GE brings one of the leading universities to Debrecen

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MIT (Massachussetts Institute of Technology), one of the best universities in the world launches its MIT Catalyst program in collaboration with GE Healthcare at first in the region in Hungary at the University of Debrecen. The Hungarian Hub formed with the support of GE will create a European-Transatlantic partnership enabling the creation and support of needs-driven clinical research projects in healthcare.

Based on the the recently built up cooperation the world famous MIT will launch it's MIT Catalyst program, which has been run successfully for 7 years in the US, addressing PhD students. The program starts in collaboration with GE Healthcare at the University of Debrecen in 2020. They agreed on joint research and training development on the field digital medicine, Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality and sports medicine.

The MIT Catalyst program brings together organizations with different profiles, such as universities, hospitals and industrial partners who participate the cooperation. Their aim is to encourage participating researchers to work on projects that can later serve international companies active in healthcare, like GE. In the last 7 years 34 scholarship students participated the program, in 4 training centers, supported by 50 mentors. Among the 16 projects nurtured by the MIT Catalyst program 8 received financial investment from the market, which, compared to other MIT programs - where the financial support rate is 15% – is outstandingly high.

University of Debrecen and GE Healthcare's Budapest Headquarter will play an important role the in the European adaption and the implementation of the MIT Catalyst methodology in the region, connecting the Debrecen ecosystem with greater Boston R&D innovation centers. In Europe University of Debrecen will cooperate with two other universities, namely the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität in Erlangeni and UPM in Madrid.

„At the University of Debrecen we have projects that are harmonized with the industrial needs for years now and we adjusted our operations accordingly. We investigate what are the projects the industry is intents to rely on the University's knowledge and we create working committees. Research-coordination and evaluation will be run by these committees including university, government and industrial partners. This model has worked so well, that along our activities and success we managed to raise the attention of an MIT-level university to our operations" – said Dr. Zoltán Szilvássy, Rector of University of Debrecen.

Just like MIT, GE Healthcare's global HQ is also based in Boston, however the Hungarian hub has played a major role in evolving the partnership. GE invested over 6 billion forints to R&D activities in 2018 in Hungary. Its local activities, its results and capacity in medical digital technologies, in addition to its established partnerships all contributed to the creation of the cooperation with MIT.

„The new paradigm that says projects should be solved needs-based and R&D goals & innovation should be also approached this way offers significant opportunities for both the university and for a company like GE. Based on our strategic partnership agreement signed two years ago with the University of Debrecen in Hungary I believe we have built an ecosystem that is competitive enough and is able to fulfill all the requirements that a world class university like MIT asks for. In the meantime we see that the decision-making environment is also supportive and the government has a vision this direction – said dr.Endre Ascsillán, Vice President of GE in Hungary.

Hungary has earned itself a name globally for the substantial support it provides to research and for the strong and readily available pool of human resources in the field of research and academy. We were also pleased to see that the decision-makers of the government, the representatives of the Ministry of Innovation and Technology, to be specific, exhibited the appropriate attitude, skills and skill application – said Enrique Shadah, head of MIT Catalysts Europe.

The Catalyst program accepts applications from around the world and decides which training centres will be assigned them to after admission. It is not concrete ideas or projects they are looking for: they keep an eye out for the underlying talent.