

Date: September 18, 2025

Topic: European Research and Innovation Days 16-17 September 2025

*This one-pager provides an overview of the key messages shared during the Research and Innovation Days 2025. It does not offer an in-depth analysis or interpretation of the discussions but instead captures the main points and priorities highlighted by speakers and participants. The aim is to give readers a clear and accessible snapshot of the event's central themes to serve as a reference for current and future activities within the European research and innovation landscape.*

## TALENT - FUNDING - SCALING UP

**Europe as a global innovation hub** The Commission's efforts focus on turning research and ideas into future industries.

**Talent attraction** The "Choose Europe" initiative boosts ERC applications and creates opportunities for young researchers.

**Startup and scaleup support** New funds, accelerator networks, and business-friendly regulations are designed to make Europe a top location for growth.

**Horizon Europe and funding coordination** Doubling the budget helps, but public-private and cross-member-state alignment is crucial; simplification and faster access to funds are also needed.

**Strategic focus and national alignment** There is an emphasis on technology adoption, sustainability, dual-use research, societal impact, and coordinated national R&I efforts.

Watch the session here: [Beyond the Horizon: future funding for R&I](#)

## ROADBLOCKS AND ACCELERATORS FOR THE EU AUTOMOTIVE COMPETITIVENESS

*"Without a strong manufacturing activity, we won't have innovation in Europe."*

**Joint initiatives contribute to the alignment of European automotive research and innovation priorities** through the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) and Joint Undertakings.

The **battery sector** represents a strategic priority for Europe, and its successful development requires sustained investment in talent, infrastructure, and dedicated support mechanisms. **Funding and scaling opportunities provided under Horizon Europe and BATT4EU** play a central role in enabling industrial deployment.

In the context of intensifying global competition, Europe must **strengthen partnerships, promote technological openness**, and increase the share of European content across the value chain. Moreover,

manufacturing constitutes a critical driver of innovation, and **reinforcing European production capacity** is indispensable **to ensuring long-term competitiveness**.

Watch the session here: [Driving R&I Forward: roadblocks and accelerators for the EU automotive competitiveness](#)

## DUAL-USE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Global geopolitical tensions highlight the **strategic urgency of strengthening European innovation and defence investment**, while ensuring a balance between openness and technological sovereignty. **Civilian-driven technologies** play a pivotal role in delivering **cost-effective dual-use applications**, as has been demonstrated in the context of Ukraine.

**Expanding access to research funds for dual-use purposes, coupled with joint procurement mechanisms**, closer NATO–EU cooperation, and the mobilisation of the NATO Innovation Fund, can significantly contribute to building and scaling Europe’s defence innovation ecosystem.

Watch the session here: [Dual-use research and innovation: opportunities and challenges](#)

## EUROPEAN STARTUP AND SCALEUP STRATEGY

**FASTER COMPANY REGISTRATION**

**A TRUE EU SINGLE MARKET**

**MORE STARTUPS AND UNICORNS HEADQUARTERED IN EUROPE**

**“EU INC.” AS A GLOBAL MAGNET FOR FOUNDERS**

### *Main challenges*

Deep tech companies in Europe continue to face **significant challenges in accessing large-scale funding**, often relying on US investors despite Europe’s strong track record in technology development. This underscores a **persistent gap between technological excellence**, on the one hand, **and market creation and scaling**, on the other.

**Fragmented regulatory frameworks on taxation, licensing, and administrative procedures** further hinder growth, while a **risk-averse investment culture** limits the availability of early-stage capital. In addition, the public sector seldom acts as a first customer, leaving an **innovation procurement gap** that weakens commercialization pathways. As a result, **European scaleups remain highly dependent on external capital**, with approximately 70 percent of funding originating from non-European sources.



### *Implementation and proposed solutions*

Establishing a **common European Union definition of startups**, accompanied by a dedicated scoreboard, will enable systematic tracking of progress across the ecosystem. Annual surveys and forums will be conducted to gather feedback and insights from stakeholders. **Harmonization of tax, labour, and regulatory frameworks** is essential to reduce fragmentation and create a more conducive environment for growth.

Moreover, the proposed **Scale Up Europe Fund**, as a public-private EU partnership, can mobilize substantial investments and attract global investors. Developing a **trusted investor network** will encourage collaboration and blended financing from multiple sources. Active engagement of large corporates in startup scaling, supported by potential tax incentives for procuring from startups, will foster market development.

Strengthening **cross-European collaboration** will connect ecosystems and support companies in retaining their intellectual property and headquarters within Europe. Finally, cultivating a **global mindset** among startups, including the pursuit of early international presence, will help attract diverse investment and enhance competitiveness.

#### **EASIER STARTS AND FAIR ACCESS TO FINANCE**

##### **CLOSE THE SCALE-UP FUNDING GAP AND FOSTER EUROPEAN EXITS**

##### **CUT FRICTION, UNLOCK CAPITAL AND SUPPORT INNOVATION PROCUREMENT**

### *How to commercialise breakthrough research*

*“Let’s be fast. Don’t waste time. Turn research into business. Make Europe competitive.”*

**Stronger support for spinouts** is essential to ensure market relevance, societal impact, rapid deals, and effective backing for founders through intellectual property and legal support, training opportunities, and proof-of-concept funding.

**Enhanced collaboration and scaling mechanisms**, including joint startup factories, early corporate engagement, and strengthened pan-European linkages, are required to overcome market fragmentation. **Intellectual property must be recognised as a key driver of growth**, with innovative models of **university–startup collaboration**—such as the transfer of patents in exchange for “virtual shares”—facilitating broader impact while reducing fragmentation and transaction costs.

#### **FUNDING ACCESS - ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET - ACADEMIA–INDUSTRY LINKS - COLLABORATION**

Watch the sessions here: [Building a Startup Powerhouse: The European Startup and Scaleup Strategy](#) | [Scaleup funding for Europe’s competitiveness](#) | [Let’s talk business – how to commercialise breakthrough research](#)