**PRESS RELEASE**

**European Inventor Award 2023 winners announced: Honouring tomorrow’s shapers**

* **The European Patent Office (EPO) honours inspirational inventors for their outstanding contributions to improving our daily lives**
* **Award winners come from China, Finland, France, Ireland and Spain**
* **Spanish chemist Avelino Corma Canós received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his seminal work in the synthetic catalysts field**
* **Winners in the four other categories are: Pia Bergström, Annika Malm, Jukka Myllyoja, Jukka-Pekka Pasanen and Blanka Toukoniitty (Industry); Patricia de Rango, Daniel Fruchart, Albin Chaise, Michel Jehan and Nataliya Skryabina (Research); Kai Wu (Non-EPO countries); Rhona Togher and Eimear O’Carroll (SMEs)**
* **Richard Turere (Kenya) won first place in the Young Inventors Prize, followed by Filipa de Sousa Rocha (Portugal) in second and Fionn Ferreira (Ireland) in third place**
* **The Popular Prize, determined by a public vote, was won by the French research team of Patricia de Rango, Daniel Fruchart, Albin Chaise, Michel Jehan and Nataliya Skryabina**

**Munich, 4 July 2023** - The European Patent Office (EPO) today announced the laureates of the European Inventor Award 2023, its prestigious annual innovation prize, and the Young Inventors Prize, in a ceremony in Valencia. The individuals and teams were recognised for their innovative contributions in the fields of catalyst chemistry, hydrogen storage, safer batteries, noise reduction, green energy, protecting livestock, education accessibility and cleaning the oceans. The winners were chosen by an independent international jury.

“*The innovation shown by this year’s winners, in the face of the modern world’s many shared challenges, such as sustainability, the energy transition and social inequality, is a source of inspiration. Through the European Inventor Award, the European Patent Office celebrates their work and the progress it represents,”* says EPO President António Campinos.

**The award winners**

This year's winners of the European Inventor Award were chosen from over 600 candidates proposed from around the world. The finalists represent 12 countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, China, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy and the United States. Many of their innovations aim to improve the everyday lives of people around the world and tackle society’s biggest challenges, such as environmental issues or the energy transition.

The laureates are:

**Industry:**

The Finnish team of Pia Bergström, Annika Malm, Jukka Myllyoja, Jukka-Pekka Pasanen and Blanka Toukoniitty for turning waste into renewable fuel. Their work converts waste and residue raw materials, like animal fat waste and used cooking oil, into premium-quality renewable fuels. The renewable diesel reduces greenhouse gas emissions by between 75-95% compared to fossil diesel, according to the inventors’ company.

To find out more about the inventors, please click [here](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/meet-the-finalists/pia-bergstrom-annika-malm-jukka-myllyoja).

**Non-EPO countries:**

Chinese inventor Kai Wu and team for lowering the risk of car explosions caused by lithium-ion batteries. Wu’s team developed a safety short circuit device (SSD), a protection device integrated into the battery. When triggered, the invention would stop the battery charging, thus eliminating the risk of battery failure caused by overcharging.

To find out more about the inventor, please click [here](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/meet-the-finalists/kai-wu-and-team?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press).

**Research:**

The French team of Patricia de Rango, Daniel Fruchart, Albin Chaise, Michel Jehan and Nataliya Skryabina for finding a safe and efficient way to store hydrogen. The team developed an atomic structure and process that results in safer, sustainable and more stable hydrogen storage.

To find out more about the inventors, please click [here](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/meet-the-finalists/patricia-de-rango-daniel-fruchart-albin?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press).

**SMEs:**

Irish physicists Rhona Togher and Eimear O'Carroll invented a new material for preventing ear damage caused by noise. Their responsive material works to dampen sound, reducing noise transmission from one space to another. It can be integrated into household appliances and can be used also in the automotive, construction and aerospace industries.

To find out more about the inventors, please click [here](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/meet-the-finalists/rhona-togher-eimear-ocarroll?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press).

**Lifetime Achievement:**

The Spanish chemist, Avelino Corma Canós is a widely acclaimed pioneer in the field of catalysts. His legacy, however, is the Instituto de Tecnología Química (ITQ, UPV-CSIC), an institution he co-founded to drive chemistry research in energy, sustainability, health and water.

To find out more about the chemist, please click [here](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/meet-the-finalists/avelino-corma-canos?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press).

**The Popular Prize and Young Inventors Prize**

**Young Inventors Prize**

Launched in 2022 this prize recognises the initiative and creativity of young people. The winner receives EUR 20 000. The second and third placed finalists receive EUR 10 000 and EUR 5 000 respectively.

**First place: Richard Turere** is a 22-year-old Maasai inventor from Kenya who was deeply concerned with protecting his family’s 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. It has been successfully adopted in multiple countries in Africa as well as in India and Latin America to deter various animals.

To find out more about the inventor, please click [here](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/meet-the-finalists/richard-turere?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press)

**Second place: Filipa de Sousa Rocha**, a 27-year-old Portuguese computer engineer and researcher, is dedicated to enhancing digital learning for visually impaired children. Her invention allows children to send commands to a robot using directional movements or speech functions similar to playing a drag-and-drop computer game.

To find out more about the inventor, please click [here](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/meet-the-finalists/filipa-de-sousa-rocha?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press)

**Third place: Fionn Ferreira**, a 22-year-old Irish inventor, whose passion for ocean conservation led him to uncover a solution for microplastic removal from water sources. He developed a unique magnetic liquid solution to eliminate microplastics from water. By binding to microplastic particles, his liquid allows for their separation from water sources, helping combat one of the world’s most pressing ecological challenges.

To find out more about the inventor, please click [here](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/meet-the-finalists/fionn-ferreira?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press)

**Popular Prize**

Chosen by the public, this year’s winner is the French research team of Patricia de Rango, Daniel Fruchart, Albin Chaise, Michel Jehan and Nataliya Skryabina, who also won in the ‘Research’ category for their hydrogen storage solution. To find out more about the inventors, please click [here](https://new.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/meet-the-finalists/patricia-de-rango-daniel-fruchart-albin?mtm_campaign=EIA2023&mtm_keyword=EIA-pressrelease&mtm_medium=press&mtm_group=press).

This year's Award ceremony was held in Valencia and livestreamed to an audience watching online from around the world. Next year's event will be held in Malta and public nominations for the European Inventor Award 2024 are now open.

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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.