



2017 EU Prize for Women Innovators: Commission awards four outstanding entrepreneurs

Brussels, 8 March 2017

At an award ceremony in Brussels on International Women's Day, Commissioner Carlos Moedas and Vice-President of the European Parliament Mairead McGuinness announced the four winners of the 2017 Horizon 2020-funded EU Prize for Women Innovators.

The winners of the 2017 EU Prize for Women Innovators are:

- **1st Prize (€100,000): Ms Michela Magas**, of Croatian/British nationality, founder of [Stromatolite](#), a UK Design Innovation Lab with a studio in Sweden, building a new generation of incubation and creative technology toolkits for innovation.
- **2nd Prize (€50,000): Ms Petra Wadström** from Sweden, founder of [Solvatten](#), which produces a portable water purifier and water heater that are powered by solar energy.
- **3rd Prize (€30,000): Ms Claudia Gärtner** from Germany, founder of [microfluidic ChipShop](#), which provides "lab-on-a-chip" systems as miniaturised solutions for better diagnostics.

Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, said: *"The winners of this year's EU Prizes for Women innovators are truly inspiring. Europe needs more women innovators like them, with great ideas and the courage and determination to take risks and succeed. The innovations that the four winners have brought from idea to market are remarkable not only from a business point of view but also because they will benefit and improve the lives of many people in Europe and beyond"*.

Mairead **McGuinness**, Vice-President of the European Parliament, said: *"This Prize demonstrates the significant contribution of women innovators in bringing many life-changing innovations to the market. It is very fitting that on this International Women's Day 2017 we recognise and celebrate their entrepreneurial spirit and achievements; we do so in a very visible way to give inspiration to other women and, in particular, to young women and girls to look towards innovation and entrepreneurship."*

In addition, a new category was introduced this year - the Rising Innovators Award - which recognises excellence in female entrepreneurs aged 30 years or under. The first winner of the prize worth €20,000 is **Ms Kristina Tsvetanova** from Bulgaria, who is CEO and co-founder of the Austrian company, [BLITAB Technology](#), which has produced the first tablet for blind users, called BLITAB.

Background

All of today's winners have recently founded or co-founded a successful company based on their innovative ideas, and all have received EU research and innovation funding in the past.

The winners were chosen by a high-level jury of independent experts following an open call for submissions in autumn 2016. The jury consisted of independent experts from business, venture capital, entrepreneurship and academia. 47 applications were submitted from across the EU and the countries associated to Horizon 2020, the EU's funding programme for research and innovation, which provides the prize money for the awards. 12 finalists were shortlisted for the award in January.

The aim of the EU Prize for Women Innovators is to raise public awareness of the need for more innovation and more women entrepreneurs, to recognise the success of women in innovation and create strong role models. Women are underrepresented in terms of creating innovative enterprises – only 31% of entrepreneurs in the EU are women. This represents an untapped potential for Europe, which needs to use all its human resources to their full potential in order to remain competitive and to find solutions to economic and societal challenges.

This is the fourth edition of the contest, which began in 2011. To be eligible to compete, participants must have founded or co-founded a company before January 2015 with a turnover of at least €100,000, and either they themselves or their companies must have previously benefitted from public or private funding for research and innovation, whatever the source.

More information

- [EU Prize for Women Innovators](#)
- [Gender equality in research and innovation](#)
- [Statistics on women entrepreneurs in Europe](#)
- [Horizon Magazine - Women in science](#)

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