



Europäisches
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EUROPEAN INVENTOR AWARD 2010

This is your chance
Put forward the next winner of
the European Inventor Award
Deadline for entries: 12 September 2009



European Commission
Enterprise and Industry

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INTRODUCTION

This brochure provides an overview of the European Inventor Award. It also explains how you can enter an inventor in the 2010 European Inventor Award competition. Anyone can put forward a proposal – inventors may even enter themselves. All entries will be reviewed by an independent jury, and three finalists in each category will be invited to the Award Ceremony in Madrid, Spain, in April 2010. You – or the inventor you propose for the Award – could be one of the winners. Seize this opportunity and submit your proposal by 12 September 2009. For further information and regular updates on the Award, please visit www.epo.org/european-inventor.

CELEBRATING THE INVENTIVE SPIRIT

Be a part of Europe's highest honour for inventors from all over the world.

The spirit of invention has fuelled human progress for generations. Thanks to the groundbreaking ideas of individual inventors, the lives of millions of people around the world have been improved again and again throughout history. With their constant search for new solutions and technologies, inventors continue to challenge the current state of the art, while pointing out new solutions.

With these individual inventors in mind, the European Inventor Award pays tribute to the people behind the big ideas that are shaping our times.

Established in 2006 by the European Patent Office (EPO) and the European Commission, the European Inventor Award recognises outstanding inventors from all over the world, from all technical fields and backgrounds – the public, private, academic and non-profit sectors.

Each Award winner is a gifted individual who has given the world an invention that has made a difference. The difference of fulfilling unmet demands. The difference of sparking a new impulse on the market. The difference of opening a new door to scientific understanding and new practical applications. And above all, the difference of improving people's daily lives.

The European Inventor Award is a celebration of the inventive spirit, the individual contributions of talented inventors, and the European patent system that protects invention and encourages innovation.

"Europe is the continent of innovation."

Günter Verheugen, European Commission Vice-President, at the European Inventor Award Ceremony 2008 in Ljubljana



CATEGORIES OF THE EUROPEAN INVENTOR AWARD

Until 12 September 2009, the EPO will be accepting proposals for the Award in the following four categories: Industry, SMEs/Research, Lifetime Achievement and Non-European Countries.

Industry

The Industry Award recognises the inventors of outstanding and commercially successful technologies patented by large European companies. Inventions considered in this year's contest should have entered the market any time from 2000–2009, but the relevant patents may date back decades in some cases.

The companies in question have more than 250 employees and annual revenues of more than EUR 50 million.

SMEs/Research

The SMEs/Research Award is presented to the people behind inventions at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or research institutions. Ideally, the invention has helped the company achieve commercial success and business growth. Inventions considered in this year's contest should have entered the market any time from 2000–2009, but the relevant patents may date back decades in some cases.

SMEs are companies that had fewer than 250 employees and annual revenues of less than EUR 50 million when the patents were granted for the invention.


Lifetime Achievement

The Lifetime Achievement Award honours the long-term contributions of an individual European inventor. With their dedication and tireless efforts – and their patented landmark inventions – these inventors have had a major impact on their respective fields of technology, and society at large.

In this category, an inventor's entire oeuvre is relevant; for that reason, no time limits apply. Please note: Inventors cannot enter themselves in this category.

Non-European Countries

This category is open to all inventors who are not European nationals, regardless of the size or revenues of the company applying their patented invention. The invention or related products must be available and enjoy commercial success in Europe. Inventions considered in this year's contest should have entered the market any time from 2000–2009, but the relevant patents may date back decades in some cases.



"The patent system is just in the middle between those that invent things and those that use them because the patent reassures them that they can protect their invention."

Heinz Zourek, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry, at the European Inventor Award Ceremony 2009 in Prague

CRITERIA FOR ENTRY

To enter yourself or another inventor for the European Inventor Award, you need to fill out an entry form and submit it to the EPO. The entry forms can be found at the back of this brochure and can also be downloaded at www.epo.org/european-inventor.

The European Inventor Award was set up to reward the highest levels of excellence. This is why all entries must satisfy certain formal requirements.

There is one common denominator for all inventors that can be proposed for the European Inventor Award: They have been awarded a European patent. A recognised benchmark of quality around the world, European patents are granted by the EPO according to strict legal standards.

Any inventor of any nationality possessing at least one valid European patent can enter or be proposed. Inventors with European nationalities are eligible for the Industry, SMEs/Research and Lifetime Achievement categories even if they currently reside outside Europe. Other nationals can be entered in the Non-European Countries category.

Entries must meet the following criteria:

- The invention's innovative factor – how it has advanced the prior technology/process in its field – must be stated clearly in the entry form.
- The invention's practical application should be precisely defined.
- The invention's commercial success in Europe should be proven.
- The invention clearly benefits the economy and society.
- The invention improves the quality of daily/working life and/or the protection of the environment.

An inventor may NOT be entered for the competition if:

- The relevant patent is the subject of pending opposition or appeal proceedings.
- The patent has been revoked.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MARKET SUCCESS

Today's economy is becoming increasingly knowledge-based. Between 1999 and 2008, the number of patent applications filed at the EPO grew by an average of 5.7 percent per year. In 2008, 146 500 applications were filed under the European Patent Convention, which amounts to 400 every single day. This is due, in part, to individual inventors, SMEs, research institutions and large companies realising the importance and economic impact of patenting their inventions.

Patents promote innovation by providing a strong incentive to innovate and to invest with the aim of bringing a product to market.

The European Inventor Award & market success

One key criterion of entries for the European Inventor Award is commercial success. But as patents are granted in highly diverse technologies, no single set of guidelines to determine market success can be applied across the board.

Inventors are eligible if their invention resulted in a significant growth in revenue, market shares and/or employment at the company holding the patent. The product or process must be successful beyond the borders of the inventor's home country and should have contributed to protecting the environment or improving the daily life or work of people around Europe.

In this year's competition, inventions that have entered the market since 2000 will be considered. The related patents may date back for decades, however.

THE SELECTION PROCEDURE

Once the proposals have all been collected, an EPO panel will carefully check that the relevant patents are still valid and meet the competition criteria. The panel will then submit a shortlist for each category to the jury, which selects three finalists in each category, who are invited to the Award Ceremony in April 2010.

The independent jury that judges the European Inventor Award consists of international experts in the fields of business, science, technology and research.

As an example of a proposal that meets all the necessary criteria, here is the winning entry in the Non-European Countries category from 2009.

Inventor: Professor Yiqing Zhou and team at the Institute of Microbiology and Epidemiology in Beijing

Innovation: Coartem malaria medication

Innovative factor: Advancement in malaria treatment, highly efficient, inexpensive, no drug resistance

Practical application: Has cured millions of patients

Commercial success: EUR 60 million in sales in 2008

Benefit to the economy and society: Breaks cycle of malaria and poverty where it is needed

Improve the quality of daily/working life and/or the protection of the environment: Cure possible after only three days of drug regimen, so patients can resume daily routines quickly

THE JURY



Jürgen Dormann is Chairman of the Board at Metall Zug AG and a Non-Executive Director at BG Group. He was previously Chairman at ABB Ltd., Adecco S.A., a Non-Executive Director of IBM corporation, Vice-Chairman of Sanofi-Aventis, and President of the European Chemical Industry Council.



Zbyněk Frolík is Managing Director of LINET spol. s r.o., one of the world's leading developers and producers of medical equipment for hospitals and houses. In 2003 he was named Ernst & Young's Czech Republic Entrepreneur of the Year.



Emma Marcegaglia is Managing Director of the steel manufacturing company Marcegaglia S.p.a. and of all companies under its control. She is also President of Confindustria, the leading organisation representing manufacturing and service companies in Italy.



Olivier Tardy is a Senior Partner and Managing Director at the Boston Consulting Group's office in Paris. A trained engineer, he is head of the firm's Technology, Media and Telecommunications activities and one of their experts in the field of Intellectual Property.



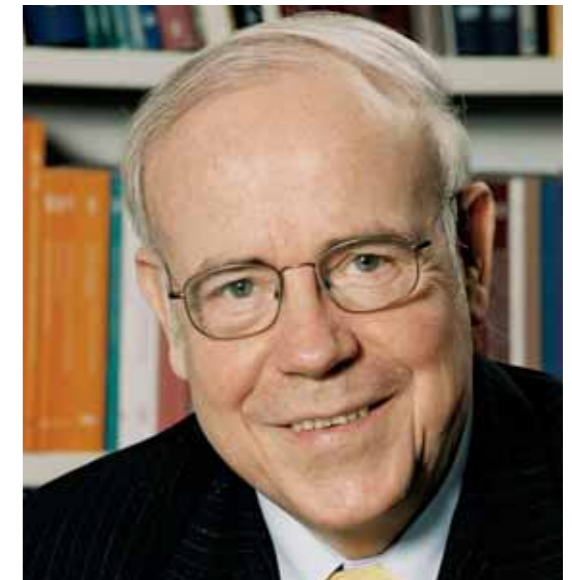
Bowman Heiden is Operations Director for the Qatar Science & Technology Park and Deputy Director of the Center for Intellectual Property Studies in Göteborg, which he helped to found. He is also Chairman of the ScanBalt Knowledge Network on IP and Bio-Entrepreneurship.



Jonathan Liebenau is a Reader in Technology Management at the London School of Economics and Adjunct Professor of Industrial Engineering & Operations Research and Fellow of the Columbia Institute for Tele-Information at Columbia University.



Sylvester Vizi is a Professor and Department Chair of Pharmacology and Therapy at the Semmelweis University and Head of the Department of Pharmacology at the Institute of Experimental Medicine of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest. He was formerly president of the Academy.



Ernst-Ludwig Winnacker is Secretary General of the International Human Frontier Science Program Organisation. He was formerly Secretary General of the European Research Council and President of the German Research Foundation.

AN AWARD WINNER CASE STUDY

Italian inventor Catia Bastioli and her team at Novamont SpA were thrilled to receive the European Inventor Award 2007 in the category SMEs/Research for their work in bio-degradable plastics. And the Award has also had a positive impact on Bastioli's company.

Novamont is the world leader in bio-plastics, and the product developed by founding member and current CEO, Catia Bastioli, is a revolution when it comes to its environmental qualities.

Bio-plastics, which are based on insoluble starch from crops, can be turned into a near infinite range of products, including shopping bags, disposable cups, and even car tyres. Adding to the intrigue, bio-plastics are renewable, recyclable, reusable, and they turn into soil within three to eight weeks in a regular compost pile. By contrast, traditional plastics take 100 to 400 years to decompose (though they can also be burned, they then emit toxic fumes).

Beating all odds

After years of research and development, and struggling, Bastioli and her team realised their hard work had finally reached an international audience when they were named winners of the European Inventor Award in 2007. "For years, we poured all of our energy into a product we believed in, despite indifference or scepticism, which sometimes pitted us against the world of industry and research we were active in," Bastioli said. Working within this challenging climate, Bastioli and her team became used to working hard for their successes. "Almost without noticing, we managed to transform an idea into technologies, patents, factories, systems and partnerships."

"Winning the Award made us understand that our years of work and sacrifice weren't in vain. We were honoured that the European Patent Office and the European Commission noticed our work and considered what we did useful for Europe and worthy of such an important recognition," she said.



Measurable growth

Since winning the Award, Bastioli and her team at Novamont have perceived a marked increase in awareness about bio-plastics research and development.

"There is certainly more awareness about our products and research among institutions and industries. Media attention has increased as well," she said.

This awareness has driven the growth of Novamont as a whole: What started out with just Bastioli and three other scientists has now evolved into a successful medium-sized enterprise. With a turnover of EUR 41 million and 135 employees in 2006, Novamont now boasts a turnover of EUR 62 million and 170 employees.

EUROPEAN INVENTOR AWARD WINNERS 2006–2008

Here is a selection of inventors who have won the European Inventor Award in the past. You or "your" inventor could be next.

2006

Industry: Zbigniew Janowicz and Cornelis Hollenberg of Rhein Biotech (Germany), who invented a method for making proteins in Hansenula yeast, which is used to produce an affordable vaccine against hepatitis B.

SMEs: Stephen P. A. Fodor, Michael C. Pirrung, J. Leighton Read and Lubert Stryer of the Affymax Research Institute (USA) for their invention of the DNA chip.

Universities and Research Institutes: Peter Grünberg from the Jülich Research Centre (Germany) for his discovery of the giantmagneto-resistance effect, or GMR.

New EU Member States: John Starrett, Joanne Bronson, John Martin, Muzammil Mansuri and David Tortolani, of the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Academy of Sciences in Prague (Czech Republic), whose work resulted in a breakthrough with chemical compounds, called prodrugs of phosphonates.

Non-European Countries: Larry Gold and Craig Tuerk from NeXstar Pharmaceuticals (USA), who found out that nucleic acids can bind a protein to potentially intercept other proteins that cause diseases like AMD.

Lifetime Achievement: Federico Faggin (Italy), for inventing the micro-processor.

2007

Industry: Franz Lärmer and Andrea Urban, of Bosch (Germany) for their Bosch Process, which revolutionised sensor technology and made possible – among other things – the life-saving airbag.

SMEs/Research: Catia Bastioli and her team at Novamont (Italy) for inventing biodegradable plastics from starch, a renewable raw material used, for instance, in eco-friendly refuse bags.

Non-European Countries: Joseph P. Vacca, Bruce Dorsey and the team at Merck Research Laboratories (USA) for developing Crixivan, a protease inhibitor that has revolutionised HIV treatment, transforming the disease from a death sentence into a chronic condition.

Lifetime Achievement: Marc Feldmann (United Kingdom) for identifying the role of cytokines in the treatment of autoimmune disorders, such as rheumatoid arthritis, and for finding a treatment that has helped millions of people around the globe.

2008

Industry: Norbert Enning, Heinrich Timm, Ulrich Klages, Gundolf Kreis, Alois Feldschmid, Christian Dornberg and Karl Reiter of Audi (Germany) for revolutionising automotive manufacturing by making car frames lighter and safer through the use of aluminium.

SMEs/Research: Douglas Anderson, Robert Henderson and Roger Lucas of Optos (United Kingdom) for developing a new laser scanning technology for the eye which allows powerful but pain-free examination of the retina.

Non-European Countries: Philip S. Green of SRI International (USA) for developing a robotic surgical system that has helped to improve surgery in Europe by allowing surgeons to perform complex procedures with the highest precision.

Lifetime Achievement: Erik De Clercq (Belgium) for landmark contributions to antiviral treatment, including the development of the drug cocktail for AIDS which has become the gold standard of our day.

EUROPEAN INVENTOR AWARD WINNERS 2009

In its fourth year, the European Inventor Award Ceremony was held in conjunction with the European Patent Forum in Prague, Czech Republic on 28 April 2009. The winners were:

Industry: Jürg Zimmermann (Switzerland) and Brian Druker (USA) for inventing Glivec, a drug to combat chronic myelogenous leukaemia with unprecedented rates of recovery. The drug is also a prime example of international research cooperation with groundbreaking results.

SMEs/Research: Joseph Le Mer (France) for his work on a heat exchanger that makes heating systems less expensive and more energy efficient. The invention has brought considerable commercial success to the inventor.

Non-European Countries: Yiqing Zhou and his team (China) from the Institute of Microbiology and Epidemiology at the Academy of Military Medical Sciences in Beijing for developing an anti-malarial drug based on a traditional Chinese remedy. The drug has already cured millions of patients in malaria problem zones.

Lifetime Achievement: Adolf Goetzberger (Germany) for his pioneering work on solar energy, making solar cells a viable alternative to fossil fuels. Goetzberger also founded Europe's largest research institute for solar energy, the Freiburg-based Fraunhofer-Institut for Solar Energy Systems (ISE). His achievements as a whole have helped turn a fringe energy source into a multi-billion EUR industry.



"It is a special honour for me, as a Swiss, to receive a European award."
Jürg Zimmermann (Switzerland), Winner, Industry category, European Inventor Award 2009



"Thanks to the organisers [of this award] for putting inventors in the spotlight. The world is not attentive enough to innovation and inventors."
Joseph Le Mer (France), Winner, SMEs/Research category, European Inventor Award 2009



"My drug represents the combined essence of Chinese and Western medicine, which is more powerful than the two on their own."
Yiqing Zhou (China), Winner, Non-European Countries category, European Inventor Award 2009



"It was an interesting lifetime. I am surprised myself to see how far we have come. I am glad I have lived long enough to see my work come to fruition."
Adolf Goetzberger (Germany), Winner, Lifetime Achievement category, European Inventor Award 2009

EUROPEAN INVENTOR AWARD CEREMONY 2009



Around 400 guests gathered at the Prague Castle to see EPO President Alison Brimelow and Heinz Zourek, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry, present the Award to outstanding inventors in four categories, after a warm welcome by Miloslav Vlček, President of the Czech Parliament.



NEXT STEPS

Once you have sent your proposal to the EPO, you can stay informed by visiting www.epo.org/european-inventor.

Participants will be informed about the status of their entries following the jury's decision.

All milestones in the European Inventor Award – including the publication of the names of the finalists, the date and location of the Award Ceremony and the premiere of videos about the finalists and their inventions – will be announced on the website.

Watch past winners on the EPO website www.epo.org/european-inventor, or on EPO films on YouTube: www.youtube.com/EPOfilms

Helpful resources

The EPO's databases are extremely helpful when it comes to finding the European patent (EP) numbers of an invention and checking the status and validity of a patent:

EPO Online Services database: www.epoline.org
esp@cenet database: <http://ep.espacenet.com>

Dates and deadlines

Closing date for entries: **12 September 2009**
Announcement of finalists: **February 2010**
Award Ceremony in Madrid: **April 2010**

