



NEWSLETTER

December 20, 2023/vol 1



Dear Esteemed Members and Partners,

As 2023 draws to an end, I am honored to share a reflection on the exceptional journey we've undertaken together throughout this year. It has been a period of substantial growth, fruitful collaborations, and notable achievements for Keiretsu Forum Southeast Europe!

Our event calendar unfolded with a diverse array of carefully curated events, designed to facilitate knowledge exchange, networking, and innovation within our dynamic ecosystem. Notably, we hosted two pitching events, providing emerging startups with a platform to showcase their groundbreaking ideas and connect with potential investors. In the spirit of celebration, we marked a significant milestone in June—the first anniversary of our presence. This achievement underscores not only the dedication for our commitment but also the positive impact we have now initiated within the entrepreneurial landscape in the region.

A crowning achievement this year was our grand agreement with BKT Kosovo, a strategic collaboration that holds immense promise for the future. We are also delighted to highlight our inaugural investment in a fintech startup. These accomplishments reinforce our commitment to supporting and nurturing pioneering startups. As we reflect on these achievements, we fully embrace the pride and satisfaction that comes with our dedication to fostering innovation within the region.

In addition to these accomplishments, our participation in some of the most prominent tech events in the region and beyond has further solidified our position as a key player in the entrepreneurial ecosystem by providing us with invaluable insights into the latest trends and innovations shaping our industry.

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, our optimism knows no bounds. The upcoming year has already been meticulously planned, featuring an exciting calendar of events with new formats that promise to elevate our ecosystem to new heights. Having effectively solidified our foothold in Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia, we are strategically planned for expansion into Montenegro, Slovenia, and Croatia in 2024. Our heartfelt gratitude extends to everyone who has supported, partnered, and above all believed in our mission. This kind of collective commitment propels us forward. A special acknowledgment is due to our dedicated team whose tireless efforts have been the backbone of our success.

As we bid farewell to 2023, I extend warm wishes for a joyous and fulfilling conclusion to the year. May the successes and milestones achieved in these past twelve months serve as the stepping stones to a future that holds even greater promise for us all!

With appreciation,

Ardian Hoxha
Chapter President of KFSEE

Keiretsu Forum SEE has proudly organised:

1. Grand Partnership with BKT Bank

We are also thrilled to share the details of a monumental partnership that Keiretsu Forum SEE has recently entered into with BKT Bank. This week, we signed an agreement with BKT Bank, which includes the bank's commitment to finance startups up to an amount of 1 million euros. Additionally, BKT Bank will create an angel investment fund.



Furthermore, the agreement includes an additional 1 million euros that will be managed by Keiretsu Forum SEE to invest in startups for equity. This alliance aims to create synergies and facilitate collaboration between our members and one of the most prominent financial institutions in the region, thus empowering startups with the capital they need to grow.

2. Investment in FinqUp by Keiretsu and Vitosha Ventures

Keiretsu Forum SEE (KFSEE), the region's largest angel investor network, is excited to announce a transformative investment in FinqUp, a visionary fintech startup harnessing artificial intelligence (AI). This EUR 100,000 investment, a collaboration between KFSEE's angel investors from Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, and Sofia-based Venture Capital Fund, Vitosha Ventures, signifies a fusion of regional expertise and entrepreneurial capital strength, setting new investment standards in the Western Balkans.



3. Angel Investment Forum: A Nexus for Collaboration and Innovation

On February 27, 2023, Keiretsu Forum Southeast Europe hosted an investment forum in Tirana, which brought together prominent investors, entrepreneurs, and startups from the region. The event focused on facilitating cross-border collaboration and innovation, and featured panel discussions and networking opportunities.



The attendees discussed the investment landscape in Southeast Europe and explored high-quality investment opportunities in both digital and traditional sectors. The forum also included dialogues comparing different legal, fiscal, and financial systems in the Balkans that can influence business decisions. The conference concluded with an emphasis on the importance of continued support for local economic development through investments in startups, mentorship, and fostering innovation in Southeast Europe.

Keiretsu Forum SEE has proudly organised:

4. Keiretsu Forum Southeast Europe Investor Pitch Day Triumph

The Keiretsu Forum Southeast Europe Investor Pitch Day, held at Hotel Plaza Tirana on May 23, 2023, was a significant success, securing \$1 million in private capital earmarked for regional startups. The event attracted a diverse range of venture capitalists, angel investors, and private equity groups, all eager to explore Southeast Europe’s entrepreneurial potential. Six startups presented their innovative concepts, including WICE’s wine ice cream, BEEZ’s modern gaming twist, OPENPAY’s simplified payment system, QUINVIO’s AI-powered video presentation platform, ENTEERA’s Employee Wellbeing services, and FITKIT’s fitness app.



The successful event highlighted Southeast Europe’s emergent role as an innovation and investment hub, with organizers planning future editions to further amplify the impact on the region’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. The success of the Pitch Day symbolizes a pivotal step towards enhancing Southeast Europe’s startup landscape and reinforces the potential of the region’s entrepreneurial talent.

5. Keiretsu Forum Southeast Europe Investor Pitch Day Triumphs Again

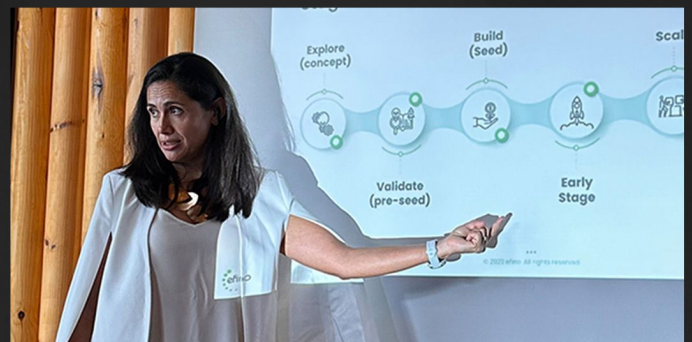
The Keiretsu Forum Southeast Europe Investor Pitch Day returned on October 6, 2023 with resounding success, this time in the vibrant city of Skopje. Our event brought together 60 distinguished participants, including investors, mentors, and industry experts. This time

the six startups that presented their concepts were: Lobstr Interactive– Online Dating App, SKAITECH – Drone Company, AVATAR TICKET – VR Live Streaming, Fingerprint Diagnostics – cancer diagnosis with advanced technology, Andrra App – pregnancy and parenting application & KOMUNA MARKET – AI-powered curated e-commerce.



6. Keiretsu Forum Southeast Europe Angel Investors Training

Recently launched, KFSEE’s angel investing training program is shaping the future of angel investors in Albania. Under the expert guidance of Maria Carolina Romero, this transformative initiative equips aspiring and seasoned investors with essential knowledge. Supported by The Swiss Entrepreneurship Program, it fosters well-informed investments, nurturing entrepreneurial growth. KFSEE, renowned for innovation, emphasizes continuous support and mentorship, marking a significant step in Albania’s investment landscape.



KFSEE's participation and partnerships throughout the year.

Keiretsu Forum SEE remains committed to actively engaging in significant events across the region, continuously enhancing our role within the investment and startup ecosystem of SEE. We are delighted to affirm our presence in different platforms and recognize the significance of such gatherings in strengthening our role and expanding our network. As KFSEE continues to prioritize staying informed about the latest trends and developments, such engagements prove instrumental in enhancing our understanding of the dynamic landscape. Through our active involvement, we aim to foster a collaborative environment, ultimately contributing to the development of the ecosystem.

1. MatchIn Summit

June 19–20, 2023



KFSEE is proud to have been a major partner of the MatchIn Summit held in Ohrid!

This important event brought together influential startups, investors, organizations, and key stakeholders who have played vital roles in nurturing the growth and development of our growing ecosystem. Representatives of Keiretsu Forum SEE actively participated in panel discussions, highlighting their commitment to inclusivity, notable achievements, and their role and opinions in driving the advancement of the ecosystem.

2. WEBIT Festival Summer Edition Sofia

July 28, 2023



KFSEE's next participation took place at the WEBIT Summer Edition Event in Sofia, where a remarkable lineup of speakers and experts from the tech industry gathered under the theme "Future to share."

This conference provided a platform for showcasing the latest trends and advancements in various fields, including AI, the future of work, life science, fintech, blockchain, cybersecurity, privacy, and data. Entrepreneurs and startups shared their experiences in using innovation to disrupt traditional industries and establish new business models.

3. WEB SUMMIT Portugal

November 14–16, 2023

Web Summit runs the world's largest technology events, connecting people and ideas that change the world. Web Summit's mission has been to create software that enables meaningful connections between CEOs, founders, investors, media, politicians, and cultural figureheads.

Artificial intelligence took center stage at Web Summit 2023, including at the event's startup competition, PITCH. Representatives from KFSEE were delighted to be part of this prominent event, gaining valuable knowledge and insights. The event provided a rich platform for networking and exchange of ideas among industry leaders, contributing to the collective expertise of our team.



KFSEE's participation and partnerships throughout the year.

4. EBRD Star Venture Kick off Meeting – Mentorship Acceleration Program for Start-Ups in Albania

November 17, 2023



Developed to support some of the most innovative and promising startups in Albania, Mentorship Acceleration Program organized the very first meeting on November 17, 2023, bringing together start-ups, mentors, partners, and key ecosystem stakeholders in Albania. Implemented by ICTSlab multifunctional laboratory with the support of Star Venture program of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development for Western Balkans, this program represents a golden opportunity for start-ups in Albania which aims to provide concrete tailored support for 12 teams from the start-up ecosystem in the country.

5. GEW Kosovo

November 17, 2023

The 11th edition of the Global Entrepreneurship Week in Kosovo has concluded. During the week of November 13-19, Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) rallied almost every nation in the world to empower entrepreneurs and encouraged citizens to become starters, finding new and better ways of doing things. As part of the GEW – Keiretsu SEE organized an insightful discussion on Kosovo's startup ecosystem at HaPiTe Space. The participants shed light on the state of business initiatives, their support from financial institutions, and the exciting future ahead.



6. Launch of the Incubator Program in Tirana

December 12, 2023



The launch of the Incubator Program in Tirana, a collaboration between DigitSapiens, ateneKOM Albania, and powered by EU4Innovation, a new chapter in supporting early-stage startups. The program's mission is to nurture and uplift emerging ventures. Notably, three standout startups will be granted the unique opportunity to pitch in front of KFSEE's angel investors. Grateful for this impactful partnership, the initiative looks forward to empowering innovative startups on their journey to success.

7. Keiretsu Forum SEE Angels Connect Socials – A Night to Remember!

December 20, 2023



In a delightful union of innovation, KFSEE organized its first Angels Connect Socials event in December 2023. The enchanting venue of Soma Slow Food in Prishtina set the stage for this fruitful gathering symbolizing a significant celebration for the angel investors and startups community in Southeast Europe (SEE) and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The event proved to be a resounding success, radiating a harmonious blend of warmth and insightful interaction. Attendees reveled in the ambiance, describing it as not only successful but also exceptionally pleasant and aesthetically captivating, marking a delightful milestone in fostering connections and collaboration within the regional entrepreneurial landscape.