EU Startup Nations Alliance expands to 15 member countries

The EU Startup Nations Alliance (ESNA) welcomes Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Poland to its membership.

Today an additional 6 member countries (https://esnalliance.eu/2023/06/15/esna-enlarges-its-membership-by-welcoming-six-new-countries/) have joined the EU Startup Nations Alliance (https://esnalliance.eu/) (ESNA). ESNA is the implementation body of the EU Startup Nations Standard, an initiative of the European Commission that promotes policies proven to foster entrepreneurship and accelerate the growth of startups.

The 6 new countries joining ESNA are Cyprus, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Poland, bringing the total members to 15 (https://esnalliance.eu/members/). This will help give ESNA momentum as it scales up its operations.

ESNA’s mission – endorsed by Ministers in 27 countries - is to support policy makers in its member countries in identifying and implementing policies that can deliver a growth-friendly environment for market-ambitious SMEs and startups.
ESNA is a first-of-a-kind body, with its focus on helping its member countries to, for example:

- streamline visa and residency applications from third country tech-talent;
- make granting of employee stock options more attractive;
- promote tech transfer from universities;
- increase access to finance for scaling-up.

Given the importance of attracting talent to Europe, ESNA is already working to develop a ‘one-stop shop’ for tech- and entrepreneurial-talent in third countries who want to work in the startup sector of an EU country.

**Background**

The initiative on the Startups Nations Standard of Excellence was launched in 2021 at the EU Digital Day (https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/24-eu-member-states-commit-digital-day-take-action-support-growth-eu-startups). It aims to support EU countries to deliver optimised framework conditions and a regulatory environment for startups. It helps to ensure startups across the EU have growth-friendly framework conditions at every point in their life cycle.

The political declaration outlined 8 areas of best policy practices, which all fall under national competencies and include fiscal treatment of stock options, talent, visas for 3rd country tech- and entrepreneurial-talent, tech transfer policy, innovation procurement policies, amongst others.

To support the signatory countries in moving beyond the aspirations of the political declaration, the Europe Startup Nations Alliance (https://esnalliance.eu/) (ESNA) was established. ESNA’s mission is to support the signatory countries and to provide concrete support to policy makers in implementing the best policy practices outlined in the EU Startup Nations Standard.

The ESNA will also help the EU reach its Digital Decade targets (https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/europes-digital-decade). The EU’s target for 2030 is to double the amount of unicorns in the EU. This target can be reached through actions such as those that create more favourable conditions for startups at all phases of their life cycle. For example, by simplifying the processes of setting up businesses to attracting talent, using stock options, and participating in public procurement. At Member State level, access to growth finance is critical – national policy makers can take actions that increase the European risk capital available for startups entering the growth phase.

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