



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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European Prize for Women Innovators 2026: winners announced

Today, the European Commission revealed the winners of the 12th edition of the [European Prize for Women Innovators](#) at the European Innovation Council (EIC) Summit in Brussels. The prize, which is jointly managed by the EIC and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), celebrates women entrepreneurs whose work is advancing innovation across Europe and contributing to a more competitive, inclusive and forward-looking economy.

Ekaterina **Zaharieva**, Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation, said: *"The European Prize for Women Innovators recognises the bold ideas and leadership of women who are transforming innovation into real-world impact. This year's finalists and winners show how entrepreneurship and diversity go hand in hand in strengthening Europe's innovation capacity. Their achievements are an inspiration for the next generation of innovators across Europe."*

The prize showcases the remarkable achievements of winners and runners-up across three categories:

1) EIC Women Innovators, for all women founders and co-founders across the EU Member States and Associated Countries to Horizon Europe:

- **Winner: Katerina Spranger** (Ukraine/UK), founder and CEO of [Oxford Heartbeat](#), applying artificial intelligence to support safer and more precise treatment of brain aneurysms.
- **Second place: Elena Heber** (Germany), co-founder and Managing Director of [HelloBetter](#), expanding access to mental health care through clinically validated digital therapies and AI-supported solutions.
- **Third place: Judit Camargo Sanromà** (Spain), founder and CEO of [Roka Furadada](#), addressing the rise in skin cancer through eco-friendly cosmetic ingredients that provide effective UV protection while minimising harm to marine ecosystems.

2) EIC Rising Innovators, for promising young women innovators under the age of 35:

- **Winner: Marta Oliveira** (Belgium), co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of [ATMOS Space Cargo](#), enabling reusable space capsules to safely return materials from orbit and support new research opportunities.
- **Second place: Judit Giró Benet** (Spain), founder of [The Blue Box](#), developing a urine-based test to improve early detection of breast cancer, particularly for women underserved by existing screening methods.

Third place: Carin Lightner (Switzerland), co-founder and CEO of [Enantios](#), advancing the development of new medicines through faster and more precise analysis of complex molecules.

3) EIT Women Leadership, for exceptional members of the EIT Community:

- **Winner: Ella Frances Cullen (Portugal)**, co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer of [Minespider](#), is pioneering digital traceability of products across supply chains. Her company's blockchain and AI platform provides digital product and battery passports for supply chain traceability, increasing transparency, sustainability, and compliance.
- **Second place: Stefania Raimondo (Italy)**, co-founder of [Navhetec](#), is advancing plant-based nanomedicine by extracting particles with biomedical potential from citrus juice. Her company has developed and patented a method that allows the extraction and use of these particles to formulate health products with superior efficacy and novel functionalities.
- **Third place: Neide Vieira (Portugal)**, co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of [IPLEXMED](#), is accelerating the diagnosis of infectious diseases through the use of graphene-based biosensors. Her company has created a portable, rapid, and connected diagnostic platform that delivers lab-grade results by harnessing the superior electronic properties of graphene biosensors.

Managed jointly by the [European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency \(EISMEA\)](#) and [the European Institute of Innovation and Technology \(EIT\)](#), the European Prize for Women Innovators highlights the crucial contribution of women entrepreneurs to Europe's innovation ecosystem and its long-term competitiveness. Now in its 12th edition, the prize continues to recognise and celebrate outstanding women who are driving innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe.

Background

The [European Prize for Women Innovators](#) is awarded to women from across the EU and countries associated to Horizon Europe, whose disruptive innovations are driving positive

change for people and planet. It aims to highlight their achievements and encourage more women and girls to pursue careers in innovation and entrepreneurship.

There are three prize categories:

- **The EIC Women Innovators category**, awarded to the most talented women innovators from across the EU and Associated Countries. The winner is awarded €100 000, and two runners-up are awarded €70 000 and €50 000 respectively;
- **The EIC Rising Innovators category**, awarded to promising young innovators under the age of 35. The winner is awarded €50 000, and two runners-up are awarded €30 000 and €20 000 respectively;
- **The EIT Women Leadership category**, awarded to exceptional women leaders from the EIT Community. The winner is awarded €50 000, and two runners-up are awarded €30 000 and €20 000 respectively.

More information

[EU Prize for Women Innovators 2023-2024 winners page](#)

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