

## Press release

### 14 new SMEs join UniCredit CEE Lounge ELITE program

- *UniCredit CEE Lounge in ELITE boosts fast-growing SMEs from Central and Eastern Europe*
- *ELITE platform supports business model upgrades and fosters SME networking across UniCredit's CEE countries*
- *14 companies from 6 countries join as UniCredit CEE Lounge's sixth cohort - Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Russia, and for the first time Serbia and Turkey*

The UniCredit CEE Lounge is pleased to be inducting 14 new companies into its innovative initiative, which is part of the London Stock Exchange Group's ELITE program to accelerate the growth of promising new companies.

The new inductees hail from six of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) where UniCredit has active operations. For the first time, companies from Serbia and Turkey have elected to participate, while representatives from Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Russia are also taking part in this, the sixth cohort of companies that have joined the initiative. Altogether, UniCredit CEE Lounge has admitted 37 companies from 10 countries across UniCredit's CEE network. Combined, they represent € 1.5 billion in aggregated revenues, employing more than 18,000 people.

The UniCredit CEE Lounge aims to help SMEs prepare to embark on their next stage of growth. The program works to increase participants' awareness of capital markets and diverse funding options, while also granting them direct access to investors. The companies from the program's previous five cohorts have already begun their executive training and coaching modules.

Today, during a ceremony in London, five participating companies – Kuminiano Fruit (Bulgaria), Novi Agrar and SPAN (Croatia), Fatrom (Romania) and Henderson (Russia) – will receive their ELITE certificates to celebrate the end of their two years training path. These certificates verify the readiness of these SMEs to go to the market, face investors and explore different funding options.

"We are delighted that our partnership with ELITE has proven to be very successful," said Andrea Diamanti, Head of UniCredit Corporate and Investment Banking and Private Banking in CEE.

“This initiative underscores our strong belief in the potential of the most-ambitious mid-sized companies in CEE, and helps us to support them in upgrading their business models and boosting their growth. ELITE is also an innovative way to better understand their needs and strategies. It brings growing businesses together and gives them the opportunity to inspire each other, exchange ideas, share best practices and identify mutual business opportunities.”

The sixth cohort of the UniCredit CEE Lounge is comprised of the following companies:

- o Evromaster, Bulgaria
- o UniComs Group, Bulgaria
- o Vinprom Karnobat, Bulgaria
- o ALARM AUTOMATIKA, Croatia
- o CROZ, Croatia
- o Real Grupa, Croatia
- o Verso Altima, Croatia
- o CrisTim, Romania
- o TSG euroShell card Agent, Romania
- o Gemotest, Russia
- o Proton Group, Serbia
- o iDATA, Turkey
- o Iskur, Turkey
- o LTB JEANS, Turkey

“I am thrilled to welcome the latest group of International firms to ELITE today, said Luca Peyrano, CEO, ELITE. The ever growing success of ELITE validates and highlights the importance of partnerships like the one with Budapest Stock Exchange and UniCredit. Programmes like ELITE are key for the expansion of fast-growing companies, providing support in the development of these ambitious and dynamic firms. These companies have a unique capacity to innovate, create new jobs and ultimately drive economic prosperity.”

Since its launch in 2012, ELITE has supported over 250 companies from Europe. It now has over 1000 between advisors, companies and investors in its growing community. ELITE services are designed to meet the individual needs of each company 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. The ELITE program helps ensure rapidly growing companies are aware of the various funding options available to them and properly prepared to meet with prospective investors. Please read more at <https://www.elite-growth.com/>.

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