



PRESS RELEASE

10 new SMEs join the UniCredit CEE Lounge ELITE programme

- The UniCredit ELITE CEE Lounge supports fast-growing SMEs from Central and Eastern Europe
- The ELITE platform facilitates business model upgrades and encourages SME networking across UniCredit's CEE countries
- 10 companies from four CEE countries – Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia – have joined in the eighth cohort of the UniCredit CEE Lounge today

The UniCredit CEE Lounge is pleased to announce 10 new companies joining the innovative initiative today. UniCredit CEE Lounge is part of the London Stock Exchange Group's ELITE programme and focuses on helping to accelerate the growth of promising companies.

The new joiners are companies from four Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries where UniCredit has active operations. To date, the UniCredit CEE Lounge has admitted more than 50 companies from 11 countries across UniCredit's CEE network.

The UniCredit CEE Lounge aims to help SMEs with their future growth, increasing their awareness of capital markets and of the available ways to attract funding. The programme also helps the companies to establish a direct dialogue with relevant investors. The companies that joined the previous cohort are currently in the process of their executive training.

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

- **Sport Depot**, Bulgaria
- **Avtomotor Corporation**, Bulgaria
- **Vaptech**, Bulgaria
- **Metal Product**, Croatia
- **Ivicom Consulting**, Croatia
- **Oprema**, Croatia
- **Y Soft**, Czech Republic
- **Vnet**, Slovakia
- **Euroins Insurance Group (Eurohold)**, Bulgaria
- **Emtest**, Slovakia

In addition, today, during a ceremony in London, the **Slovenian company Inea** that has participated in one of the previous cohorts of ELITE, has received a certificate to celebrate the end of its two year training course. The ELITE certificate confirms the readiness of SMEs to go to the market, face investors and explore the different funding options available.

"Supporting the SME client segment, as the growth engine of the European economy, is one of our core activities. That is why I am extremely proud that for the fourth year in a row, we are providing our SME clients with all the benefits that participation in ELITE can offer: the possibility to connect directly to capital markets, have their business reviewed by experts, discover new areas for growth and have the opportunity to network, to name a few. This initiative is a valuable opportunity for us to continue learning

about the SME segment and adapt our way of doing business with SMEs to match their needs. It allows us to further strengthen our role as a true partner and advisor to this client segment", said **Andrea Diamanti, Head of UniCredit Corporate and Investment Banking and Private Banking in CEE.**

Luca Peyrano, Ceo ELITE: *"I am proud to present the latest international group of companies from across Europe and celebrate with them ELITE's significant milestone; reaching over 1000 companies in the dynamic ELITE community. In just six years ELITE has become a global programme spanning more than 30 countries, supporting the growth and internationalisation of SMEs around the world. ELITE continues to innovate and support the job creators and innovators of today and tomorrow. Together with our partners, we are committed to supporting the most ambitious companies, allowing them to scale and grow."*

Since its launch in 2012, ELITE has supported over 1000 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 programme helps ensure that 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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Enquiries

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