

**ONE24 Startup Manifesto**

# **A New Dawn for EU Innovation**

Innovators, frontrunners, and founders fighting for  
the new generation of startups in Europe

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# Empower the foundation of tomorrow by integrating startups in future legislation

The dawn of 2024 heralds a fresh era for the European Union as the Belgian presidency assumes the helm of the European Council on January 1. Belgium, known for its rich history and vibrant culture, now leads the EU in steering the course of innovation and progress.

With a legacy rooted in technological advancements, cultural influence, and societal development, Belgium, is now in the driver's seat when it comes to navigating the European Union into a prosperous future during uncertain times.

The Belgian Presidency takes charge during the year of election, emphasizing the urgency to finalize essential legislative pieces within the current mandate. Yet, a delicate balance must be maintained to ensure that foundational legislation is not hastily rushed.

Startups and the European Union is a co-dependant partnership - The one needs the other. Startups are in need of legislative rails and The European Union is in need of the cutting edge technology that startups can provide. The Belgian Presidency's commitment to advancing the EU's transition into the digital decade is welcomed.

However, with this manifesto, we call for a thoughtful evaluation that urges the Presidency to pause and consider whether the repeal or modification of legislation with unintended consequences is necessary.

As the European Union continues to refine its approach to tech regulation, startups find themselves at the forefront of change.

This manifesto will navigate through the intricate web of policies, compliance frameworks, and legal landscapes that shape the environment in which startups operate.

The key policy issues for startups this year include the conclusion of a protracted marathon negotiation on artificial intelligence, which still needs to be ratified.

The Belgian Presidency's promise to revisit the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the ongoing debate on net neutrality, and the concerning decline in investments into innovative startups all underscore the need for strategic attention.

In this pivotal juncture, the call is for the Belgian Presidency not only to lead but also to reassess, ensuring that the integration of startups into future legislation becomes a cornerstone for a thriving and resilient European Union.

Sincerely yours,

Johann Svane  
Head of Policy, Danish Entrepreneurs

# We call upon the Belgian Presidency to...


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## Ensure that the groundbreaking deal on artificial intelligence incorporates startups' perspectives

We wholeheartedly support the EU's groundbreaking efforts to establish a robust regulatory framework for artificial intelligence (AI). While we commend the Commission's initial risk-based approach, we express our concern about the recent departure from this approach. This deviation could potentially stifle innovation and hinder the growth of AI startups within the EU. A thriving AI ecosystem also requires a steady inflow of capital. If the EU's Artificial Intelligence Act (AIA) fails to adequately support innovation, it could hinder the attraction of capital from external sources, potentially slowing down the development of AI startups within the EU.

To safeguard the European AI ecosystem and foster innovation, we urge the Belgian Presidency to uphold the original risk-based framework. By adhering to this approach, the EU can strike a balance between regulating AI responsibly and fostering innovation. Any last-minute changes that deviate from this framework could jeopardize the EU's ambitious AI agenda and hinder the potential of European startups to excel in this rapidly evolving field.

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*Regulators should invest time in understanding the intricacies of AI tools, beyond the hype, ensuring that regulations are grounded in the actual capabilities and applications of the technology.*

Tomek Snazyk, CEO of Startup Poland

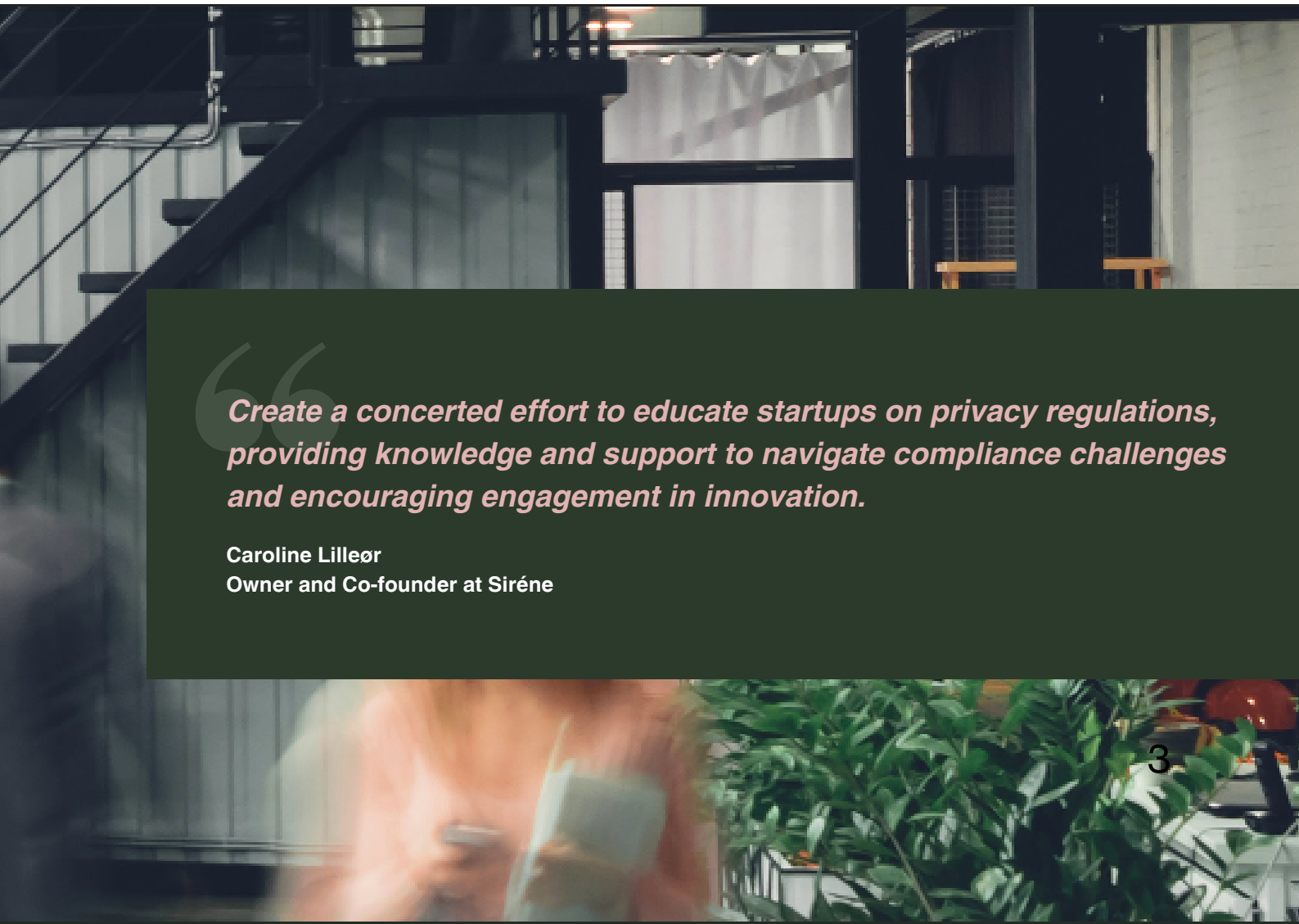
## Prioritize privacy focusing on GDPR

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As the European Commission proposes a law to bolster GDPR enforcement, there is a plea for maintaining the delicate balance necessary for startups to thrive without triggering a comprehensive reform of the existing legislation. The commitment of the Belgian Presidency to oversee and enhance procedural rules is seen as a step towards more robust data protection mechanisms.

We urge the Belgian Presidency to prioritize strengthening the enforcement of existing rules while refraining from introducing any new regulations that could further burden startups. By upholding the GDPR's integrity while safeguarding the one-stop-shop mechanism, we can ensure that startups can continue to innovate and thrive in a data-driven world without compromising data protection standards.

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*Create a concerted effort to educate startups on privacy regulations, providing knowledge and support to navigate compliance challenges and encouraging engagement in innovation.*

**Caroline Lilleør**  
Owner and Co-founder at Siréne


## Continuing to uphold net neutrality as the cornerstone of innovation and growth

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Unrestricted access to the internet plays a pivotal role for startups in Europe, serving as a foundational principle within the European internet infrastructure. The principle of net neutrality is advantageous for startups by enabling the global provision of products and services, fostering economic growth, addressing escalating consumer demands, and expanding consumer choices. The open internet, combined with the existing infrastructure, ensures a level playing field for companies of all sizes, irrespective of their resources and should continue to do so.

We urge the Belgian presidency to prevent any alterations to the present state of the internet, as such changes would not only complicate the global competitive landscape for European companies and startups but also risk triggering an adverse ripple effect that could negatively affect the market reach and growth prospects of numerous companies.

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*Let discussions on net neutrality recognize the potential negative impact of network fees on startups and strive to maintain a level playing field where both startups and global giants can thrive.*

**Peter Kofler, Chairman of Danish Entrepreneurs**



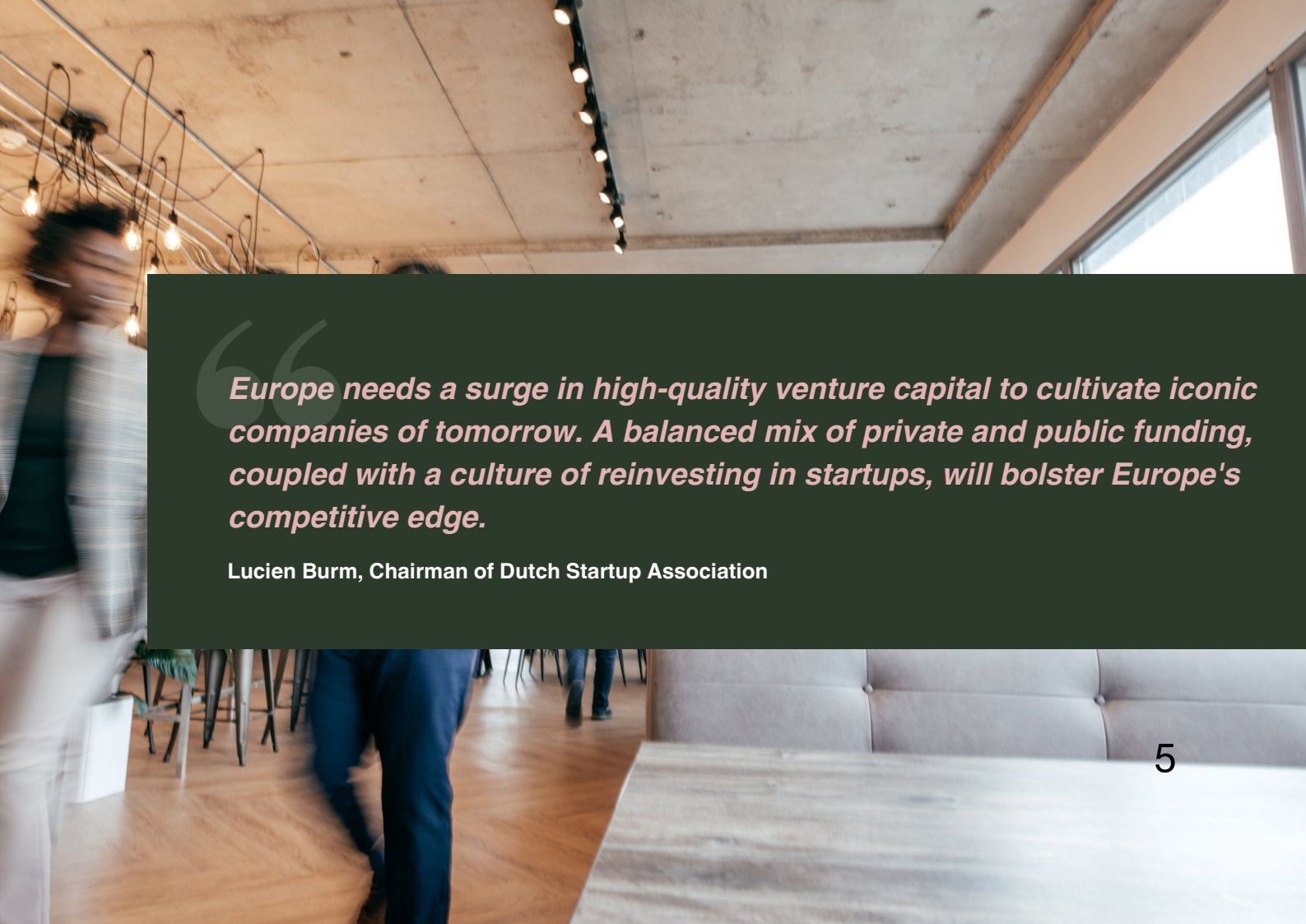
## Foster investment and improve access to capital

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In the ever-evolving quest for global competitiveness, this discussion takes center stage to unravel the pivotal role of investing in innovation as the catalyst for propelling Europe forward. This discussion goes beyond financial considerations, delving into the role of public and private sectors in fostering a culture of innovation across European corporates, institutional investors and public organizations.

We urge the Belgian presidency to streamline regulatory processes, give tax incentives, and implement supportive frameworks that encourage risk-taking and innovation.

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*Europe needs a surge in high-quality venture capital to cultivate iconic companies of tomorrow. A balanced mix of private and public funding, coupled with a culture of reinvesting in startups, will bolster Europe's competitive edge.*

Lucien Burm, Chairman of Dutch Startup Association


## Consider a temporary pause and deregulate existing regulatory frameworks

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At Danish Entrepreneurs, we recognize the importance of responsible regulation in navigating the ever-evolving technological landscape. However, we also advocate for a balanced approach that fosters innovation while upholding ethical principles. Recent regulatory developments, particularly those driven by technological advancements, have raised concerns within the startup community hindering the growth of European innovators and potentially stifling innovation across the continent.

We urge both the EU and the Belgian Presidency to take proactive measures to address these concerns and promote a more conducive environment for innovation. This includes revisiting existing regulations and implementing a temporary pause on introducing new legislation in areas where startups face undue burdens.

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A background image showing a person holding a smartphone. The phone screen displays a photo of a person in a blue uniform playing a tuba. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor event or concert.

*An effort to review and update outdated laws, ensuring that new regulations are clear, predictable, and supportive of startup growth in the ever-evolving tech landscape.*

**Johann Svane**  
Head of Policy, Danish Entrepreneurs

# Contributors of the ONE24 Startup Manifesto

The contributors to the ONE24 Startup Manifesto represent startups in their native countries and collaborate on raising the voice of startups in Europe, bringing together founders and policy-makers, and advocating for startup-friendly policies in the European Union.

This manifesto is a product of policy workshops and the conclusions are therefore not a final position of every signee but a benchmark of which concerns roam the ecosystem.

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