ANNUAL REPORT
The voice of startups in politics and governments
www.alliedforstartups.org
Welcome

COVID-19 has dramatically changed the world that we live in. What we once saw as normal now seems a distant memory. Thousands have tragically lost their lives to this pandemic, and millions have been impacted, either economically or personally, by this international health crisis.

But yet, in the face of these trying times, startups have risen to the challenge. Innovation and creativity have come to the forefront to address the challenges we are faced with head on.

Digital health startups delivering telemedicine services have grown exponentially. Direct door to door delivery for food and grocery has seen an unprecedented rise in users and demand. Job search matching tools and talent focused startups are helping people find new opportunities and get back on their feet. Contact tracing software and tools are becoming more sophisticated every day. Startups are on the frontlines of fighting this pandemic.

In the face of a tragedy, startups continue to be an unbreakable engine growing our global economy. Creating jobs and building new life saving technologies.

We are proud to represent hundreds of thousands of startups from over 35 countries on 5 continents at Allied for Startups. Despite the challenges we are all faced with, we have seen our membership rise to the occasion – engaging as never before with our global partners to create policy recommendations for growth. I am constantly impressed by the community we have built. This year has brought many difficulties, but also much opportunity.

This year we launched our Advisory Board, a female majority group that will advise us strategically on the role of startups in the post-COVID-19 recovery. We worked to extend the scope of State Aid to ensure that startups receive liquidity support as well and heard an immediate response from Commissioner Vestager. We prevailed against all odds in hosting a Digital Services Act Roadshow, moving all of our workshops onto zoom and seeing attendance in the hundreds.

I am so proud of what we have been able to achieve in the wake of a year no one could have predicted. Our team is small, but mighty, and I am constantly amazed by the breadth of work we produce and the amount of impact we are able to have. I know that the years ahead will bring continued success for Allied for Startups and I hope you will continue to be a part of our journey.

Stay safe and healthy.

MELISSA BLAUSTEIN, Founder & CEO
Who we are?

Allied for Startups is a global network of over 45 startup organisations in 35 countries and 5 continents that represent the voice of startups in politics and government.

Our Mission

To create consensus on policies that can positively impact startups and grow digital entrepreneurship and the digital economy at large. We want to ensure that the voices of startups are heard in national governments and international organisations.

The Dream Team

Melissa Blaustein  
Founder & CEO

Benedikt Blomeyer  
Director for EU Policy

Daniel Dalton  
Senior Advisor

Manon Tabaczynsky  
Policy Officer

Ines Moreno  
Policy & Comunications Officer

Gaivandas Giedraitis  
Digital Health Fellow

Our Values

Our values define us. They govern the way we work internally as a team as well as externally with our Members, policy makers and other ecosystem stakeholders.

Positivity
In policy you’ll always meet twice. You will have a point of agreement with everyone. Our messaging is resolutely positive & optimistic.

Transparency and Accountability
Open and honest with each other about concerns, issues and questions with honesty and compassion.

Solution Oriented
Don’t ask how something can’t work, ask how it could work. If there is a problem, think of two solutions and approach a team member with them.

Always Learning
If you honestly tried your best and followed up, there’s only learnings. Be willing to fail to get it right.

We are Innovators
There’s no other company like this one! We’re innovators in the policy space, blazing the trail for startups around the world.

Empathy & Integrity
We’re a small team, we’re all helping each other and when something new comes up, chances are that we’re doing it for the first time.

Diversity and Inclusion
As a basic mindset - we don’t join manels. Diversity brings better ideas. Gender balance matters.

Commitment
We’re not just executing orders, we’re thinking things through. We are reliable.

Teamwork
We are a team for the good and the bad.
Continental Council

Our Continental Council is formed by leaders and CEOs of Allied for Startups’ Members. They are voted in by our members for a period of two years. Their role is to advise on our strategy and priorities.

Melissa Blaustein
Founder & CEO

Michael Mcgeary
Senior Strategist, Engine

Simon Schaefer
Founder & CEO, Factory

Doina Popa
Vice-President, Codette

Liz McCarthy
Executive Director, Scale Ireland

Dom Hallas
Executive Director, COADEC

Dash Dhakshinamoorthy
CEO, Startup Malaysia

Nicolas Brien
CEO, France Digitale

Partners

Our partners and affiliates support our activities, which are voted by our membership and laid down in our mandate.

Advisory Board

Our high level Board brings together a distinguished and diverse group of thought leaders in the fields of politics, finance, innovation and business. It helps shape and guide our overall strategy and provide critical insight into startup issues.

Kat Borlongan
Head, Le French Tech

Kathryn C. Brown
President and CEO of the Internet Society

Fran Burwell
Distinguished Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council

Marie Ekeland
Founder Daphni Fund and 2030 Fund

Eva Kaili
Member of the European Parliament

Robert Madelin
Chairman of FIPRA International Ltd

Matthew Tsayemi
Executive Director, China European International Business School, Ghana

Corporate Board

We are proud to be sponsored by our Corporate Board which supports our activities and helps us to achieve the goals chosen by our members.
Our Members

Allied for Startups’ Members are over 45 regional and national trade associations and not for profit organisations from 5 continents. They represent and support startups, entrepreneurs, investors, charities, and advocacy organisations in their national ecosystems.
Policy Priorities

As a global network of startup organisations we believe that policy that affects startups should be designed with the input of startups and with a global vision from day one.

Our priorities are determined by our Members and voted on every year at the Annual Summit.

Online Platforms

Online platforms have transformed the way people communicate and consume. Startups benefit from this thriving platform economy - it allows them grow, operate with little cost and connect easily with consumers and users. In the process of designing policies it’s important to identify an approach that takes into account startup ecosystems.

e-Health

Our DTx platform’s mission is to be the bridge between startups, policy makers and stakeholders in the European healthcare ecosystem in order to lower regulatory barriers, enhance growth and support innovation for startups. Startups can identify and push for improvements in regulations with a unified voice.

Competition Policy

Startups are born out of the very essence of competitive thought - they have the potential to challenge any established company, business-model or sector - and they do! Startups need giants to disrupt, competitors to outperform, users to love, who consume and co-create. The right frameworks will let them challenge legacy industries and create new value.

Data flows

Data is a key resource for startups. The more high-quality data founders have, the more they can train their products with it, which leads to better technologies and services for consumers and societies. The free flow of data gives entrepreneurs the chance to compete on the basis of their product or service, and not on the basis of having a deeper pocket.

Talent

Entrepreneurs start their businesses where conditions are best. Startups need simple procedures to attract and retain top talent. Startups need harmonised and unified rules around a European startup visa and stock option reform. Ultimately, the time investment and the administrative efforts will be lower and will enable entrepreneurs to focus on what they are best at-innovation.

Net neutrality

Net neutrality is the cornerstone of an open and fair digital economy. It ensures that all internet traffic is treated equally and that access to data from any provider is governed by a non-discrimination principle. Net neutrality gives startups an equal chance to compete in an open marketplace with large players on the basis of their products and services.

Artificial Intelligence

Forthcoming Artificial Intelligence legislation should be centered around providing a clear and straightforward framework for startup entrepreneurs to operate in. A harmonised European approach can pave the way for easier deployment and scale-up of AI across Europe and beyond.

Blockchain

Distributed Ledger Technologies or Blockchain is one of the emerging technologies with transformative potential for digital economy and citizens. Key innovators in this field are startups. With a clean slate and no entrenched way of doing things, they start with the problem and see blockchain as a solution. Startups should therefore also play a central role when it comes to policy formation on blockchain.

We have a unique opportunity to shape legislative proposals in order to create a more diverse, attractive and competitive tech landscape so that startups can grow exponentially.
COVID-19

Startups are full of potential, but they are also smaller and more vulnerable economic actors. It is therefore vital to ensure that startups have what they need to weather the economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. For that reason, from the start of the COVID-19 crisis we:

Created a Working Group:

To develop a common advocacy strategy, put startup to the service of COVID-19 solutions and the economic recovery.

Collected best practices

Our Members across the globe are formulating funding and policy recommendations from startups in their national and local ecosystems. We have been collecting and exchanging these to spread the options that work.

Expanded our thought leadership

by exploring the value of startups during the COVID-19 crisis as well as a valuable economic actor for the economic recovery. We have also been showcasing startups fighting the pandemic, especially under our Digital Health umbrella.

Startups' Recommendations

OUR 13 RECOMENDATIONS

We published 13 recommendations from startup organisations to national governments and international organisations in the fields of investment, talent and policy. It serves as a playbook for startup communities and stakeholders in the innovation community to advocate with their respective policy makers.

Addressed policy makers

We encourage policy makers in Europe and beyond to identify startups as key players in their long-term plans for economic growth. We wrote a Joint Letter to the President of the European Commission asking her to put startups at the center of economic recovery and to the solutions to COVID-19. We also wrote to Commissioner Vestager, asking her to ensure that urgent COVID-19-related liquidity support for startup ecosystems is not delayed or blocked by EU legislation. We are pleased that the Commission’s third revision of the State Aid Temporary Framework is extended for startups.

13 recommendations for the post-COVID-19 economic recovery

- Adapt the Temporary Framework on State aid liquidity
- Balance safeguards and financing needs of the economy
- Design EU funding programmes for startups
- Unleash private capital through a multi-tier plan
- Strengthen the roles of public funding
- Formulate procurement rules that are more open to startups
- Create an EU wide startup visa
- Unify and extend stock options schemes at the EU level
- Promote digital and entrepreneurial skills in education
- Provide entrepreneurs with a digital one-stop shop
- Shape legislative tools that welcome innovation
- Harmonise EU rules in the Single Market
- Enhance and simplify global trade for startups to scale
Our mission

The DSA4startups campaign brings the voices of startup entrepreneurs and ecosystem builders to EU policy makers with the goal of co-creating rules that empower platform startups.

Why?

Because the Digital Services Act has the potential to be the cornerstone of an open platform economy that promotes innovation in Europe. However, the new legislation could undercut the current framework and add burdensome requirements for startups. Our #DSA4startups campaign aims to ensure startups have a voice in legislation that impacts them.

How?

1. Economic study

To provide a baseline for the debate surrounding the upcoming Digital Services Act, we want to quantify the economic impact of a strong intermediary liability framework. The goal is to study the importance of the intermediary liability exemption for the broader economy, including gig economy workers and SMEs. Doing so will contribute to a more evidence-based political debate by adding sound economic analysis and an understanding of the wider role of strong limited liability rules.

Making the Digital Services Act startup-friendly

Digital Roadshow

Webinar series to inform and discuss the Digital Services Act with our Members and partners in their startup ecosystems. This includes authoring community statements, which we invite all entrepreneurs to co-sign! This campaign is designed to spark grassroots interest and engagement in this landmark European legislation.

Netherlands
Dutch Startup Association

Bulgaria and Romania
Codette and BESCO

Germany
Silicon Allee

Denmark
Dansk Iværksætter Forening

Brussels
AFS October 2020

Our mission

Ensure that EU policies benefit startups in healthcare.

Connect stakeholders, discuss challenges and share best practices.

Lead policy dialogues around digital health.

Facilitate and enhance cooperation among startups and stakeholders.

What we do

Monitor and identify opportunities for startups to engage with policy makers.

Bring startup entrepreneurs and communities together to raise awareness about EU policies.

Engage with and create opportunities for startups to engage with policy makers.

Speak on behalf of startup communities to promote research and opinion on digital health.

DTx Startups

DTx brings together startups, policymakers and other healthcare stakeholders, with the aim of improving the policy environment for startups and supporting innovation in the European health startup ecosystem. We have been growing our membership of startup champions, putting the spotlight on startups tackling COVID-19 and developing and partnering initiatives.

Online publications

- The European digital health startup ecosystem
- COVID-19 & digital health startups
- Telemicine in Europe startups

https://alliedforstartups.org/ongoing-projects/dsa-4-startups/
https://alliedforstartups.org/ongoing-projects/dtx/
Bridging the gap between policy makers and startups in Europe

In 2019, in the wake of European elections, we set ourselves the goal of forming an Intergroup on startups and scale-ups in the European Parliament. Our Europe @Startups campaign gathered more than 50 MEPs. Like most startups, we weren’t successful in our first attempt. We realised that we had created a network of tech savvy and startuppers MEPs, so we pivoted! In September 2019 we went underground and created: The Rocket Club!

The Rocket Club provides a platform for European policy makers to meet ecosystem builders and startup founders to exchange ideas, share best practices and co-create legislation that empowers innovation in Europe.

Great things happen when policy makers speak to startup entrepreneurs!

Facts & Figures

What we have produced and achieved this year in numbers:

- Engaged with +100 policy makers
- +50 Media mentions
- 2020
- 30 Speaking opportunities representing startups on stage at events & webinars
- 10 Letters to policy markers
  1. Commissioner Phil Hogan
  2. President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen
  3. Commissioner Margrethe Vestager
  4. World Trade Organisation
  5. Members of the European Parliament
- 20 Policy briefings and issue sheets
- 6 Policy Reports
- 7 Policy consultation submissions
- +150 Own editorial content pieces.

https://alliedforstartups.org/ongoing-projects/rocket-club/