

Welcome to Lille: Get to know incubator and accelerator EuraTechnologies

What could a France-based accelerator offer a UK startup? We spoke to Koussée Vaneecke, president at EuraTechnologies, to find out more.

Temps de lecture : minute

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EuraTechnologies is an incubator and accelerator with a background deeply entwined with history. It started in Lille within buildings that were once spinning factories. In the 1980s, the factories closed and 2,500 jobs were lost. When it launched in 2009, EuraTechnologies' mission was to transform these empty factories into a giant incubator, *generating jobs* to compensate in some way for the huge losses that happened as a result of the closures. Thirteen years later, 6,500 jobs have been created thanks to startups that have grown with the accelerator.

“Our Lille campus is really for any startup that wants to expand in Europe,” says Koussée Vaneecke, president at *EuraTechnologies*. “We’re geographically in a great position as we’re between Paris and London and very close to Brussels, Amsterdam and Cologne. We are also a great platform to launch from if you’re looking to expand into the north of Europe.”



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EuraTechnologies' ongoing commitment to job creation was shown through its 2022 *Talent Fair* event in October, which showcased over 300 job opportunities. *Pitch Perfect*, the closing show at the event, saw four EuraTechnologies' alumni and startups from various sectors pitch to five high profile investors with the hope to have them invest in their company.

“Our mission is to create more jobs,” says Koussée. “We are a semi-public company and we accompany startups from their launch to their development in order to create great successes and eventually jobs. We incubate and accelerate 200 startups each year to help make this a reality.

“All our programmes are operated in English, making it easy for UK startups to participate. We have different verticals that are real ecosystems and through them, we serve partnerships with big corporations, companies and mentors.”



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International mindset

One of those programmes began back in 2009 – the same year EuraTechnologies launched – in partnership with Stanford University. The programme operates every two years and startups split their time between Stanford and Lille when participating. It demonstrates the accelerator's international vision from the very beginning.

“For the past ten years, we’ve collaborated with EuraTechnologies to deliver an executive innovation leadership program in Lille, France that provides a foundational education for professionals within startup organisations, which are part of the entrepreneurial ecosystem EuraTechnologies has developed there,” says Carissa Little, associate dean for global and online education at Stanford’s school of engineering, and executive director at the Stanford centre for professional development.

Startups that are part of the EuraTechnologies incubator, including from the UK, can be enrolled in this programme.

EuraTechnologies operates in seven verticals, including retailtech, ecommerce and proptech. The region surrounding Lille booms with big retail companies and is highly engaged with technological development.

“We have two batches of startups per year – one in March, one in October,” says Koussée. “In 2022, 30% of our batches were international startups. In October 2022, we welcomed 140 startups and 40 were international and from countries including the UK, Estonia, Tunisia, Morocco and the Czech Republic.

“We are very attractive to a lot of different countries because startups know they will be able to develop in a specific vertical and benefit from the vivid ecosystem we've created. Many startups that want to expand in Europe believe Lille is a great base to do this from, too.”

Achievements in 2022 and beyond

In summer 2022, EuraTechnologies raised €24M and will use this money to accelerate its mission and create 3,000 additional jobs in the next five years through its startups.

It will also use the money to reinforce its tech offering to startups. One example is the purchase of a costly cyber range that simulates cyber attacks, helping startups adapt their architecture to prevent a real-life attack.

“We have the ability to bring together great corporations and offer opportunities to startups,” concludes Koussée. “Our new investors will really help startups as it's a new opportunity to work quicker, adapt their product and get their first clients very quickly. This is really an accelerator designed for their development.

“A goal we have for next year is to be more international. We’ve started the transformation by welcoming 40 nationalities into our incubator, but we want to further launch EuraTechnologies in Eastern Europe and other emerging countries. We have an ambition of opening ten new locations in the next two to three years, which is really exciting.”

Koussée Vaneecke is president at accelerator and incubator *EuraTechnologies*.