

# CSABA POROSZLAI

CEO, EGIS PHARMACEUTICALS PLC

Photo by Zoltán Sárosi



## BACKGROUND

Csaba Poroszlai is an economist. He began his professional career in 1998 at Béres Pharmaceuticals, where he worked as chief financial officer from 2003 to 2008, gaining significant industry experience. He joined Egis Pharmaceuticals PLC in 2008, responsible for developing crucial controlling systems as the head of strategic controlling. In 2011, he was appointed chief financial officer and became a member of the Egis board of directors. Since 2022, he has been the CEO of the Egis group, which is present not only in Hungary but in a total of 18 countries with subsidiaries or representations. He lives in Budapest with his wife and two children.

## WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO BUILD YOUR CAREER IN THE PHARMA INDUSTRY?

It was by chance that I came close to the industry: while at university, one of my instructors was looking for a replacement for a pharmaceutical factory, and chose me. It was a very fortunate turn of events, as I have remained in this industry ever since. I am an economist, and from a professional perspective, this sector is exceptionally beautiful and complex (which is quite rare in Hungary). For example, Egis's activities cover all pharmaceutical value-creating processes: it produces many active ingredients and intermediates itself,

and manufactures, packages, and distributes value-added finished products – this is what we call vertical integration. These very complex processes where constant renewal is not just an opportunity, but also an expectation, and innovation is part of everyday life. The competition is constant, and our quality products are continuously under development. Our mission, which has guided the company for more than 110 years, also spurs us on: to help more people live long and healthy lives.

## HOW HAS THE PHARMA INDUSTRY CHANGED SINCE YOUR EARLY DAYS IN THE FIELD?

At the dawn of the generic markets, relatively few companies entered the market for the same molecule at the same time. Today, this segment has become a battleground where 10-20 or even more manufacturers enter at once, only the most efficient can survive.

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Meanwhile, the globalization of the industry has intensified, with more Asian suppliers appearing, especially in the active ingredient and intermediates market. The looser local regulations and lower wages have favored cheaper production conditions, leading to more manufacturers sourcing their raw materials from there, which, however, has created significant supply uncertainty over the decades. Some companies, including Egis, have retained their raw material production within Europe, preserving the complete value chain in Hungary.

## WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY TODAY?

Continuing from the previous thought, I see the breakdown of supply security, the elongation, and fragmentation of supply chains as the biggest challenge. I consider addressing drug shortages resulting from this and strengthening European active ingredient production to be the most urgent tasks. Egis is well-positioned to address these issues due to its vertical integration, which has been maintained

despite trends. The company has directly joined the Critical Medicines Alliance. This alliance seeks answers to the issue of supply security at a pan-European level.

## WHAT WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT INNOVATIONS IN THE INDUSTRY IN THE LAST DECADE?

As Egis is a generic drug manufacturer, the most interesting perspective for us is the shortening of the synthesis routes for small-molecule active ingredients, the production with fewer impurities, and more modern technology. The drugs manufactured this way can compete with the original products. It also adds value when we can use two active ingredients, often used together, in one formulation, thus increasing the success of therapy and making it easier for patients to use. I am very proud that this year we won the Innovation Grand Prize with two such fixed-dose combination products. These products reduce the risk of cardiovascular events related to atherosclerosis, so their impact is also significant from a public health perspective. During their development, Egis also obtained three patents relevant to large-scale manufacturing technologies, covering three active ingredient and two product development topics.

## CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY IN HUNGARY AND HOW IT COMPARES TO THE GLOBAL MARKET?

Hungary has a long tradition in pharmaceutical manufacturing, standing out among the countries in the region. It is a knowledge-intensive industry, and compared to the also leading automotive industry, it has a much higher added value. This follows from vertical integration. This is true for Egis as well as several other pharmaceutical companies in Hungary. All this together allows Hungary's pharmaceutical trade balance to be strongly positive: domestic pharmaceutical factories have globally competitive exports, which represent a significantly greater total value compared to imports. The industry's products or active ingredients help patients recover in more than 100 countries. However, this requires many well-trained professionals and continuous investments.



## HOW IS DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IMPACTING THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY, AND WHAT STEPS IS YOUR COMPANY TAKING TO INTEGRATE DIGITAL SOLUTIONS?

Without digitalization, there is no competitive company, and this is true for Egis as well. From research and manufacturing processes to registration, we are moving many processes to digital paths, but digitalization also plays an important role in areas found in all companies, such as HR or finance. We also support our employees' digital competencies via training.

## LOOKING FORWARD, WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES AND FUTURE CHALLENGES FOR THE INDUSTRY IN HUNGARY?

In Hungary, the significant intellectual and physical pharmaceutical industry capacity is a suitable basis for further development. It should be added that our industry is special because industry players plan in terms of decades due to the length of development cycles. For that reason, for us, the predictability of economic regulation and the availability of well-trained professionals are fundamental needs. However, the professionals of the future are still in school—it is essential, therefore, that we engage the young generation and maintain their interest in the natural sciences.

Business Name	Egis Pharmaceuticals PLC
Top Executive	Csaba Poroszlai
In Charge of Position Since	2022
Description of Business or Services	Pharmaceuticals production
Year Founded in Hungary	1913
Number of Employees in Hungary	3,742
Total net Revenue in 2022 (HUF mln)	245,878
HQ in Hungary	1106 Budapest, Keresztúri út 30-38.