

2026



The International AI Summit | October 2026 | Dublin, Ireland

An Open Economy and a Simple Rulebook

The S9+ Dublin Statement | 2026



Europe will become a global AI leader by enabling its startups to build, buy, scale and sell faster than anyone else. This cannot be achieved by isolating ourselves from the world. Instead, we want to focus on building the right conditions for future global European AI champions to thrive.

We, the S9+ Coalition of national startup associations, representing founders and scaleups across 13 European digital frontrunner countries, welcome the Summit's focus on harnessing AI for Europe's competitiveness. Here are our four guiding principles for the EU institutions and the Member States gathered in Dublin.

An Open, Strong Economy to Leverage Europe

Sovereignty is the ability to choose, switch and reduce critical dependencies through strength. Europe should invest in creating the conditions for scalable, high-quality innovation in order to build the world's best next-generation technology, while remaining open, creating innovation and wealth to support a stronger European tech presence globally. This should be supported by a combination of targeted regulatory measures and market incentives.

Anchor the Tech Sovereignty Package in Openness, Interoperability and Choice:

European startups should have access to state-of-the-art technology without being excluded by localisation mandates and forced "European-only" procurement criteria. The level of criticality should be anchored in verifiable, auditable, technical and operational controls. Furthermore, pilot-to-procurement pathways and mutual recognition of references should be established to increase purchasing from startups.

Remove Funding Barriers:

Europe has a massive late-stage funding gap. To keep European startups and scaleups in Europe, we urge the EU to map, assess and remove barriers preventing capital from flowing to any Member State at all funding stages, including institutional and pension fund investments and to integrate the EU capital markets. Additionally, GBER and Rescue & Restructuring rules should be startup-compatible.

Acknowledge M&A as a Sign of Ecosystem Health:

In the ongoing review of the Merger Guidelines, ensure they promote innovation and give innovative companies access to talent, infrastructure and the markets needed to scale.

Open Public Data Access as the Raw Material of European AI:

Analysing publicly available information is critical for AI development and adoption. High-value datasets fuel startups and must be broadly available for AI training.

Coherence and Clarity in the Digital Rulebook

What Europe's founders need now is one coherent, proportionate implementation of the existing regulation, not 27 interpretations and a second wave of guidance, codes and standards that each add a compliance layer.

One AI Act, One Interpretation:

National authorities must adopt the AI Office's guidance in full and treat it as binding, and a classification decision on a startup by one authority should be valid in every Member State. Run AI regulatory sandboxes jointly across Member States, as Article 57 of the AI Act allows, and recognise sandbox outcomes in every Member State. Use the Digital Omnibus to remove overlaps between the AI Act and the GDPR, the Data Act and product-safety rules before the high-risk obligations of the AI Act apply. The regulatory regime must place startups at its heart with clear, concise guidance and proportionality.

Easy Access to Cloud

European startups run on cloud. The goal is to increase compute capacity, not to decide which cloud they use, and to make sure they can use any cloud, move between clouds, have a visible entry point in the EuroHPC AI Factories, and never lose access to the compute startups need. Enabling a thriving ecosystem where European startups and scaleups can innovate and grow within a competitive yet predictable framework is the key to improving the EU's capabilities on cloud and AI development.

Enforce the Data Act's Switching Rules before Writing New Ones:

The Commission should publish a provider-compliance scoreboard twice a year and act on it, instead of adding a Cloud and AI Development Act layer with new certification duties on customers.

Keep the EU Cloud Sovereignty Framework Voluntary and Technology-Neutral:

Sovereignty scoring must reward quality, interoperability, open standards and abolition of switching charges, not headquarters location. No procurement rule should force a startup to build twice or abandon the cloud it was built on; instead, invest in the quality and attractiveness of alternatives. Additionally, any requirements targeting "critical sectors" must not unintentionally limit startups and scaleups' ability to access the infrastructure and services they need to innovate and scale.



End Fragmentation with Simplification & Harmonisation

A founder in Tallinn, Lisbon or Dublin should be able to incorporate, hire, sell and operate across the Union as if it were one country. Today, there are 27 different regulatory regimes.

Deliver EU Inc. in 2027. Adopt the 28th Regime as a Regulation, Not a Directive:

A single digital entry point for incorporation within 48 hours, a harmonised employee stock option framework across Europe to help retain and recruit staff of innovative companies.

A Genuine EU Startup Visa and Harmonised Work Permits:

This would allow non-EU talent recruited in one Member State to work in any other within 30 days. As a first step, Member States should mutually recognise each other's existing national startup visas.

Deliver a Genuine Risk-Based Digital Omnibus Reform that Works in Practice:

Member States need to deliver a true simplification of the overlapping digital regimes established in the GDPR and the ePrivacy Directive, a real reduction in burdens on businesses, a pragmatic consent mechanism allowing low-risk operations and a clear legal basis unlocking data for innovation and AI training.

Establish a Single European Startup Security Clearance:

Mutual recognition of facility and personnel clearances across Member States, allowing a scaleup cleared in one country to bid in all 27 and access the NATO 1.5%-of-GDP commitment, which explicitly covers innovation.

Follow the Recommendations of 13 Member States to Make 2027 a Year of Simplification and Implementation:

We encourage the Commission to follow these recommendations and deliver on its promise of true simplification to boost EU competitiveness. Harmonised implementation must be the key priority, instead of introducing new overlapping, unclear regulatory requirements and duplicative reporting.

Adopt a "Scale First" Test for Every New Digital and AI Initiative:

Before any new horizontal digital legislation is proposed, the Commission should publish a cumulative-burden assessment covering the GDPR, the Data Act, the AI Act, NIS2, the CRA and DORA together. Pause the Digital Fairness Act and focus instead on better enforcement of the consumer acquis. Furthermore, ensure AI innovation is a key priority in the copyright framework and for data protection authorities, to foster innovation, competitiveness and growth.

The S9+ Commitment

We will measure your delivery. We will evaluate progress at each of our future summits, tracking the guiding principles above. Rules do not create power; power shapes the rules.

Sg+

 adigital

 Czech
startup
association

 DANISH
ENTREPRENEURS EST. 1985

 dsa

 ESTECH

 Estonian
Founders
Society

 Finnish
Startup Community

 PULSE Luxembourg Startup Association

 Scale Ireland

 scale-ups.eu
startups.be

 START:UP
SLOVENIA

 STARTUP
POLAND

 STARTUP
PORTUGAL

 SWEDISH INCUBATORS
& SCIENCE PARKS