

A VC firm in the most unlikely European spot, reveals a thriving local economy

Pedja Predin's journey from war-torn Serbia to becoming a successful venture capitalist is a testament to his resilience and adaptability. Growing up during the civil wars of the 1990s, he found solace in water polo, which not only kept him active but also instilled vital leadership skills. This foundation helped him navigate the challenges of moving to the United States and building a career in finance and technology.

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Looking ahead, Serbia's economic prospects are showing signs of improvement, reflecting the potential that Pedja sees in his home country. The European Commission has recently raised its economic growth forecast for Serbia to 3.5% for 2024, up from the previously projected 3.1%. This upward revision suggests growing confidence in Serbia's economic resilience and potential.

For 2025, the outlook is even more promising, with the World Bank projecting growth of 3.8%. This steady upward trajectory aligns with Pedja's vision for *FifthQuarter Ventures*, which aims to capitalise on and contribute to this growth by supporting local entrepreneurs and attracting talent back to the region.

Pedja's personal connection to Serbia's economic transformation is palpable. He understands that behind these numbers are real people and opportunities. The projected acceleration of private consumption growth,

helped by lower inflation, resonates with his goal of fostering a more prosperous environment for Serbian citizens.



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The gradual decline in unemployment rates expected in 2024 and 2025 is particularly significant; it's not just economic statistics, but the potential for talented individuals to build their careers at home rather than seeking opportunities abroad. This aligns perfectly with FifthQuarter Ventures' mission to mitigate brain drain and support local talent.

Inflation, which has been a concern, is projected to return to single digits in 2024 and continue declining in 2025. This trend towards economic stability is crucial for the startup ecosystem that Pedja is nurturing. It provides a more predictable environment for entrepreneurs to plan and grow their businesses.

Despite these positive indicators, Pedja remains acutely aware of the challenges. The high level of uncertainty across Europe's economic growth reminds him of the resilience required to succeed in his specific region. It's this very resilience, which he developed during his childhood in Serbia, that he now seeks to instill in the founders he supports.

As Pedja looks to the future, he sees Serbia not just as a country with improving economic indicators, but as a land of untapped potential and resilient people. Through FifthQuarter Ventures, he's not just investing in startups; he's investing in the future of his homeland, aiming to harness opportunities and create a brighter economy for Serbia and its people.

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