**PRESS RELEASE**

**Young Inventors Prize finalists announced: three new candidates for this year’s European Inventor Award**

* **The European Patent Office (EPO) has just announced the three candidates nominated for Europe’s top innovation awards**
* **This announcement follows the reveal of the twelve finalists in the ‘Industry’, ‘Research’, ‘SMEs’ and ‘Non-EPO countries’ categories**
* **The Young Inventors Prize recognises innovators under 30 contributing to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals**
* **The three new candidates were chosen for their work cleaning the oceans, making education accessible and protecting vulnerable ecosystems**
* **The European Inventor Award ceremony, in which the winner will be revealed, will be held on 4 July in Valencia, Spain and will be broadcast** [**online**](https://inventoraward.epo.org/?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press)

**Munich, 23 May 2023** - The European Patent Office (EPO) announced today the three latest finalists for the European Inventor Award 2023. The candidates are in the running for the Young Inventors Prize, which recognises remarkable young inventors who have followed their passions to help tackle global issues and help reach the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through scientific and technological innovations. The announcement follows the reveal of the twelve finalists in the ‘Industry’, ‘Research’, ‘SMEs’ and ‘Non-EPO countries’ categories, who are eligible for the Popular Prize, voted for by the public in the lead-up to the ceremony. The Lifetime Achievement Award winner will be revealed on 20 June.

To build on the vision of the European Inventor Award to celebrate innovation across sectors and countries, the EPO established the Young Inventors Prize in 2021 to inspire the next generation of inventors. Unlike the traditional European Inventor Award categories, the Young Inventors Prize finalists must be 30 years old or under, do not need a granted European patent to be considered and will receive an economic reward.

*“These three inventors are part of a new generation facing untold challenges and their work is a source of inspiration for us all. We launched the Young Inventors Prize last year to help that inspiration reach so many more people and bring us closer to achieving a more sustainable world,*” says EPO President António Campinos.

**The winners of the 2023 edition**

An independent jury of fellow inventors, all former Award winners, chose all of this year’s finalists from over 600 nominations. The first, second and third place of the 2023 edition of the Young Inventor Prize will be announced at a hybrid ceremony on 4 July 2023 at 12 pm CET in Valencia (Spain) together with the winners of the other European Inventor Award categories. The ceremony will be broadcast online [here](https://inventoraward.epo.org/?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press).

This year, the Young Inventor Prize candidates represent three countries - Ireland, Portugal and Kenya. Their commitment to making inventions that are having profound effects on the local and international community will be celebrated at the ceremony.

**Young inventors tackle environmental and social challenges**

Fionn Ferreira, a 22-year-old Irish inventor, has always felt a deep commitment for protecting the environment and tackling plastic pollution. His passion for ocean conservation led him to develop a solution for microplastic removal from water sources. When studying for his master's degree in chemistry at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Ferreira developed a unique magnetic liquid solution to eliminate microplastics from water. By binding to microplastic particles, this liquid, known as a ferrofluid, allows for their separation from water sources, paving the way for their removal and helping combat one of the world’s most pressing ecological challenges.Ferreira’s invention contributes to UN SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, as it supports the sustainable management of water resources, wastewater and ecosystems.

Filipa de Sousa Rocha, a 27-year-old Portuguese computer engineer and researcher, is dedicated to enhancing digital learning for visually impaired children. During her master's studies she developed an inventive approach using blocks with 3D icons to teach digital literacy. The icons allow children to send commands to a robot using directional movements or speech functions similar to playing a drag-and-drop computer game. De Sousa Rocha's creation, named 'Block-based Accessible Tangible Programming Systems' (BATS), has opened up new opportunities for inclusive learning.De Sousa Rocha’s work in improving access to education contributes to UN SDG 4: Quality Education and UN SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities.

RIchard Turere is a 22-year-old Maasai inventor from Kenya who is strongly interested in/dedicated to protecting livestock without endangering the local lion population. To address this issue, he developed Lion Lights™, a system that uses light sequences to deter lions and other predators from approaching livestock. He continues to improve his invention, making it more efficient with automation, so that the system now even runs on renewable energy. Over 2,000 homes in Kenya today use Lion Lights, reducing the number of lions killed for livestock protection. It has been successfully adopted in multiple countries in Africa as well as in India and Latin America to deter various other animal species. Turere’s invention contributes to UN SDG 15: Life on Land, which includes protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.

These innovative solutions demonstrate the potential of young inventors to address pressing global issues. With their ingenious ideas, Ferreira, de Sousa Rocha and Turere are demonstrating that innovation is not a matter of age and that young people have the power to drive real change. As the world faces growing social and environmental challenges, it is more important than ever to support and celebrate the creativity and spirit of the next generation of inventors. The Young Inventors Prize was set up to encourage the next generation. The winner will receive EUR 20 000, the second and third-placed finalists will receive EUR 10 000 and EUR 5 000, respectively.

[Read more](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/categories-and-prizes?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press) on the Young Inventors Prize eligibility and selection criteria.

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**A look back at 50 years of European patents**

In 2023 the EPO celebrates the 50th anniversary of the founding of the European patent system. When 16 countries signed the European Patent Convention in Munich on 5 October 1973, they ushered in a new era of co-operation on patents. This laid the ground for a patent system supporting economic and technological developments that have shaped our lives and continue to do so today. Find out [more](https://www.epo.org/about-us/50-epc-anniversary.html?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press) about the history of the EPO and the anniversary events planned in 2023.

**About the EPO**

With 6,300 staff members, the [European Patent Office (EPO)](https://www.epo.org/?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press) is one of the largest public service institutions in Europe. Headquartered in Munich with offices in Berlin, Brussels, The Hague and Vienna, the EPO was founded with the aim of strengthening co-operation on patents in Europe. Through the EPO's centralised patent granting procedure, inventors are able to obtain high-quality patent protection in up to 44 countries, covering a market of some 700 million people. The EPO is also the world's leading authority in patent information and patent searching.