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#EU4Digital

Annual EU4Digital Startups and Innovation Forum 2023:

‘Digital technologies for the wide-reaching digital upskilling of SMEs in the Eastern Partnership’

Location: Online

When: 9 March 2023, 10:00 - 13:00 (Brussels time)
Equivalent to the following local times -
Moldova, Ukraine: 11:00 - 14:00
Belarus: 12:00 - 15:00
Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia: 13:00 - 16:00

Language: English

Concept: The ICT innovation governance forum is an annual high-level meeting of the leaders of the ICT innovation and startup ecosystem in the Eastern Partnership region. It is a regional catalyst and venue to discuss strategic plans with the EU.

The forum will bring together key policy makers (vice-ministers, heads of departments) and other experts who are engaged in ICT innovation and startup ecosystem development in the region. The event will provide a platform to share best practices and discuss the future of the ICT innovation and startup ecosystem and its particular dimensions, challenges and means for deeper cooperation.

The first innovation forum was held in January 2022 under the theme ‘Innovative solutions for the development of startup ecosystems in the Eastern Partnership’. That event culminated with the launch of the Eastern Partnership Startups ecosystem platform (eapstartups.co).

This year, the second forum will focus on digital skills and the initiation of the EU4Digital EdTech Hub for upskilling of SMEs.

Goal of the event: Provide the venue for key policy makers and ICT innovation ecosystem actors, including EU, EaP and international donors, to share experiences and strategic plans regarding support of digital skills for SMEs, helping to reach the goal to [upskill 1 million people](#) in the Eastern partner countries.



Objectives of the event:

1. Increase awareness about strategic EU policies and support to the EaP region in the area of digital skills for SMEs, as well as relevant programmes and initiatives of international donors;
2. Present the forthcoming EdTech Hub educational programme for enhancement of digital competencies in the Eastern partner countries;
3. Facilitate discussions on current and upcoming EaP policies for digital upskilling of SMEs as well as potential international cooperation and future needs.

Target audience in the EaP countries:

- Ministerial-level representatives and agencies coordinating the development of the innovation ecosystem.
- Innovation and SME support agencies.
- IT associations and networks of SMEs with a focus on digital markets; innovation clusters.
- Key online digital skills platform operators.

AGENDA

Timing (CET)	Topics and speakers
9:50 – 10:00	Connection – the session will start at 10:00 sharp
10:00 – 10:10	OPENING <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High level EC representative
10:10 – 10:20	WELCOMING NOTE: EU strategy and policy agenda on support of SMEs digital skills and support plans for the Eastern Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EC representative
10:20 – 10:40	KEYNOTE SPEECH: Using Edtech to scale digital upskilling <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Riaz Shah, Partner, Global Learning Leader EY
10:40 – 11:30	PANEL: Digital upskilling of SMEs in the Eastern Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State of play in Eastern partner countries• Discussion: existing solutions and remaining challenges to support digital skills in the EaP• Ministerial representative of each EaP country (AM, AZ, GE, MD, UA)
11:30 – 11:40	Q&A session
11:40 – 12:00	PRESENTATION: Forthcoming EdTech Hub platform: engineering for and with EaP stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artūras Piliponis, EU4Digital Facility Team Leader, Partner at EY
12:00 – 12:10	Q&A session
12:10 – 12:40	TOUR DE TABLE: Donor supported initiatives and strategic plans for digital upskilling of SMEs in the Eastern Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Donor organisations
12:40 – 12:50	Q&A session
12:50 – 13:00	CLOSING REMARKS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DG NEAR, European Commission