

**Legal hybrid and venture builder  
dr Signe Viimsalu, mag.iur, MBA,  
is a Law Leader at EY Estonia,  
providing innovative legal  
solutions to its global clients.**



Signe started her career as a Lawyer in 1998 at Intrum Iustitia ([www.intrum.com](http://www.intrum.com)), Europe's leading Credit Management Services' company. In 2001 Signe joined Enterprise Estonia ([www.eas.ee](http://www.eas.ee)) to provide legal expertise and implement quality management systems needed to draw down on EU structural funds to Estonia for years 2004-2006 and 2007-2013. She has been involved in drafting several grant programs for entrepreneurs and laws including the Individuals' Debt Protection and Debt Adjustment Act, Bankruptcy Act, Reorganization Act, Structural Assistance Act and the Public Procurement Act. In 2006-2007 she held two positions simultaneously at the Estonian Ministry of Justice. While her advisory tasks were connected to the supervision of insolvency practitioners, coordination of international relations and law-making, she also acted as Head of the Legal Department of the Ministry.

In 2007 Signe moved to the Estonian Development Fund ([www.arengufond.ee](http://www.arengufond.ee)) to provide legal expertise on setting up the first public VC fund (later called Smartcap, privatized by Tera VC) and fund manager structures, support high growth within local start-ups and encourage inward early-stage investments. In fulfilling her legal tasks, she interviewed key players of potential portfolio companies, conducted due diligence, negotiated shareholder agreements and advised clients on various legal, business and financial matters. In 2011 Signe left the (semi)public sector to join Glimstedt, the regional law firm, in order to set up Corporate Advisory and Finance solutions. She has been seen as a pioneer/distributor of startup law in Estonia.

She has advised clients on number of business development matters including quality management, corporate law and good governance, corporate finance, start-up law, VC, M&A, (cross-border) insolvency, tax, contracts, competition and EU law, intellectual property law, employment law and administrative law. In years 2013-2014 she was the CEO of the first Estonian Business Angel Network EstBAN ([www.estban.ee](http://www.estban.ee)), established 2013 in Estonia with an aim to grow the quantity and quality of local seed investments in the region. Under her leadership EstBAN became the Best Performing Angel Network in Europe in year 2014.

Signe has been co-founder of think tank THETA, co-chair of INSOL Europe's Eastern European Committee ([www.insol-europe.org](http://www.insol-europe.org)), independent associate of WynRiver ([www.wynriver.com](http://www.wynriver.com)) and Invesdor ([www.invesdor.com](http://www.invesdor.com)). In year 2015 Signe briefly worked in SEB bank (<https://sebgroupp.com/>) as a lawyer in investment services. After that she has been digital nomad working globally with various legal, financial and managerial projects (innovation, service and system design, entrepreneurial ecosystems, investments etc) for various governments, companies and NGOs. One of the recent change management projects has been consolidation and redesign of entrepreneurial grant implementation system for the Ministry of Finance in Estonia with performance-based state budgeting system, where she helped with law, innovation and coaching.

Signe is a hands-on inspirational doer, an inventive mind, executive coach, a lawyer and global executive having a mag.iur and Ph.D in international insolvency law (2011) from the Netherlands and Estonia. In year 2018 Signe received two global executive MBAs, one from University of Minnesota (USA) and another one from Vienna University of Economics and Business (Austria). Besides giving lectures and trainings in the Baltic countries, she has been invited to Central Europe, USA, Indonesia and India as a visiting consultant to assist with the development of corporate governance, entrepreneurial ecosystems, business development and cross border insolvency programs for governments and universities.

She is keen on innovation, circular economy, legal tech, life-long learning and considers her strength is the ability to work productively both as a practitioner and an academic in both private and public sector from time to time.



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