

Meeting with representative of [REDACTED] Microsoft Out of scope

Focus on Startups, Women in Digital, Innovation radar

Scene setter

- Europe is home to multiple, thriving companies and startups. Nowadays a large pool of startups across Europe has the ambition to scale up their businesses. In 2017, more than €20 billion of venture capital was invested in European companies, the largest level of investment on record.
- The number of EU startups becoming unicorns is constantly increasing. As the tech talent is spread everywhere in Europe it is not surprisingly to see unicorns coming from CEE region. For instance, in March this year, Robotic Process Automation software provider UiPath from Romania was valued at USD 1 billion.
- Studies show that startups (co-)founded by women perform 63% better than all male ones. Nevertheless, according to Atomico report "The state of the European tech", only 6% of their selected European series A and B venture-backed companies have women CEOs.

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- MICROSOFT launched in February this year the "**Microsoft for Startups**", a new program of \$500 million over the next two years, that delivers access to technology, go-to-market and community benefits that helps startups grow their customer and revenue base. The Microsoft **ScaleUp** program (previously known as Microsoft Accelerator) is designed for Series A startups and offers access to sales, marketing and technical support. Via **M12** venture fund (formerly Microsoft Ventures) Microsoft typically invests in enterprise software companies in the Series A through C funding stage. As part of their global diversity and Inclusion program Microsoft setup the **Women Think Next** network, a worldwide community for professional women. Other activities are also deployed within communities in support of women in tech such as **DigiGirlz** program, a program designed to introduce girls to the career opportunities available in technology fields.

Objective

1. Ask views on how could the company support in
 - o Increasing the support for the tech startups based in CEE region.
 - o Helping European startups grow internationally
 - o improving the level of support and investment in women led tech startups in Europe
 - o increase girls' participation in STEM studies,
 - o increase women's participation in ICT jobs.
2. Encourage the company to collaborate with Startup Europe initiative
3. Ask the interlocutor to share best practices on offering their women employees the chance to take a leadership position within their company and
4. Invite the company to sign the Women in Digital Declaration
5. Draw attention to the Innovation Radar and invite for the use the tool in view of identifying candidates for their programmes.

Background notes:

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MICROSOFT

Microsoft announced in February 2018 the launch of: [Microsoft for Startups](#), a new program that delivers access to technology, go-to-market and community benefits that helps startups grow their customer and revenue base. They are committing \$500 million over the next two years to offer joint sales engagements with startups, along with access to Microsoft technology, and new community spaces that promote collaboration across local and global ecosystems. The program provides dedicated resources to prepare startup marketing and sales teams to effectively sell their cloud solutions to enterprise organizations in partnership with Microsoft's global sales organization and partner ecosystem.

The [Microsoft ScaleUp](#) program (previously known as Microsoft Accelerator) is designed for Series A startups and offers access to sales, marketing and technical support. Eligible startups partake in the immersive program at one of Microsoft eight global locations followed by ongoing support from a dedicated team of success managers.

Via [M12](#) venture fund (formerly Microsoft Ventures) Microsoft typically invests in enterprise software companies in the Series A through C funding stage. As part of its value-add to portfolio companies, M12 offers unique access to strategic go-to-market resources and relationships globally. The M12 team is based in North America, Europe, and Israel.

[Women Think Next](#) was built to actively contribute towards the growth of professional women in the technology industry. Women Think Next brings together professional women from Advertising & Marketing, Sales, Finance, Technology & Research, Services and more.

With a focus of bringing people together, building connections, giving professionals the opportunity to learn from one another while ultimately supporting members to further achieve their professional goals.

Women at Microsoft work with the community in several ways:

- DigiGirlz Day - Members of Women at Microsoft volunteer with Microsoft's DigiGirlz program, a program designed to introduce girls to the career opportunities available in technology fields. These events occur at Microsoft offices around the world.
- WiRL Leadership Summit Sponsorship- Women at Microsoft sponsored 10 women to attend the WiRL Leadership Summit. Its webinar format makes it convenient for many professionals.
- Sit With Me – Women at Microsoft partnered with SitWithMe.org to recognize the important role women play in creating future technology.
- Recruiting events to encourage young women to become interested in STEM and to encourage corporate women to work at Microsoft.

Women digital entrepreneurship:

Women are underrepresented in tech area and even less represented in the startup tech area. To date there are around 23% of women entrepreneurs in the ICT sector in Europe; the rate is growing, but at a very slow pace.

Different barriers are still holding back women from establishing businesses: lack of role models for inspiring confidence, weak business networks to support their endeavour, low financial support, and the existing stereotypes, attitudes, biases.

Nevertheless, the strength of women entrepreneurs is an important factor to watch for because studies show that startups (co-)founded by women perform 63% better than all male ones.

In the crowdfunding domain for instance, where there are nine male-led campaigns to every one female-led campaign, female-led campaigns are more successful, 13% to 10% respectively. Still, the rate of investment in the women led activities are lower than in the ones led by men. According to Atomico report "The state of the European tech" only 6% of their selected European series A and B venture-backed companies have women CEOs.

Startup Europe

Started in 2011, Startup Europe has become a reckoned reference in the European startup related field. Our mission is to build a Startup Continent by increasing the connectedness among all players of the European startup ecosystems.

The initiative is primarily focused on two main pillars that create a visible, interconnected, dedicated space where startups can obtain advice, partners and grow locally or internationally:

- access to funding opportunities for startup ecosystem builders who design projects to improve startups' capabilities to scale up, raise capital or enter new markets;
- support of cross-border stakeholder networks and grassroots initiatives

As a result, throughout the last two years, 715 Startups have been directly supported raising cumulatively €161M from venture capital; performed 900 pitching session with investors, participating in 350 matchmaking sessions between startups, investors and corporates, talking to 100+ mentors to support their growth strategies. Furthermore 32 startup business summer academies were attended by 1000+ ICT students and recent graduates.

Innovation Radar

Innovation Radar (<https://www.innoradar.eu/>) represents a data-driven online tool, developed with the Joint Research Centre (JRC), which provides easy access to innovations supported by EU funding and the innovators behind them. It allows every citizen, public official, professional and business person to discover the outputs of EU innovation funding and give them a chance to seek out innovators who could follow in the footsteps of companies such as Skype, TomTom, ARM Holdings, all of whom received EU funding in their early days.

Innovation Radar is not only a databank: it is designed to help broker contact between EU-funded innovators and, for example, investors or other professionals who can help them get their innovations to market, be it with additional expertise or capital.

The Innovation Radar platform builds on the information and data gathered by independent experts involved in reviewing ongoing projects funded by the EU (under Horizon 2020, Framework Programme 7 (FP7) or the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP)). These experts also provided an independent view regarding the innovations in the projects and their market potential (more information about the Innovation Radar methodology is available [here](#)).

In recent years many great EU-funded innovations identified by the Innovation Radar - and the innovators behind them - have been championed as part of the Innovation Radar prize scheme.

(DG CNECT)

Personal data