

## P r e s s   r e l e a s e

### UniCredit establishes SME partnership with London Stock Exchange

- Agreement launches UniCredit CEE Lounge within ELITE to accelerate SME growth
- Creates support network for ambitious SMEs in UniCredit CEE network

UniCredit is pleased to announce that it has signed an agreement with London Stock Exchange Group to be the key banking partner in supporting the development of small and medium enterprises originating from its portfolio of clients in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) through ELITE, an innovative platform that enables ambitious private companies in Europe to accelerate their growth.

The partnership establishes the ELITE UniCredit CEE Lounge, which provides SMEs with comprehensive services for organizational and management development to help fast track their growth. Launched by London Stock Exchange Group, ELITE provides companies with access to world class executive training and coaching that is supported by leading European business schools, industry experts and entrepreneurs; a working zone supported by a tutorship model and direct contact with Europe's financial and advisory community.

The first 14 companies to participate in the UniCredit CEE Lounge will be announced today at the London Stock Exchange headquarters. They have been selected from its CEE network across Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

"We are excited to team up with the London Stock Exchange Group to help high-growth SMEs in Central and Eastern Europe access a full range of educational, training and coaching services that can prepare them for the next stage of their development. The ELITE UniCredit CEE Lounge is specifically designed to prepare companies that can make a difference in tomorrow's world, giving them the timely knowledge they need to make the right investment decisions. UniCredit strongly believes in the potential of excellent mid-sized companies in CEE, and by supporting their growth, UniCredit aims to strengthen its role as a trusted partner of these enterprises, providing innovative services helping them to grow rapidly. ELITE UniCredit CEE Lounge is a clear step in that direction," said Carlo Vivaldi, Head of CEE Division and Deputy CEO of UniCredit Bank Austria.

The ELITE environment helps make fast growing companies more aware of the various funding options available to them while improving their "readiness" to face investors. It also brings growing businesses



together, giving them the opportunity to inspire each other, exchange ideas, share best practices and identify mutual business opportunities.

“We are delighted to be partnering with UniCredit today, who join ELITE as its main banking partner in the CEE region. The partnership with UniCredit creates a dedicated “ELITE UniCredit CEE Lounge,” that aims to select the most promising SMEs in the CEE region to join ELITE and accelerate their growth. We are sure that UniCredit, with its established presence and strong relationships with the best SMEs in the CEE Region, will make a significant contribution to the development of ELITE in the area,” said Raffaele Jerusalmi, CEO, Borsa Italiana and Director of Capital Markets, London Stock Exchange Group.

Since its launch in 2012, ELITE has supported over 320 companies from across Europe and now has 150 advisors and 90 investors in its growing community.

By creating the ELITE UniCredit CEE Lounge, the Group aims to facilitate access for its clients to valuable training and exposure-related activities and create closer relationships with Europe’s best mid-sized companies, helping them through crucial strategic decisions and supporting them in their growth journeys.

UniCredit clients in CEE are expected to receive the greatest value from this initiative. ELITE services will be designed for each SME selected for the UniCredit CEE Lounge, with the Group contributing to training modules and tutoring, as well as providing access to its own tailored support services.