (NWP) application area. In 2021, the [Extraordinary World Meteorological Congress](#) approved [Resolution 1](#), which established a two-tiered approach to the international provision and exchange of Earth system data. Information designated as 'core' data shall be provided on a free and unrestricted basis. Members should provide 'recommended' data but can place conditions on its use. Key expected outcomes of the workshop include identification of 'core' and 'recommended' sets of data for inclusion in the Manual of the [WMO Integrated Global Observing System](#) (WIGOS), increased familiarity with existing satellite data-sharing policies at the national and international levels, and discussion of the main obstacles to increased exchange of satellite data and how they can be overcome. The event features a keynote address from [Mariel Borowitz](#), Associate Professor, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Georgia Institute of Technology, as well as sessions hosted by industry leaders and experts and briefing on the data policies of key satellite agencies.

[Diplo](#), a respected Swiss-Maltese non-governmental organisation that specialises in capacity development in the field of internet governance and digital policy, launches its "[Geneva Manual](#)," a comprehensive guide on non-state actors' contributions to the implementation of cyber norms on December 7. Its first episode focuses on how vulnerabilities in digital products and networks leading to cyberthreats raise security concerns from individual users to international security and peace. As governments, including the U.S., begin to develop [strategies](#) to enhance cybersecurity capabilities in the wake of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, this event and subsequent series will host significant discussion to help inform this field.

The ITU Joint Coordination Activity on Quantum Key Distribution Network ([JCA-QKDN](#)) will be holding their upcoming meeting on December 14. The JCA-QKDN works on the quantum key distribution networks within ITU-T. The agenda has yet to be determined, but with the U.S.'s efforts to reauthorize the National Quantum Initiative Reauthorization Act ([H.R. 6213](#)), the EU will analyze ways to draft regulations and continue the development of quantum technologies.

Health



The [Fight the Fakes Alliance](#) will host "[Fight the Fakes Week](#)" December 4-10, 2023. This

event aims to raise awareness about the critical global issue of substandard and falsified medicines. This year, the focus is on the profound impact these products have in Africa, a region where the prevalence of such medicines is alarmingly high and leads to half a million deaths annually. This initiative offers opportunities to publish an open letter, organize events, and share information regarding fake or substandard drugs. [Register](#) for the online flagship event taking place on December 7, 2023, at 12:00 p.m. CET / 6:00 a.m. ET.

The [World Health Organization](#) will host its [154th session of the Executive Board](#) on January 22-27, 2024. The Executive Board is comprised of 34 members with technical expertise and is elected to serve three-year terms. The annual meeting takes place every January, during which the Board members finalize the agenda for the upcoming World Health Assembly and decide on the resolutions to be presented and discussed at the Assembly. While every year is crucial in global health, 2024 carries particular significance with its deadline for finalizing pandemic negotiations.

Environment and Sustainability



The UNECE holds its second [Global Workshop](#) on Funding and Financing Transboundary Water Cooperation and Basin Development from December 5-6, 2023. The workshop, which is organized by the UNECE's Water Convention, is aimed at facilitating the funding and financing of transboundary water basin development and cooperation to promote water sustainability. The global workshop will include governmental representatives, private financiers, financial institutions, climate funds, and more and will provide opportunities for all parties to exchange experiences, challenges, best practices and information on priorities for transboundary water cooperation and management activities.

Following the workshop on funding and financing transboundary water cooperation, the UNECE [Task Force on Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus](#) holds a meeting from December 7-8, 2023, to build on the workshop's progress. The Task Force will center discussions on what it has accomplished in its ten-year history and what future activities it will undertake. More specifically, the Task Force and meeting participants—ranging from governmental authorities to NGOs to the private sector—will discuss how to apply transboundary water cooperation to the clean energy transition and how to ensure global climate cooperation.

The [Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee](#) holds a meeting in Geneva from December 12-15, 2023. The Aarhus Convention, which was adopted in 1998, has become increasingly significant amid climate change because of its linkage of human rights and environmental rights. Under the Convention, governments have an obligation to protect their citizens' rights to live in an environment that is adequate to health and well-being. In recent months, environmental activists have turned to legal action against governments to force greater action on climate change. In August, a U.S. judge in Montana issued a [landmark ruling](#) in a case filed by a group of young Montanans who accused the state of violating their right to a clean and healthful environment by promoting fossil fuel development. Legal experts have said that the ruling may inspire similar lawsuits around the world. Indeed, in September, a [group of youth activists](#) from Portugal argued before the European Court of Human Rights that their rights to life were being violated by a failure to address human-caused climate change. Thus, upcoming meeting of the Compliance Committee will undoubtedly be

significant given the rise in lawsuits against governments over failure to protect the right to a clean, safe, healthy environment.

From January 9-12, 2024, the [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Working Party on Pollution and Energy](#) holds its [90th session](#), where the [World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations](#) will present proposals to modify and establish United Nations regulations on vehicle emissions, including regulations for both light- and heavy-duty vehicles, agricultural and forestry machinery, motorcycles and mopeds, particle emissions and electric vehicles. Given the spotlight on transportation decarbonization across the world and fierce global competition in the electric vehicle market, the 90th session will be significant as its outcomes could impact global transportation policy.

Science and Technology

The ITU [Focus Group on Metaverse](#) (FG-MV) holds its [fourth meeting](#) from December 4-7. The Focus Group was established in December 2022, with the last meeting held in October 2023. Looking ahead, the FG-MV will build on the efforts made last month by discussing the presentation of written contributions including incoming use-cases, discussing the progress on the development of ongoing deliverables, and discussing an agreement on FG-MV future meeting plans. This meeting will be crucial to predicting how the E.U. will draft regulations on the metaverse as the technology continues to develop.

On January 26-27, the UNECE holds its [18th Session](#) of the Working Party on Automated/Autonomous and Connected Vehicles. The Session's [agenda](#) is set to include discussion on artificial intelligence in vehicles, cybersecurity, software updates and other over-the-air issues, data protection and privacy-by-design, as well as data and vehicle communications. As innovation continues in these industries worldwide, any agreements reached on these topics is sure to have in impact on the direction of this young and ever-evolving industry.

Social

The [Governing Body](#) of the [International Labor Organization](#) (ILO) [voted](#) to refer a dispute over the right to strike to the International Court of Justice. This referral is unprecedented, and the proceedings are likely to gather a lot of attention. In the past, the [ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations](#) has recognized the right to strike through the [Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948](#). The Committee of Experts is a group set up in 1926 to examine government reports on measures taken for implementation of ILO conventions in their countries. However, the Employers' group has questioned the Committee's interpretation of the Convention, leading to a [request](#) from the ILO for the International Court of Justice to provide an advisory opinion on whether such a right is protected under the Convention. A proposal to include a standard-setting item on this issue in the [112th Session of the International Labor Conference in 2024](#) was not endorsed. The Committee of Experts is set to meet next in December to continue deliberations.

The UNECE [7th Session](#) of the Working Party on Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) takes place 30 November and 1 December 2023. [Policy discussions](#) will largely focus on digital and green transformations and promoting women's empowerment and stakeholder engagement in Public-Private Partnerships and infrastructure projects in support of the Party's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), although the party does [note](#) that progress on the SDGs has stalled, and in some cases, even gone into reverse. Nonetheless, participants will enter the Session with the goals of (1) increasing knowledge on the contribution of digital and green technologies to sustainable recovery and reconstructions PPP programs; (2) highlighting the importance of stakeholder engagement and gender equality in PPP and infrastructure projects; and (3) reviewing the impact of UNECE PPP normative tools, guidelines, and capacity building activities and chart a path for the future work of the Working Party.

On December 5-6, the ILO will hold its inaugural [Youth Employment Research Forum](#), which will bring together researchers from across the globe to discuss the dynamics of youth employment and its supporting policy framework. The goal of this exercise will be to begin building the evidence base on what has changed in the realm of youth employment over the past two decades to help explain the current and future circumstances of labor market entry and job outcomes for young people, which will be aided by the forthcoming 20th anniversary edition of the ILO Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024, which analyzes the youth labor market situation around the world using the most recent labor market information.

Youth and Sports

The [Center for Sports & Human Rights Sporting Chance Forum 2023](#) on December 5-6 will bring members of the sports community together to have conversations on the intersection between sports and human rights. Coinciding with 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 5th anniversary of the Centre for Sports and Human Rights, this forum will promote innovative strategies to advance responsibility in sports. To supplement the forum, the U.N. Human Right Office will announce global pledges to renew the world's commitment to the future of human rights; these pledges will be revisited during the 2025 Sporting Chance Forum.


Humanitarian & Human Rights

From December 13-15, the [United Nations Refugee Agency](#) (UNHCR) hosts the world's largest international gathering on refugees: the [Global Refugee Forum 2023](#). The Forum's objectives are to support the implementation of the goals outlined in the Global Compact on Refugees by easing pressure on host countries, enhancing refugee self-reliance, increasing access to third-country solutions and improving conditions in countries of origin. States and stakeholders will be able to identify challenges and discuss solutions. The Forum is co-convened by Colombia, France, Japan, Jordan, Niger and Uganda, and co-hosted by the government of Switzerland and UNHCR.

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR),

the [U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) and the government of Switzerland are co-hosting a [celebration](#) from December 10-12. This hybrid event will allow the international community to engage in discussions and learn about the developments on the future of human rights. This celebration will feature forums, debate panels, and keynote remarks from Heads of State and other high-level dignitaries to reflect the freedom advanced by the UDHR.

The [International Code of Conduct Association \(ICoCA\)](#) holds its [10th Annual General Assembly](#) on December 4-5. The ICoCA focuses on strengthening human rights due diligence, and thus reduces risk in the security supply chain. The Annual General Assembly will promote discussions on responsible private security by allowing participants to engage in panel discussions and interactive workshops.



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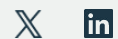


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