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European Digital Innovation Hubs Lead SMEs into the Era of AI

According to a recent report by the European Commission, digital innovation hubs play a key role in the adoption of artificial intelligence in European companies. In Finland, a total of four innovation hubs are in operation.



23.4.2025

NEWS ARTICLE

According to a recent [report](#) by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), the network of European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) across the EU has reached over 200,000 and/or companies through 5,000 events, delivering over 18,000 services to companies as of September, 2024.

The EDIH Network brings together a diverse array of public and private actors, uniting a total of 2,355 unique organisations within 225 hubs covering nearly 90% of European regions. They operate close to their customers, with a broad regional but limited international service coverage.

Impressively, 90% of the businesses that have engaged with these hubs have reported measurable improvements in their digital maturity. Among the key focus areas, the adoption of artificial intelligence and automation stands out as a major driver of innovation and competitiveness.

SME Investment Surges Past €26 Million Mark

The Finnish AI Region (FAIR), one of the active drivers of digital transformation in Europe, has engaged approximately 1,500 business representatives, with over 200 registering as part of the FAIR ecosystem, according to Haaga-Helia's communications specialist **Martti Asikainen**.

"So far we've delivered more than 230 tailored services to businesses, and crucially, companies registered in our ecosystem have secured at least €26 million in private capital to develop their operations," he says proudly.

FAIR's comprehensive expert network supports businesses in artificial intelligence, augmented reality (XR), high-performance computing, and cybersecurity. Its mission is to enhance the competitiveness of Finnish SMEs and accelerate the adoption of new technologies.

Europe's AI Ambitions

The European Commission recently unveiled its "[AI Continent Action Plan](#)," aimed at establishing Europe as the leading continent for artificial intelligence. The EU's strength lies in its dynamic AI landscape, boasting both top-tier general-purpose AI models and specialised AI applications.

Finland currently ranks among the leading countries in AI development. According to [the Finnish State of AI](#) report published earlier this year by Business Finland and AI Finland, the country is conducting world-class AI research. Finland has earned its profile on the global stage thanks to its extensive pool of talent, though challenges remain.

The Finnish government has thrown its weight behind AI development with a significant investment in ELLIS Institute Finland, which focuses primarily on artificial intelligence and machine learning. The institute is expected to elevate domestic research to new heights whilst attracting international expertise to Finland.

A Growing Influence of the EDIHs

One of the European Commission's action plan objectives is to develop workforce skills and promote AI adoption across all sectors. The field is accelerated by research, evolving technologies, and a flourishing start-up and scale-up ecosystem, supported by innovation hubs like FAIR.

The JRC believes the role of innovation hubs will continue to grow in the near future. FAIR's Director **Solja Sulkunen** says that shares this optimistic outlook for FAIR's future. Current demand already demonstrates that SMEs have a genuine need for high-expertise, low-threshold services —a need that intensifies during economically uncertain times.

"Now that we've established a solid foundation for our operations and results are becoming visible, it's time to step on the accelerator," she reflects, inviting Finnish companies to join the collaborative development effort.

The FAIR consortium—comprising Aalto University, University of Helsinki, CSC, EIT Digital, KiraHub, Haaga-Helia and Metropolia Universities of Applied Sciences, along with the cities of Espoo, Helsinki and Vantaa—is seeking funding for the coming years. Further information about FAIR's services can be found on our [website](#).

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The banner features the Ulysseus logo and text about international weeks from February 9 to 19. It includes a QR code and logos of partner institutions like LIRF, Université Côte d'Azur, University of Genova, University of Applied Sciences, METI, Haaga-Helia, University of Vienna, and UOG.

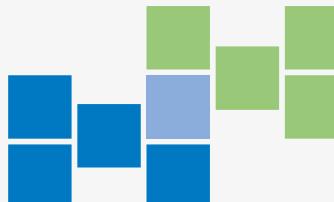
Student, join Ulysseus International Weeks



26.01.2026 News article

A photograph of two students, a young woman and a young man, sitting at a desk in a modern office or study area. They are both looking at their laptops and smiling. The woman is in the foreground, and the man is slightly behind her.

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