

CEE Startup Voucher Final in Žilina: Czech startup Sensomedix triumphs with surgical solution

Žilina, November 12, 2025 – Yesterday, the CEE Startup Voucher competition finals took place in Žilina. The event was organized by the international initiative CEE Startup Network together with the Žilina innovation center INOVIA. The grand prize and first place went to Czech startup Sensomedix, which develops technology for surgeons for immediate diagnosis and detection of infections directly at the site of surgery. The competition, which aims to support innovative startups from Central and Eastern Europe, provided young companies with access to investment, mentoring, and key contacts. A total of 86 startups from 21 countries participated in the fifth year of the competition.

The INOVIA Innovation Center, one of the founders of the CEE platform, focuses intensively on supporting startups and early-stage entrepreneurs. In addition to the main competition, the event also featured the Microbiome Explorer Challenge, where startups focused on innovations in the field of microbiome competed.

"The CEE Startup Voucher program has proven to be an ideal opportunity for innovators who want to take their ideas to the global level and use all available resources to expand their business. All participants gained valuable experience, and selected participants took advantage of exclusive meetings with international investors and drew on the experience of experts that the CEE Startup Network has in its portfolio," said Michal Porubän, who is responsible for startup support at INOVIA.

Winners of the 5th annual CEE Startup Voucher

First place and the main prize of €20,000 went to the Czech startup [Sensomedix](#). It develops point-of-care technology for surgeons that instantly detects infections, thereby increasing safety during surgical procedures.

2nd place and a voucher for a ScaleUp report (worth €1,990) went to [OWA Smooth](#). This DeepTech software startup improves the quality of sensory data for industrial applications, reveals hidden trends, and optimizes operations.

3rd place and a voucher for a ScaleUp report (worth €1,990) went to [AdvaMat](#). The company helps manufacturing companies increase efficiency through innovative PVD coatings that improve the durability and performance of materials.

Žilina at the center of innovation and support for young entrepreneurs

"I was very pleased that this event brought together young start-ups and entrepreneurs during a difficult time and gave them the opportunity to develop their potential, make contacts, and improve their skills. It was amazing that Žilina appeared not only on the Slovak map, but also on the startup map. It is important to support the innovative ideas of young entrepreneurs who do more in their free time and strive to further advance projects with values in society," said Denis Cáder, member of the Žilina City Council.

About CEE Startup Network

For the fifth year, the CEE Startup Network has been successfully connecting the innovative ecosystems of the Žilina region, the Moravian-Silesian region, and southern Poland. The initiative was created with the aim of dispelling the myth that innovative ideas must originate primarily in capital cities and metropolises, and it has provided regional projects with key access to mentors and investors and opened the door to foreign markets. The founding members were the MSIC Ostrava and INOVIA Žilina innovation centers.

The goal of the CEE Startup Network is to continue creating opportunities for regional startups and strengthening the innovation ecosystem in Central and Eastern Europe.

This press release was created as part of the Slovakia Program for the project "Project of coordinated systematic innovation development of the Žilina region by the innovation authority INOVIA," ITMS code 401101B482, co-financed by the European Union.



INOVIA Innovation Center

It was established in November 2021 with the aim of supporting innovation and developing the entrepreneurial potential of the Žilina Region. The founding members were the Žilina Self-Governing Region, the City of Žilina, and the University of Žilina. INOVIA connects local companies, research and educational institutions, and supports young innovators, start-ups, and the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The center provides consulting, professional services, and assistance with growth, digitization, and innovation implementation, helping companies increase the value of their products and services. This accelerates the development of the region. This positive contribution is further enhanced by the support provided by the INOVIA innovation center for smart projects of local governments.

INOVIA media contact: Silvia Milová, +421905254822, milova@inovia.sk