



**KORÇA** DIGITAL  
WEEKEND

**KORÇA MUNICIPALITY**  
PRESENTS

**KORÇA DIGITAL**  
**WEEKEND**



Bashkia Korçë

**ICT'S LAB.**  
powered by ICTSmedia

**VIGAN**  
State of giants.



ABS A  
Albania Business Services Association



## **Municipality of Korça**

Presents: Korca Digital Weekend  
Gallery of City Library, Republika, Korçë  
25 January 2020

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Digital transformation and technological advancements have revolutionized our world and daily lives. Technology has challenged every area of life by creating new spaces which can bring community development advantages.

The new era asks for **INNOVATION** and **CREATIVITY** to keep up with the new challenges and transform the benefits into competitive advantages.

With the aim to create the most favorable and competitive ecosystem in Albania the City of Korca is hosting Korca Digital Weekend – a forum that engages the foremost technological, political, business, cultural and other leaders of society to shape the national, regional and industry agendas.

Deeply anchored in the public and private sectors, the Forum is the first event organization in South Albania serving this role, bringing together the countries' foremost CEOs, policy-makers, experts and academics, international organizations, youth, technology innovators and representatives of civil society in an impartial space with the aim of driving positive change.

Korça Digital Weekend - will discuss challenges and present opportunities!

Focused on achieving our social and economic goals and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, we believe that our region can actively participate in the new digital/economic era by making the most of the region's competitive advantages and keeping up the sustained commitment towards participating and competing in the global market.

### **#KORÇADIGITALWEEKEND**

Korca Digital Weekend will...

- Introduce the spaces, incentives and facilities that Korça Municipality is building to improve the ecosystem of new businesses in this area
- Expand opportunities to enhance digital skills and become part of the job market immediately
  - Tell about the local advantages in the age of global digitalization (which enables self-employment to grow personal business and work in distance)
  - Introduce some successful companies that will expand operations in the region.

Inspirational success stories and partners of Korça Municipality program will work together to create the most favorable ecosystem in Albania to foster innovation and creativity. They are ambitious young people, entrepreneurs, support organizations, start-ups, and many other national and international actors.

Be part of this special weekend!  
**#KORÇADIGITALWEEKEND.**

With the valuable support of VIGAN group, ICTS Lab and our partners, let us embark Korça to a new destination as a regional hub of innovation and creativity.

**Korca noble and innovative!**

**AGENDA**  
**#Korca Digital Weekend**  
**Gallery of City Library, Republika, Korçë**  
**25 January 2020**

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- 09:00 – 9:30      **Registrations**  
   **Part I : Digital Skills**
- 09:30 – 09:35      Event opening /Remarks
- 09:35 – 09:50      Mayor of Korça - Sotiraq Filo  
**Korça, a regional hub of innovation and creativity**
- 09:55 – 10:10      Niko Peleshi, **Albania and Korça in the era of innovation.**  
Heraldo Memelli : From Korça to Silicon Valley ( Live Call )
- 10:15 - 10:25      Kushtrim Shala, **The new language skills of 21-st Century.**
- 10:30 – 10:40      Dritan Mezini, **Future jobs? Are we ready?**
- 10:45 – 10:55      Albi Zhulali, **An albanian dream in Silicon Valley.**
- 11:00- 11:10      Agi Haxhimurati – **How to create brands that bring millions of tourists?**
- 11:15 - 11:25      **Networking/Coffee break**
- 11:30 – 11:55      **Albanian Digital Capacities in the Global Economy?**  
  
Panel Discussion: *Moderator - Arnisa Lushaj*  
**Veton Kurtsmajlaj**, Researcher & Economist  
  
**Eljona Kosta**, OMA Founder  
  
**Dritan Pecini**, Founder "Game On Albania"  
**Edmond Hajrizi**, Founder of UBT  
**Pamela Germani**, Digital Marketing & Network Trainer
- 12:00 – 12:10      **Driton Musolli**, How to get the most out of networking?
- 12:15 – 12:30      **Anisa Berisha**, UK Albania Tech Hub Programme & Fiordi  
Pernaska, CEO i VIP TIE / Success story
- 12:35 – 12:45      **Renato Toni**, Entrepreneur VR Networking: - Start-Up Uplift VR,  
Plexus, Live Demo Plexus VR, Start Up Uplift Albania.
- 12:45 – 12:55      **Vigan Group: The Digital City program**
- 12:55 – 13:55      **Networking – Kokteil – Foto**

## Part II: Digital Economy

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- 14:10 – 14:20 **Laidi Ferruni**, How does e-commerce bring businesses one-step closer to the world?
- 14:25 – 14:35 **Arjodita Mustali**, Shaping the future of digital economy?
- 14:40 – 14:50 **Ilir Capuni**, *To* be an economist or an engineer?
- 14:55 – 15:25 **Why is digitalization a competitive advantage to alternative markets?**
- Panel Discussion:  
*Moderator – Arbër Çepani, Entrepreneur*
- Florensa Haxhi**, Head of National Cooperation Programs, Prime Minister Office
- Ersenilda Elezi**, Albanian Business Services Association
- Gert Boshnjaku**, CEO New Media Group
- Edmond Alla**, EBRD Associate, SME sector in Albania
- Rafail Prodani**, Head of Computer Science Department, University of Korçë
- 15:30 – 15:40 **Networking – Coffee break**
- 15:45 – 15:55 **Genti Selenica**, *CEO- Baboon Food Delivery*
- 16:00 - 16:10 **Mergim Cahani**, Large enough to be a unicorn!
- 16:15 - 16:25 **Jeta Zagragja**, Technology Entrepreneur.
- 16:30 - 16:40 **Gjergji Robo**, CEO Smartwork  
The influence of digitalisation in how we do business!
- 16:45 - 16:55 **Alqi Puli** Start-up Ecosystem in smart cities?
- 17:00 – 17:30 **Presentations: Korca young people present ideas of a Smart City.**
- 17:30 - 19:00 **Conclusions**

*Thank you for the participation!*

*Korça Municipality*

## EVENT SPEAKERS

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**Sotiraq Filo**, Mayor of Korça. He studied at the Polytechnic University of Tirana. Therefore, he achieved an MBA degree at City College in Thessaloniki; he pursued a long career in working as an expert in banking and public administration. From 2013, as the Mayor of Korça he has played an important role in the institution's achievements and city transformation in many areas. He is a member of the Albanian delegation in the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.



**Niko Peleshi** holds a degree in Electronic Engineering from the Polytechnic University of Tirana. His political commitment dates back to 2004 when he was appointed Prefect of Korça, then Mayor and in 2013 as Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania. He is an important figure of the Albanian Strategic Development progress with a pivotal role in Korca's transformation into a regional tourist hub. Today, he comes as an influencer to provide support, and inspiration to present the advantages that can make Korça a national technology hub.

## Digital Skills



**Kushtrim Shala**- Kushtrim Shala has over 10 years of experience in the telecommunication industry, mainly IT in new products development and recently in marketing product /project management. He holds a master of Computer Sciences degree from University of Tirana since 2006. As well as an MBA from UNYT. Prior joining Vodafone, Kushtrim spent two years working in one of the greatest media in Albania, which was newly established – Top Channel. He has co-founded series of startups and initiatives such as publishing house ICTSmedia ltd., The regional innovation lab ICTSlab with the main focus in 21st century education, The largest national Innovation contest Albanian ICT Awards which is Albania’s flagship innovation event , Uplift Albania - an early-stage startup accelerator. He also is a member of the editorial team at Computerworld Albania magazine, PCworld.al, CIO.al.



**Dritan Mezini**, co-Founder of DM Consulting Services and co-founder of the largest dedicated online job portal duapune.com, which had been operating successfully in Albania and Kosovo since 2005. He is the Chairman of the Board / Executive Director of the Albanian ICT Association (AITA). With progressive experience over 20 years, Dritan brings an extraordinary depth of expertise in ICT, Innovation, Entrepreneurship, IT consulting, Human Capital Management and more. Mr. Mezini is also a board member of the Albanian Counseling Network (ACN), Protik, and American University of Kosovo (RIT Kosovo), former president of the Fulbright Alumni Association and the creator of HRHub Albania and coorganizer of Digi Diaspora.



**Albi Zhulali** drives Softmogul's vision, strategy, and growth, providing the easiest cloud solution for hotels of all sizes to streamline all their day-to-day operations. His leadership has guided Softmogul's rise from a simple idea into the biggest startup in Albania and part of the biggest tech startup accelerator in the world Plug and Play. Albi has more than 13 of years experience in business and startups. Prior to Softmogul, he founded Startups.al and co-founded Pinguin.al that developed websites and branding for some of the biggest names in Albania. While running Softmogul, Albi’s passion is mentoring young and up-and-coming talents in the industry.



**Agi Haxhimurati** has graduated in Design Communication. He is the designer of the initiative "How to create brands that bring millions of tourists". 70,000 people visited co-founder of Hardh Fest, which in 2019. He works with large companies in the Albanian market. Earlier, Agi has made a name for himself in the world of Albanian design with works such as BUNKART 1 and 2, You are the airport, Tirana Castle, which he says have opened great career doors to him, being featured in the world media, such as "The Guardian", "Business Insider", "Japan Times", "CNN" etc.



**Veton Kurtsmajlaj** has been engaged in the world of statistics and analysis for five years. He started his career as a statistics specialist during his studies. Most of the knowledge and techniques he possesses comes as the result of constant work and study. He currently works as Head of statistics at two private companies in Tirana.



**Eljona Kosta is the** co-founder of Online Marketing Academy. She graduated at the University of Tirana with a degree in Philosophy – Sociology, and holds a master's degree in International Business and Marketing. In 2012, she began training in Digital Marketing, primarily in Advertising on Facebook, Google and Twitter, with over 400,000\$ in advertising portfolio management over the years. She was eventually cut off from employment to focus 100% on digital marketing in 2014. Her career cornerstone in helping young people develop competitive skills in the Albanian and Global market.



**Pamela Germani** is the co-founder of Online Marketing Academy, since 2016. She has trained over 800 individuals who today work as freelancers or set up their own agency in SMM (social media management and advertising industry)





**Dritan Pecini** has received most of his experience from the Australian Tech Industry. During his time in Melbourne, he has studied and worked at his own entrepreneurial business along the fields of digital education and media. After his return to Albania, he guided the Digital Marketing Strategy through DDB Albania & Montenegro for clients such as Raiffeisen Albania & Telekom Montenegro. Currently, Dritan leads his own Digital Advertising Agency named after himself.



**Renato Toni** is a solution Architect with more than 5 years of experience in the telecommunications industry, delivering national and international enterprise products. Renato today is here as co-founder of the Plexus Vr game that started and was developed during Uplift Albania accelerator.



**Anisa Berisha** holds an MBA Degree and many international trainings mostly by the Foreign & Common-Wealth Office, UK covering the areas of projects management, finance and economic development. She leads the UK-Albania Tech Hub Programme at British Embassy Tirana, aimed at boosting tech start-ups in Western Balkan and creating opportunities to do business with the UK. She is an active speaker in different national and international conferences mainly on entrepreneurship, innovation & technology. She has been the Brexit's Platform Facilitator at London School of Economics (LSE), assistant professor at Epoka University and an active researcher. Her last research is published in the international journal of Humanities and Social Science in Barcelona, Spain and Lumen Journal in Iasi, Romania. She has been certified as an expert in public communication and institutional image while last year she got nominated for the prize of Young European of the Year 2018 by Schwarzkopf Stiftung (German Foundation for unified Europe)





**Fiordi Pernaska** is an entrepreneur, businessperson and innovator. His companies are pioneers in the application of additive manufacturing processes in the realisation of final products, mainly in fashion and design, holding several patents on this regard. He is the cofounder and CEO of VIP TIE, a fashion brand offering a unique fully custom 3D PRINTED & HAND CRAFTED gentleman's luxury accessories, He is also the co-founder of 3B ARMY, a dynamic innovative 3D Printing company, a point of reference in technological innovation of production processes with a vast culture in 3D Modeling & Additive Manufacturing. Moreover, Fiordi serves as the Chairman of the fashion brand ONUS, which established by his great grand father in 1927 in Tirana. Fiordi is a frequent speaker at national and international conferences, with a focus in innovation and additive manufacturing. He is also active in mass media, through his participation in various national talk shows. He is highly involved in the expansion of additive manufacturing innovative production technologies in the global fashion industry.



**Driton Musolli** is the CEO and co-founder of TransMogul. With more than 10 years of experience in business administration and 5+ years of experience in the Transport and Logistics industry, he has a clear vision of how TransMogul is to be shaped, and is leading everyone toward that goal.

## Digital Economy



**Laidi Ferruni** is an entrepreneur and online marketer, with 15 years of experience. Laidi founded the first Albanian online shopping platform in Albania, "123.al". Today he comes as the founder of Quibli Media, a platform that helps businesses and their managerial staff in training and marketing.



**Arjodita Mustali** is an entrepreneur that has co-founded and runs the first outsourcing services corporation in Albania. She started her career 13 years ago as a project manager in one of the biggest international corporate in Albania and worked towards founding the companies “Evolve”, and the outsourcing company “Unit Center” Ltd, with over 300 employees. In the last three years, Arjodita and her partners have diversified the engagement and supported start-ups in the field of real estate, restaurants, personal development through mentoring and the academy.



**Ilir Capuni**, Doctor of Computer Science degree from Boston University. He has established Excellence Laboratories in Tirana from which several products and spin companies have emerged. Mr. Çapuni is one of the founders of the scientific conference “Balkan Communications Conference”. He is a researcher in computer science and has co-founded the decentralized social network “FBRK.io”.



**Arbër Çepani**– has completed his studies in Political Economy and International Relations in Italy as well as in the Faculty of History with a master's degree in "Cultural Heritage" Tirana. He is the founder of the café-museum “Komiteti”, which has had worldwide acclaim from prestigious media outlets such as “New York Times”, “The independent”, “Corrieredella Sera”, “Vogue”, etc. Arbër does a lot of motivational speaking and trainings; he pays great attention to young people who want to have their own businesses.



**Florensa Haxhi, PhD**, PhD and Researcher of Public Policy, and a Senior Public Official who covers the areas of economic development, national strategic programming and regional cooperation. She has been the national coordinator for country's strategic framework, responsible for overseeing, as well as participating in the preparation of the National Strategy for Development and Integration. She currently holds the position of the General Director of the Development Programs and Cooperation Unit, at the Prime Minister's Office, and is responsible of drafting a considerable number of National Development Programs in different sectors of the economy, which are translated into concrete executable national strategic projects with a direct impact to the country's economic growth. Some of the National Programs she is in charge of drafting are the National Program for Startups and Innovation, the National Program on Industrial Development, the National Program

on Blue Economy, etc. She is also a senior lecturer of Project Management and Public Finance, at university (Bachelor and Master's) level.



**Ersenilda Elezi** has over 13 years of experience as a specialist in human resources in international companies and corporate. Currently serving as vice director of the "Albanian Business Services Association" (ABSA). As a representative of this sector ABSA is lobbying for workforce qualifications, identification, awareness and presentation of BPO business services



**Gerti Boshnjaku** is an Entrepreneur / PR & Marketing Professional, CEO and Founder of New Media Communications; A Marketing Communications Company specialized in Design & Development of Online Solutions. His career includes 18+ years of experience in the Marketing and Advertising industry, working in well-known companies in Albania and managing the business operations of his own company, which he founded in 2009. On 2015, he launched a startup project in the Digital Media called the Business Magazine Albania - [www.BusinessMag.al](http://www.BusinessMag.al) - which now is the First Online Media Platform focused on Startups and Entrepreneurship in Albanian language.



**Edmond Alla** is part of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development involved in the support to SME sector in Albania. In his earlier career years, Edmond has been a successful entrepreneur in the clothing and retailing sector. In 2006, he started working for the EBRD as Adviser for Small Business and to date has implemented more than 450 projects focusing on SME and business development support. In his earlier career years, Edmond has been a successful entrepreneur in the clothing and retailing sector Edmond is presently responsible for the WIB programme in Albania implementing the Western Balkans Star Venture Programme.



**Genti Selenica** is Co-Founder in different several Start up's, Wine e-Commerce Agregator App ( Italy ) , International Shipping Service (New York, USA) and lately CEO and Co Founder of Baboon, the first professional and innovating app regarding Food Delivery for 3 years.



**Mergim Cahani** is the Founder & CEO of Gjirafa, Inc ([.gjirafa.com](http://gjirafa.com)), the Albanian Search Engine and a content platform. Gjirafa has recently raised \$2.5M in angel and venture funding, with investors including Rockaway Capital, Esther Dyson, Ondrej Bartos and Phillip Staehelin. An Alumni of StartupYard 2014, Gjirafa is working to build the Internet Economy and bring state of the art e-commerce solutions to emerging markets in Kosovo, Albania, and the region. Previously he founded easySurvey, a mobile survey solution, and MatchBox, now a defunct dating application. Currently, Mergim serves as the President of the Board of Governors at the American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo, as an advisory board member of several startups, accelerators and funds, and has over 15 years of industry experience with startups, technology, management, and investment experience.



**Jeta Zagragja** is a technology entrepreneur, a startup mentor, and an education advocate.

Jeta brings almost a decade of practical experience in successful startups, financial industry, and non-profit sector in Kosovo and USA. Currently, she is a co-owner and Chief Operating Officer at UCX Kosovo, a global, innovative, and lean technology company. She has formerly held positions as the former Chief Business Development Officer at Cactus JSC and Chief Business Development Officer at Gjirafa.com.



**Gjergji Robo** has a management consulting, information technology and general management background, and a strong experience - matured in several multinationals - in growing up and managing Companies operating in the consulting and technology businesses. He is the founder of Smartwork Albania, Consulting firm, member of Altea group, with great aspirations for the future. Altea Federation is a group of companies that share vision, mission and values in a single identity. 17 federated companies and over 1,500 people working together through a holistic approach to help our clients evolve by harmonizing technologies, processes and people.



**Alqi Puli** (Alkis Poulis) is an Albanian-Greek Startup Entrepreneur and Researcher with more than 20 years of experience in Conception, Management and Implementation of complex Industrial Research and Development Projects related to Smart Digital Services for Cities and Citizens, Virtual and Augmented Reality, Space Technologies and Digital Health. Currently, he is CEO of Cotheta Immersive Data Science Technologies in Ioannina Greece, and OVIS Innovation Shpk in Gjirokaster Albania. Alkis has more than 20 years of experience in EU Level Industrial Research as Team Leader, Director of R-D-I for high-tech SMEs in

projects for clients like European Commission, European Space Agency, industries like Daimler AG, Porsche AG, Siemens AG, Dassault Systems Aerospace, etc.





**Rafail Prodani, PHD**, teaches from 22 years at Fan Noli University. He has a long experience in teaching and developing information technology modules skills he developed during national and international trainings and certifications.



### **Heraldo Memelli**

Computer Science PhD with engineering leadership experience in Silicon Valley. In the past, he managed the global team of HackerRank engineers that owns all the technical content and the product components related to programming challenges. Actually, he is working as an engineering manager at Facebook.



**Prof. Dr. Edmond Hajrizi** is the founder and rector of the private higher education institution, UBT, with whom he brought the experience and expertise gained from studies and work in many international universities and institutions. Today, UBT is synonymous with the institution that offers the most advanced and comparable programs in Europe and the US.