

## Press release

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29 May 2017

### **Launch of “Digital Serbia” Initiative Serbia to become regional digital innovation hub**

**“Digital Serbia” is the non-profit private partnership initiative launched by Ringier Axel Springer Serbia and leading tech companies. Its mission is to focus on improving the framework and ecosystem required to enable tech entrepreneurship and digital innovation in both industry and education in Serbia. The founding members of the initiative are Infostud, Microsoft, Nordeus, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Ringier Axel Springer, Seven Bridges, Startit, Telekom Srbija and Telenor.**

“Digital Serbia” has been established as an association, bringing leading technology, IT and telecommunication companies together to drive digital innovation for Serbia and for its people. The Steering Committee of “Digital Serbia” will be made up of representatives of the founding companies. The Committee will be headed by Branko Milutinović, CEO and co-founder of Nordeus.

All of the association’s activities will be directed towards setting up an improved framework and investment climate to encourage technological entrepreneurship, innovations in the Serbian IT industry and a better level of digital literacy and education in the digital economy. Companies who want to participate in the realization of this goal, and to contribute to tDigital Serbia, are invited to join.

“Digital Serbia” has been launched following the success of "digitalswitzerland", and builds on the efforts of digital hubs such as London, Tel Aviv and Berlin, which joined the digital tech and innovation bandwagon early on.

Jelena Drakulić-Petrović, General Manager of Ringier Axel Springer Serbia and founder and initiator of the Digital Serbia Initiative: “Technological development brings unprecedented change at a high speed. Innovation in business and education helps to increase productivity. It allows for new solutions in the development of products and services. As a media company, we believe in the importance of enhancing digital innovative strength in Serbia, as this will be the driver that helps to create new jobs and grow our business. With “Digital Serbia”, we are seeking to unlock the vast potential we envisage for the Serbian economy and its people.”

Branko Milutinović, CEO and co-founder of Nordeus: “Thanks to digitalization, success can now be boiled down to its essence: creativity, know-how and professionalism. This is our opportunity. Together, we will work hard so Serbian innovations and success stories may develop from a stronger foundation and gain more attention. That’s why our decision to invest in digital education and tech entrepreneurship is so important to the future of our entire community.”

“Digital Serbia” will provide basic information and support to innovative companies, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises in the IT sector, on how to operate in these areas, and will provide assistance to companies and society in establishing contacts through various forums and fairs. In

addition, “Digital Serbia” will actively participate in identifying and addressing legal restrictions that slow down the development of e-Business in Serbia, and will provide active support for technology startups.

The website [www.dsi.rs](http://www.dsi.rs) has been launched with detailed information about the initiative.

A kick-off event for “Digital Serbia” will be held today on May 29, 2017, at Dom Omladine in Belgrade at 3 PM. Founding members will present a “Digital Manifesto” including the mission and goals of the initiative.

Also building on the success of "digitalswitzerland" is the initiative “Digital Poland”, which will be launched on June 1, 2017 in Krakow during the Impact Conference ([www.impactcee.com](http://www.impactcee.com)). The initiative will be supporting digitization for the economy, supporting education and the legal system around issues relating to digitization and innovation, and helping companies in Poland to transition from offline to online.

#### **About “digitalswitzerland”**

digitalswitzerland is a joint partnership between businesses, public authorities and the scientific community, which wants to shape Switzerland as the leading international hub for digital innovation. digitalswitzerland is already active in a wide range of fields such as knowledge transfer, education, start-up ecosystems, and political framework conditions. The association includes more than 70 of the most renowned companies and organizations as well as innovative locations throughout Switzerland. The initiative was launched in 2015 by Marc Walder, CEO of Ringier AG. More info can be found at [www.digitalswitzerland.com](http://www.digitalswitzerland.com)

#### **About Ringier Axel Springer Media AG**

Ringier Axel Springer Media AG was founded in 2010 by the Swiss Ringier AG and the German Axel Springer SE. The company operates in the growth markets of Poland, Hungary, Serbia, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with a broad range of media services, comprising more than 165 digital and print offerings. The company's registered offices are in Zurich and it employs a total of about 3100 employees.

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