**PRESS RELEASE**

**Polish inventor's printable perovskite solar cells secure dual wins for SMEs category and Popular Prize at European Inventor Award**

* **Olga Malinkiewicz and her team have been chosen as the winners, by an independent jury, in the ‘SMEs’ category of the European Inventor Award 2024**
* **The team were also chosen by the public to receive the Popular Prize**
* **Malinkiewicz has been honoured as a winner in both categories for developing groundbreaking perovskite solar cells that efficiently convert light into energy, offering new sustainable energy solutions**

**Munich, 9 July 2024** - The European Patent Office (EPO) today in Malta honoured Polish scientist **Olga Malinkiewicz and her team as winners in the ‘SMEs’ category of the European Inventor Award 2024. Additionally, they were honoured with the Popular Prize,** **chosen by the public**, underscoring their pivotal role in enhancing renewable energy technologies. Malinkiewicz and her team have been recognised for the creation of printable thin and flexible perovskite solar cells, offering a more sustainable and versatile approach to harnessing solar energy from both natural and artificial light sources. Utilising an innovative inkjet printing process, these cells are produced in a manner that **enhances sustainability and reduces energy consumption.**

Additionally, in the ‘SMEs’ category, the other finalists were French scientists Bruno Mottet and Lyderic Bocquet for their method of harnessing osmotic energy, and Finnish couple Sirpa and Markku Jalkanen for their cancer cell-targeting immunotherapy treatment.

The public was also invited to choose their favourite inventor or inventor team from the 12 teams and individuals nominated for the Popular Prize in the categories ‘Research’, ‘Industry’, ‘Non-EPO countries’, and ‘SMEs’.

*“I am very happy and grateful to receive this award. I am grateful not only on behalf of myself and the wonderful Saule Technologies team, without whom this success would not be possible. I am also grateful on behalf of all those scientists who want their scientific discoveries to bring practical benefits to all people,”* Malinkiewicz says. *“The transition from the stage of scientific research to the stage of commercialisation of the developed technology is extremely difficult. Most inventors fail at this stage. We made it. I hope that our success will give courage, energy, and faith to all those who dare to dream. Do it!”*

Their printable solar cells, weighing so light that a one-square-metre sheet can be effortlessly supported between two fingers, introduce the concept of light recycling and adaptable application possibilities. With exceptional perovskite qualities that can absorb a wider range of the sun’s wavelengths, **this breakthrough technology is both adaptable and cost-effective.**

**Embracing perovskite for efficiency and versatility**

Perovskite cells offer high efficiency and can also be characterised by their low production impact, utilising minimal energy during manufacturing. Malinkiewicz highlights that inkjet printing is a cost-effective and energy-efficient method for producing these perovskite solar cells, compared to other methods like evaporation systems and spin coating. This sustainable approach supports broader environmental goals, aligning with global initiatives for greener technologies.

As the [European Union’s Renewable Energy Directive](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-directive-targets-and-rules/renewable-energy-targets_en) aims to reach 45% renewable energy consumption by 2030, the rapid growth of solar power becomes a key focus. **Perovskite solar cells, with their higher efficiency in converting light into electricity, are emerging as a promising alternative to traditional silicon-based panels.** During Malinkiewicz’s testing process, perovskite cells demonstrated a 25.8% light-to-electricity conversion rate, outperforming silicon-based cells at 21%.

The lightweight, flexible nature of the perovskite-coated polymers also reduces structural pressure on buildings. This invention has unlocked new commercial opportunities, from energy-generating sun blinds to the potential integration of solar power into consumer electronics like keyboards and mobile phones. Malinkiewicz’s printable solar cells are, therefore, pivotal in accelerating the shift towards sustainable energy. This invention aligns with global renewable targets and exemplifies how advanced materials can lead to smarter, more adaptable energy solutions.

**All the winners of the 2024 edition of the European Inventor Award were announced at a hybrid ceremony today** in Malta. You can stream the ceremony [online](https://www.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/streaming?mtm_campaign=EIA2024&mtm_keyword=pressrelease&mtm_medium=press).

[Find out](https://www.epo.org/en/news-events/european-inventor-award/meet-the-finalists/olga-malinkiewicz-and-team?mtm_campaign=EIA2024&mtm_keyword=pressrelease&mtm_medium=press) more about the invention’s impact, the technology and the inventor’s story.

**Next generation of the Young Inventors Prize in 2025 to take place in Iceland**

During today's ceremony in Malta, the European Patent Office (EPO) was excited to announce a new concept for the award, starting in 2025. From next year onward, the award will be held biennially, with the upcoming edition focusing on young innovators below 30 years-old whose inventions address one or more United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). An independent jury of former finalists will evaluate the entries, ensuring a fair and insightful selection process that honours the innovative spirit and achievements of the next generation of inventors. The 2025 edition will be celebrated in Iceland, marking the first of these newly biennial-focused awards, and the [nominations period](https://www.epo.org/en/news-events/young-inventors-prize/nominations?mtm_campaign=EIA2024&mtm_keyword=pressrelease&mtm_medium=press) for all technological fields remains open from today until the end of September.

In alternating years, starting in 2026, the EPO will return to the original concept of the European Inventor Award, featuring its traditional categories of ‘Industry’, ‘Research’, ‘SMEs’, ‘Non-EPO countries’, ‘Lifetime Achievement’ and ‘Popular Prize’.

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**About the inventor**  
  
Saule Technologies co-founder and CTO Olga Malinkiewicz is a physicist and entrepreneur who, in 2013, discovered the potential of perovskite at a technical conference. Her subsequent invention of a room-temperature inkjet printer for perovskite solar cell films earned her the Photonics21 Student Innovation Award.

This drew the attention of Polish businessmen Piotr Krych and Artur Kupczunas, leading to the formation of Saule Technologies, with a shared goal of advancing renewable technology.

**About the European Inventor Award**

The European Inventor Award is one of Europe's most prestigious innovation prizes. Launched by the EPO in 2006, the award honours individuals and teams, who have come up with solutions to some of the biggest challenges of our time. The finalists and winners are selected by an independent jury comprising former Award finalists. Together, they examine the proposals for their contribution towards technical progress, social and sustainable development, and economic prosperity. All inventors must have been granted a European patent for their invention.

**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 45 countries, covering a market of some 700 million people. The EPO is also the world's leading authority in patent information and patent searching.