



## PRESS RELEASE

# 5 new SMEs join the UniCredit CEE Lounge ELITE program

- **The UniCredit CEE Lounge in ELITE supports fast-growing SMEs from Central and Eastern Europe**
- **The ELITE platform backs business model upgrades and fosters SME networking across UniCredit's CEE countries**
- **5 new companies from 3 CEE countries have joined in the seventh cohort of the UniCredit CEE Lounge**

The UniCredit CEE Lounge is pleased to welcome 5 new companies into its innovative initiative, part of the London Stock Exchange Group's ELITE program to accelerate the growth of promising new companies.

The new member companies are from three Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries where UniCredit has active operations. To date, the UniCredit CEE Lounge has admitted more than 40 companies from 10 countries across UniCredit's CEE network.

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 the diverse funding options available, while also granting them direct access to investors. The companies from the program's previous six cohorts have already begun their executive training and coaching modules.

This seventh cohort of the UniCredit CEE Lounge is comprised of the following companies:

- **AutoPlus**, Bulgaria
- **Eurosped**, Bulgaria
- **ScaleFocus**, Bulgaria
- **Jaffa**, Serbia
- **Gama Recycle**, Turkey

*"For the fourth year in a row we are able to offer our SME clients a unique and valuable opportunity to join ELITE, a program that enables them to strengthen their businesses and connect to capital markets directly. By supporting these companies throughout their two year journey in the program,*

*we are also able to learn, adapt and change the way we do business with SMEs in line with their needs. In this way we are strengthening the basis of our long term relationship with our SME clients as a true partner and advisor”,* said Andrea Diamanti, Head of UniCredit Corporate and Investment Banking and Private Banking in CEE.

Luca Peyrano, CEO, ELITE:

*“I am delighted to welcome the latest group of international companies to ELITE. The ever growing global success of ELITE, demonstrated by companies joining from Latin America to Europe and Africa today and over 150 new companies joining in 2018 alone, highlights the diversity and dynamism of the ELITE community and the strength of our new and existing partnerships.*

*Today, ELITE is proud to support access to finance and financial education for over 850 of the most ambitious companies around the world, allowing them to innovate, scale and grow. We look forward to continuing to expand ELITE’s dynamic community of companies, advisers and partners”.*

In addition, today, during a ceremony in London, five companies that have participated in ELITE’s previous cohorts – Jidvei (Romania), Lanaco (Bosina&Herzeġovina), NiceLabel (Slovenia), Pro Diagnostic (Slovakia) and TOKIC (Croatia)– will receive their ELITE certificates to celebrate the end of their two year training. The ELITE certificate confirms the readiness of these SMEs to go to the market, face investors and explore different funding options available.

Since its launch in 2012, ELITE has supported over 850 international companies. ELITE services are designed to meet the individual needs of each company selected for the UniCredit CEE Lounge, with UniCredit contributing to training modules and tutoring as well as providing access to its own tailored SME 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/>.

Milan, May 4, 2018

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