Estonia organised a public-private e-hackathon to hack the crisis

TALLINN, ESTONIA, April 8, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Estonia is a great example on how government, citizens and businesses are fighting side-by-side to reduce the predicted and tangible economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis.

Estonians are known for building the world's most digitally advanced nation as well as producing a staggering number of globally successful companies. These include four "unicorn" digital start-ups valued at over $1 billion: Skype, TransferWise, Bolt and Playtech.

Named "the most advanced digital society in the world" by Wired, in

Reflection of enter e-estonia. Source: Annika Haas

emergency situations such as the current COVID-19 outbreak, Estonians experience first-hand how digital society is a true necessity. While doctors are working hard in hospitals to take care of the sick, the public and private sector have worked on e-solutions to tackle the crisis with innovation.

On the same day when the state of emergency was declared in Estonia, a public-private cooperated e-hackathon was held to hack the crisis. Tens of startups across the country contributed with ideas and solutions – in response to the Hack the Crisis hackathon.

For example, Sixfold, a company founded by experienced Austrian and Estonian IT entrepreneurs made its border crossing times live map available to anyone for free. This will help logistics companies both in Estonia and across Europe and hopefully reduce the effect the crisis has on logistics.

Because of the current situation, there are companies that have human resources that they cannot use – and others who are short of work hands. As a result of the hackathon, the workforce sharing platform Share Force One was launched. The platform connects B2B sites for temporary workforce exchange. Share Force One works in partnership with the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund. The solution is live and free to use to all of Estonia's businesses.

Also, two Estonian organisations, Accelerate Estonia and Garage48, set up an online hackathon, with over 1,100 people from more than 20 countries and 14 time zones gathering to develop solutions to help Estonia emerge from the coronavirus crisis and create competitive advantages in the post-crisis period.

"Startup-government collaboration is in the DNA of the Estonian digital society. With around

1,000 examples, Estonia is among the top countries by startup per capita. In terms of startup regulation, Estonia is the best in the world according to a study by Index Ventures from late 2018. This asset is now being used rapidly to turn the crisis into economic opportunities," stated Kersti Kaljulaid, President of Estonia.

While the state is already helping and further preparing to help its businesses, companies are contributing themselves. The Ministry of Economic Affairs has started a web portal to collect information from businesses that are willing to help the government with their resources, either material ones or knowledge.

According to Kaimar Karu, the Minister of Foreign Trade and Information Technology, there is a need for the government to help its citizens and companies as much as possible during the COVID-19 situation – and at the same time there are businesses that are ready to contribute their resources in order to help the government tackle the obstacles. "We opened a simple website in the eesti.ee portal where entrepreneurs can declare the kinds of tools or competence with which they can help. We will collect this information and distribute it among agencies," the minister said.

Eveli Post
Meta Advisory Group
+372 513 6292
email us here

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