



StartupDelta

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VIA: NEELIE KROES, SPECIAL ENVOY FOR STARTUPS & SIGRID JOHANNISSE, DIRECTOR STARTUPDELTA

StartupDelta has accomplished its key indicator: reaching the top 3 of the best European Startup ecosystems! In less than 1 1/2 year. Or even better: In the [Startup Nation Scoreboard the Netherlands ranks nr1](#), thanks to an overall adoption rate of 72 % of policy actions recommended in the [Startup Leaders Manifesto](#).

Of course, we are very pleased with this milestone. Although some people might be wondering how it is possible that the same person, who once commissioned the [Startup Manifesto](#), now also runs off with the first prize, being Special Envoy for Startups in the Netherlands?

Coincidences do happen occasionally. When [Kaj Hed](#), [Daniel Ek](#), [Niklas Zennstrom](#), [Joanna Shields](#) and other European Startup Leaders sat together in March 2013 on the invitation of Neelie Kroes, at that time being Vice-president for the Digital Agenda, they did it reluctantly. Writing a piece of paper on necessary policy actions to boost entrepreneurship and startups in Europe was not their thing, so to say. But once they started talking about their experiences, lessons learned and failures, they became inspired to contribute enthusiastically to the good cause. They represented the first scale ups in Europe and were the living proof that Silicon Valley didn't need to be replicated to be successful. Some of the Startup Leaders, like Joanna, or [Zaryn Dentzel](#), even came from the US to Europe. Kaj Hed mentioned as his greatest lesson learned that a founder needed to be creative and fearless. He said that Europe should realise that if you become second, you have lost. A winners mentality is key in order to become a global player.

When the Startup Manifesto was published, founders in about ten European countries followed the example and published a national manifesto. **Last year the European Digital Forum decided to benchmark all the proposed policy actions mentioned in the Manifesto. A whole movement was born and at this moment the European Digital Forum is working on a second European manifesto.** The updated version will be presented this year which, without a doubt, will be more focussed on scale ups in Europe. A lot of things have happened in the last three years and soon we will be talking about a scale up nation scoreboard.

This leads to the question: do rankings matter? "Yes", we said straight from the beginning with StartupDelta. Rankings mean visibility, as well as benchmarking. They can trigger

positive action and learning from each other. You want to know what you are good at and what needs to be improved compared to your peers. It can stimulate competition and an outward looking attitude.

Over the last one and a half year, the Netherlands has done very well in all the startup related rankings. Coming from nothing, by the way. This is nothing to be complacent about. Countries are becoming more and more competitive, when it is about building a climate which fosters innovation and startups. There is still a lot of work to be done! For instance using all the potential talent Europe has and stimulating diversity.

Related to this, another ranking which was launched last week at [the London Stock Exchange](#), was [the Inspiring Fifty](#) with the names of the [50 leading Tech Women in Europe](#). A great initiative by Janneke Niessen. The i50 is an amazing and diverse group in age and background. There is no denying that there aren't enough talented top women around. There is a huge untapped potential around in Europe. We need to foster female entrepreneurship and women in Tech. No doubt. The role models are everywhere and the amazing best seller [Project Prep](#), a book about girls in Tech, showed that young girls are very eager to become part of the tech scene, as long as you involve them in a way that appeals to them. Getting rid of a psychological threshold of decades, not to mention centuries. This doesn't sound like rocket science, but still it is easier to send a missile to the moon than to change communication. It is about being able to change perspective from a girl's point of view and talking the same language. How difficult can it be? You wonder. During the Startup Fest Europe we will be hosting an event around the Inspiring Fifty in the Netherlands and will share many more inspiring best- practices.

Changing perspective is key to startups and new business models. It is in their DNA. It is also key to make a change in government policy. Last week [the new law on innovative procurement](#) was discussed in Parliament. The Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs, Henk Kamp, welcomed the proposal by StartupDelta to evaluate the innovative approaches by the 5 largest cities in the Netherlands in order to come up with better models for innovative public procurement that involve startups. This will be a good test case if the space, which is created in the new Dutch law, is providing sufficient experimental room for newcomers and will inspire national procurement processes to open up to startups. The Dutch government could play a tremendous role as launching customer for startups. Risks can be managed! This is a very good step towards the future.

Talking about changing perspective, the young can teach the older generation. Next week, on Wednesday, the Prime Minister Mark Rutte, the Minister for Education Sander Dekker and Neelie will be taught coding by kids in Primary School. Don't miss it! Check our [twitter account!](#)

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