

Press release 4 June Turku, Finland

New Think Tank will promote the Baltic Sea Region a world leader in the digital economy

“Top of Digital Europe” is a new Think Tank initiative that will address key topics related to ICT as a driver for growth and competitiveness in the Baltic Sea Region.

“Top of Digital Europe” was launched on 3 June 2014 by Baltic Development Forum (BDF) and Microsoft at the 16th BDF Summit in Turku, Finland, during a high level plenary session on the digital economy.

Among the speakers were the Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen of Finland and Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas of Estonia, Craig Shank, Vice President of Microsoft and other representatives of industry and ICT policies.

The first report of the Think Tank - “Searching for the Micro Multinationals” – was presented at the Summit. The report is elaborated by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) on behalf of BDF and Microsoft. It addresses the challenges faced by SMEs in the ICT sector when they want to grow and expand across borders.

“Micro-Multinationals” is a new type of ICT-fueled SMEs with a global market and a scaling business plan. They have a remarkable, but often not fully realized potential to boost the economy. However, we know very little about them and their conditions. Cross-border networks, education and recruitment of relevant skills as well as technology adoption in public support systems are common core challenges among the companies interviewed in the report. We need to activate adequate solutions as micro multinationals and the Baltic Sea Region has all the prerequisites to become a global forerunner in promoting ICT-driven startups and SMEs.

“The Nordic/Baltic region is one of the world’s leading ICT powerhouses”, says Craig Shank, VP and Assistant General Counsel, Microsoft International. “In the last decade, Microsoft has invested more deeply in this region than in any other part of the world. I am convinced that Top of Digital Europe will be a source of inspiration to overcome the challenges together.”

“The digital sector is crucial for our economy. With still tougher global competition, we must work hard to maintain our leading position as a world leading ICT region”, says Lene Espersen, Chairman of BDF and former Minister of Economy and Business Affairs of Denmark. “We need to focus on joint business-society opportunities and actions. Together we can release a huge potential by joint cross-border efforts within talents, Big Data, e-governance and other key areas within the ICT sector. Top of Digital Europe will bring forward ideas and showcases to inspire Europe and the world.”

“Top of Digital Europe” will

- identify key issues and develop solutions related to ICT as a growth driver and the digital economy
- strengthen competitiveness through innovative cross-border actions
- be agenda-setting by creating and stimulating a dynamic discussion on growth through ICT
- address decision makers at regional, national and European level as well as key stakeholders

Baltic Development Forum is the leading think-tank and network for high level decision-makers from business, politics, academia and media in the Baltic Sea Region. Its mission is to position the Baltic Sea Region in the EU and on the global map by advancing the growth and competitive potential through partnerships between business, government and academia.

sustainable growth
innovation
competitiveness



Photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/baltic-development-forum/sets/72157645008586274/>

Video:

Craig Shank, VP & Assistant General Counsel, Microsoft International, at the 16th Baltic Development Forum Summit & 5th Annual Forum of the EUSBSR in Turku, Finland (3 June 2014).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-GCaBMjttE>

“Top of Digital Europe” is hosted by BDF. It is established on the initiative of BDF and Microsoft, supported by Siemens, as a non-profit think tank that promotes the Baltic Sea Region as a leader in the ICT sector. “Top of Digital Europe” invites partners and stakeholders from business, politics and academia to join us in the further development of the Think Tank and a strong digital Baltic Sea Region .

Further information about BDF and the BDF Summit: www.bdforum.org and www.bsr2014.eu

The report can be accessed here: http://issuu.com/bdforum/docs/searching_for_the_micro_multination

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