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ELITE and WTC Lisboa launch an International Academy to support Portuguese companies to grow

- **WTC Lisboa joins ELITE in its journey to grow and globalise SMEs, with the sponsorship of BBVA and the support of the Portuguese Family Businesses**
- **The new Academy marks the implementation in Portugal of ELITE, the Euronext network dedicated to fast-growing private companies**
- **The launch paves the way for the first group of Portuguese companies to join the ELITE community in H1 2023**



Lisbon – 31 March 2022 – Euronext, the leading pan-European market infrastructure, today announced the launch of the World Trade Center (WTC) Lisboa International Academy by ELITE. The project marks the first step of the implementation of ELITE, the Euronext network dedicated to fast-growing private companies, in Portugal, as a part of Euronext's commitment to SMEs.

WTC Lisboa International Academy by ELITE is a programme organised and managed by ELITE leveraging on over ten years of international experience in supporting private small and medium-sized companies to access skills, network and capital. The World Trade Center Lisboa will promote this initiative under his pillar Business Club and the International Trade committee. The content of the programme has been designed and defined by ELITE, based on its own methodology already tested on more than 2,000 companies internationally, and on content and experts provided by the NOVA Business School.

BBVA, a customer-centric global financial services group with a strong presence in Iberia, is associated with this project as a sponsor.

The Portuguese Family Businesses joins this initiative as an ambassador to create a bridge between family-owned companies and international markets.

Programme content

The WTC Lisboa International Academy by ELITE will be delivered through:

1. Three core modules (two days each, making a total of six days) run in Portuguese at the NOVA Business School premises and with a faculty based on academics and professionals. These will be supported by the Strategy in Action tool to help the companies build a real and detailed strategic plan over the course of the three modules;
2. A calendar of four international workshops, one per quarter, supported by ELITE partners across Europe, deep-diving into different topics. In 2023, the planned workshops will cover Internationalisation (Lisbon, March), Entrepreneurship (Amsterdam, June), Sustainability (Paris, September), and Capital Markets (Milan, November). These workshops are open to the entire ELITE community and aim to train companies on the topics above, while providing a forum for international networking across Europe;
3. Mentoring: high-touch regular contact to assess and debate on each company's priorities while supporting them to develop an action plan to implement the key actions defined.
4. Funding options: support on choosing best funding strategies based on each company characteristics

The launch of the WTC Lisboa International Academy by ELITE is the first step of the broader expansion of ELITE in Portugal and across Europe. The international expansion of ELITE is part of Euronext's "Growth for Impact 2024" strategic plan.

For the first time, Portuguese companies will join the ELITE community in H1 2023.

Marta Testi, CEO of ELITE, a Euronext company, said: *"The launch of the WTC Lisboa International Academy by ELITE materialises the implementation of ELITE in Portugal. It will be an important tool to allow participating companies to access skillsets and expertise. Together with WTC Lisboa and with the support of BBVA and Portuguese Family Businesses, we will help a group of Portuguese SMEs to increase their size, profitability, and impact, while supporting them to grow and leverage on the funding options offered by the market today. This new development will launch officially the ELITE programme in Portugal and paves the way for the first group of Portuguese companies to join ELITE in H1 2023. These companies will join a community of over 1,300 companies in 23 European countries and a large range of advisors and partners."*

Luciano Montenegro Menezes, CEO of the World Trade Center Lisboa, said: *"We are thrilled to launch this Academy. The World Trade Center Lisboa shares ELITE's commitment to supporting private Portuguese companies to grow internationally. The launch of this project helps shape our aligned objective of supporting entrepreneurs and executives in upskilling and empowering their strategies and business opportunities. For WTC Lisboa, this represents a milestone in its strategy of promoting the internationalisation of the Portuguese economy."*

Luís Castro e Almeida, CEO of BBVA Portugal, said: *"The launch of this initiative aligns with BBVA's purpose of supporting private companies in financing their internationalisation and growth. Associating with this project shapes our responsible banking model which aspires to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable society. Therefore, providing companies with knowledge to make better management decisions towards their growth and internationalisation, is an action we are definitely excited to be part of."*

Notes to Editors:

Companies that can apply

ELITE welcomes companies of all sizes and sectors looking to scale up their business and explore funding options. For this reason, the WTC Lisboa International Academy by ELITE will be open to all Portuguese private SMEs looking to join a European ecosystem by connecting them to skills, network and capital to push their sustainable growth in the long term.



Companies that choose to join will follow a structured programme based on learning and mentoring designed to help them grow, be more structured, explore funding options and access a network of partners, peers and investors.

The goal is to nurture and to continuously assess and understand the strategic and financial needs of its members throughout the programme: when an SME is ready to evaluate alternative funding options, ELITE can bridge the connection with professional counterparties including advisors, intermediaries and institutional investors, both in equity and in debt, investing in both private and public capital.

ELITE community

As of today, ELITE gathers a community of 1,300+ companies in 23 European countries and a large range of advisors and partners. Since its launch in 2012, ELITE companies have raised more than €20 billion through over 1,300 corporate transactions. Euronext acquired ELITE as part of the acquisition of the Borsa Italiana Group in 2021, and since then has been strongly committed to expanding ELITE in the Euronext countries. Portugal is the first step in this expansion strategy.

ELITE supports companies by connecting them to skills, network and capital to drive their sustainable growth in the long term. Based on a unique offer of services and solutions, ELITE combines a calendar of workshops and coaching sessions, supporting entrepreneurs and executives in upskilling and empowering their strategic plan and business opportunities.

As announced in December, Associação Empresarial de Portugal (AEP), Banco Santander, Deloitte, Vieira de Almeida (VdA), and World Trade Center Lisboa (supported by BBVA and Family Businesses Association) were the first group of ELITE network partners to join the initiative.

ELITE showcase

Since ELITE's launch, more than 2,000 companies have been part of the ELITE network, which today counts 1,300 companies with an aggregate revenue of €115 billion, representing 36 sectors and employing over 700,000 people. ELITE has been a success story, providing concrete support to many companies to accelerate their growth:

- €920 million has been raised with direct support from ELITE for over 250 companies, leveraging also on the Basket Bond® model;
- 58 companies have been listed, raising €3.7 billion;
- 134 companies have issued 191 bonds, raising €2.8 billion;
- and 328 companies have managed over 1,050 M&A deals.

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About Euronext

Euronext is the leading pan-European market infrastructure, connecting European economies to global capital markets, to accelerate innovation and sustainable growth. It operates regulated exchanges in Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal. With close to 1,930 listed issuers and around €6.3 trillion in market capitalisation as of end December 2022, it has an unmatched blue-chip franchise and a strong diverse domestic and international client base. Euronext operates regulated and transparent equity and derivatives markets, one of Europe's leading electronic fixed income trading markets and is the largest centre for debt and funds listings in the world. Its total product offering includes Equities, FX, Exchange Traded Funds, Warrants & Certificates, Bonds, Derivatives, Commodities and Indices. The Group provides a multi-asset clearing house through Euronext Clearing, and custody and settlement services through Euronext Securities central securities depositories in Denmark, Italy, Norway and Portugal. Euronext also leverages its expertise in running markets by providing technology and managed services to third parties. In addition to its main regulated market, it also operates a number of junior markets, simplifying access to listing for SMEs.

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About ELITE

Launched in 2012 by Borsa Italiana and now part of Euronext Group, ELITE is the European network of private SMEs which accelerates the process to access private and public capital markets. ELITE's mission is to support companies by connecting them to capital, skills and network to drive their sustainable growth in the long-term.

Based on a unique offer of services and solutions, ELITE combines a calendar of workshops and coaching sessions, supporting entrepreneurs and executives upskilling and empowering their strategic plan and business opportunities.

ELITE Companies' management teams are also guided on how to fast-track their development and how to access the most suitable funding options for their needs, whether the Basket Bonds®, institutional investors, private equity, venture capital or equity markets.

With over 2000 companies and 200 partners admitted since the launch, about €15 billion have been raised by ELITE businesses through 1200+ corporate transactions, highlighting how dynamic SMEs are once they are provided with an efficient access to private and public markets.

For the latest news, go to elite-network.com or follow us on LinkedIn (linkedin.com/company/elite_group/).

About WTC Lisboa

The World Trade Center – WTC -, was created by the Rockefeller family in New York City more than 50 years ago with the aim to grow international trade through iconic real estate buildings spread globally.

Today WTC is the world largest business association present in 93 countries and 320 cities with more than 700 thousand companies operating in the WTC ecosystem.

WTC is based in three pillars; "Real Estate" iconic business building in each city, "International Trade" using the global WTC platform to do business matchmakings and promote international business missions, and the "Business Club" to foster networking among business leaders in each city and throughout the WTC network.

The WTC Lisboa is a brand new business center with 70.000m2 inaugurated in September 2022, very well located next to the motorway Lisbon to Cascais close to downtown Lisbon and with easy access to the airport.

The WTC Lisboa Business Club has five Committees – International Trade, Real Estate, Tourism & Entertainment, Innovation & Start-ups, Smart Cities - which gather monthly and in the last 10 months along with other initiatives such as the CEOs "Head to Head", we had over 500 C-level and business owners attending the meetings.

WTC Lisboa and its International Trade committee believe it is crucial for the Portuguese companies to grow trade and go international and therefore we strongly support the WTC Lisboa International Academy by Elite.

About BBVA

BBVA is a customer-centric global financial services group founded in 1857. The Group has a strong leadership position in the Spanish market, is the largest financial institution in Mexico and it has leading franchises in South America. It is also the leading shareholder in Turkey's Garanti BBVA and has an important investment, transactional and capital markets banking business in the U.S. Its purpose is to bring the age of opportunities to everyone, based on our customers' real needs: provide the best solutions, helping them make the best financial decisions, through an easy and convenient experience. The institution rests on solid values: Customer comes first, we think big and we are one team. Its responsible banking model aspires to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable society.

About Portuguese Family Businesses (Associação das Empresas Familiares)

Portuguese Family Businesses was founded in 1998. PFB is a private, non-profit association, nationwide and transversal to all sectors of activity. All PFB members are Directors, Shareholders or directors of their own Family Businesses.

PFB gathers around 400 Associated Companies, national and international, of different sizes and economic importance, which represent an important part of the economic life of the Country.

In 2016 the Association created a Next in Line group, which represents the next generations of family businesses associated with the AEF. This group started with 20 companies, and currently has more than 70 companies, divided into small, medium and large.

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