Welcome to the latest edition of the EIT Digital newsletter!

Europe is buzzing with bold moves to shape its digital future. In this issue, we spotlight game-changing initiatives that boost strategic autonomy, fast-track innovation, and fuel inclusive growth across the continent.

We begin with an invitation to the Brussels launch of the **Makers & Shapers Report on Digital and Defence Innovation** for Europe's Strategic Autonomy. Organised by EIT Digital under the auspices of the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU, the event will convene leaders from policy, industry, and academia to explore the intersection of digital innovation and Europe's defence capabilities.

In our **Grow Digital Insights** feature, Asier Rufino Bengoechea, founder of Tecnalia Ventures, examines the central role of Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) in powering Europe's deep tech ecosystem. His analysis outlines a roadmap for **translating scientific excellence into scalable industrial impact**, technological sovereignty, and resilient regional growth.

This month also brings a new opportunity for small and medium-sized enterprises. As part of the **SME4DD initiative**, EIT Digital and the CURIUM project are co-hosting a joint webinar designed to help SMEs in France, Italy, Hungary, and Sweden gain practical expertise in AI, blockchain, and cybersecurity.

Finally, we spotlight four initiatives advancing collaboration and inclusion across Europe: the **UNITE** matchmaking platform and upcoming €4M open call for health innovation; a public survey by the **ACHIEVE** project to co-design a new Master's programme in Cloud and High-Performance Computing; **Women in Digital**'s call for

best practices to close the digital gender divide, and **NEXTCHAIN**, a pan-European matchmaking platform designed to accelerate cross-border collaboration and connect innovation stakeholders, year-round.

As always, thanks for being part of the EIT Digital community.

Let's grow digital — together.

Makers & Shapers Report: Digital & Defence Innovation for Europe's Strategic Autonomy

What happens when Europe's top digital minds meet defence innovation? You get the *Makers & Shapers Report on Digital and Defence Innovation for Europe's Strategic Autonomy*—and it's launching live in Brussels.

On **October 15**, join EIT Digital at the **Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU** for a high-impact half-day event featuring the official release of the report, keynote sessions, expert panels, and deep dives into cybersecurity, dual-use tech, and Europe's digital independence.

Expect serious networking, fresh insights, and an inside look at how Europe plans to lead in digital defence.

Practical information:

- **Doors open** at 13:15 with **registrations and networking coffee** from 13:30
- **Celebratory cocktail reception:** following the event
- **Access:** Please note that entry to the Permanent Representation of Estonia

to the EU is restricted and requires presentation of a valid ID card. **We kindly ask you to arrive in advance.**

RSVP by Oct 10: Register here

Deep Tech, Real Stakes: How Europe Can Lead the Next Industrial Wave

Science isn't the problem—scaling it is. In the latest *Grow Digital Insights*, Asier Rufino Bengoechea, founder of Tecnalia Ventures, dives into how Europe's Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) are quietly powering a deep tech revolution. The goal? Turn cutting-edge science into scalable, industrial innovation.

Why it matters: Despite 95% of patents going unused and most SMEs underutilizing IP, Europe's RTOs—like Fraunhofer, CEA, and TECNALIA—have launched 4,000+ deep tech startups in the past decade. These aren't apps—they're tech solutions tackling real-world challenges in health, energy, mobility, and climate.

The challenge: Deep tech takes time. Teams often lack business skills, investors lack patience, and success is still measured in unicorns—not in long-term impact. Rufino calls for a shift toward **"Pegasus"** metrics: job creation, supply chain integration, and tech sovereignty.

Read the full article

SME4DD – CURIUM Joint Webinar

The **SME4DD** ("Training SMEs for the Digital Decade") initiative—which delivers short-term training programs in AI, blockchain, and cybersecurity across Europe—is teaming up with **CURIUM** for a **joint webinar** that brings practical digital upskilling directly to SMEs.

This collaboration merges SME4DD's mission of empowering SMEs with strategic digital knowledge, with CURIUM's expertise in industry-relevant insights and solutions.

What's on the Agenda?
This webinar offers a fast-track, **hands-on introduction** to emerging digital tools and frameworks—designed for SMEs eager to adapt. Expect sessions covering:

- **Real-world use cases** in AI, Blockchain, and Cybersecurity.
- Guidance for **business managers, product owners, and developers** on implementing digital solutions within SME contexts.

Why It Matters for SMEs

- Empowers small businesses in **France, Italy, Hungary, and Sweden** with actionable tech expertise.
- Acts as a gateway to more immersive formats within SME4DD—like workshops, seminars, and the Executive Programme in Strategic Digital Technologies for SMEs.

Register here

In Other News: Health Innovation, Cloud Skills & Inclusive Tech

Looking to shape Europe's digital and health future? Start here.

 UNITE, the €20M Regional Innovation Valleys project, has launched a new **matchmaking platform** to help organisations—from startups to hospitals—co-create deep tech solutions for healthy aging. Over 100 partners across 8 EU regions are already onboard. And coming this **October**, the **first €4M Open Call** will fund cross-border projects focused on **remote care** and **health data interoperability**.
 Register for the matchmaking

 ☐ Meanwhile, the **ACHIEVE** project is building a new **Master's programme in Cloud and High-Performance Computing**—and wants your input. Experts can help shape the curriculum by filling out a quick survey by **30 September**
 Take the survey

 And over at **Women in Digital**, digital inclusion is taking the spotlight. The initiative is calling on policymakers, NGOs, and ICT players to share **best practices** for bridging the digital gender divide. Your submission could help shape future policy and programs across Europe
 Submit yours

 NEXTCHAIN is now live—your year-round gateway to cross-border innovation. Powered by EIT Digital, PRIMOM, Poznan Science and Technology Park, DigitalTech EDIH, and other partners, NEXTCHAIN offers expert-led forums,

B2Match networking, and showcase events spotlighting Europe's most promising digital solutions. Join tech providers, R&D centres, and businesses in a pan-European matchmaking experience designed to drive collaboration across sectors like healthcare, agri-food, and digital transformation.

Register now