

EUROPEAN INVENTOR AWARD 2011 PRESS INFORMATION



Press release

The European Inventor Award 2011 goes to pioneers in medical research and implant technology, clean energy, construction and water purification

The winners of the 2011 edition of the European Inventor Award are: Per-Ingvar Brånemark (Sweden - Lifetime Achievement); Ann Lambrechts, Bekaert (Belgium - Industry); Jens Dall Bentzen, Dall Energy Aps (Denmark - SMEs); Christine Van Broeckhoven, Vlaams Interuniversitair Instituut voor Biotechnologie (Belgium - Research); Ashok Gadgil and Vikas Garud, University of California/Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, WaterHealth International (USA/India - Non-European countries).

Munich/Brussels/Budapest, 19 May 2011 -- From promising methods for diagnosing Alzheimer's and modern implant technology to high-stability concrete, an efficient biomass furnace and water purification with ultraviolet light - the winners of the European Inventor Award 2011 cover a wide spectrum of pioneering technological solutions and are a testament to Europe's innovative capacity. The European Patent Office (EPO), in cooperation with the Hungarian EU Council Presidency and the European Commission, awarded Europe's most prestigious innovation prize in five categories at a ceremony at the Academy of Sciences in Budapest today.

The winners of the European Inventor Award 2011 in detail:

Lifetime Achievement: Per-Ingvar Brånemark (Sweden)

He is the pioneer of osseointegration, now a widely practised medical method based on titanium implants, which creates a stable connection between the implant and bone. Today it is a standard implant technique among dentists and is widely used in reconstructive surgery. Millions of people worldwide have benefited from his landmark method.

Industry: Ann Lambrechts, Bekaert (Belgium)

Lambrechts' invention has opened up a world of new architectural possibilities by improving the bending strength of reinforced concrete structures. The steel fibre elements that she developed greatly increase the tensile strength of concrete, reduce construc-

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tion time and have enabled many spectacular new structures such as the Gotthard tunnel.

SMEs: Jens Dall Bentzen, Dall Energy Aps (Denmark)

His special low-emission furnace burns biofuels with a moisture content of up to 60 % and is therefore ideal for eco-friendly, highly efficient and hence inexpensive power generation from biomass in factories and production plants.

Research: Christine Van Broeckhoven, Vlaams Interuniversitair Instituut voor Biotechnologie (Belgium)

Her pioneering method for identifying disease genes in Alzheimer's sufferers paved the way for the development of modern drugs and treatments to combat Alzheimer's disease. Each of the genes and proteins that Broeckhoven has identified acts as potential "target" for researchers working to develop treatments for neurodegenerative diseases.

Non-European countries: Ashok Gadgil, Vikas Garud, University of California/Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, WaterHealth International (USA/India)

Using gravity and a carefully planned hydraulics design to ensure even water flow, their UV disinfection device requires only a 40 watt UV light bulb to disinfect 1 000 litres of water per hour. The water purification device has been installed in more than ten countries worldwide, delivering clean water to over two million people.

"European patents play an important role in the cycle from idea to market success. The winners of the European Inventor Award have benefited from the patent system, not only coming up with breakthroughs in their technical fields, but supporting the development of their companies or institutions, they have actively contributed to job creation and to the improvement of people's daily lives," said EPO President Benoît Battistelli.

"This award highlights that Europe continues to be a leader in technical innovation," said Pál Schmitt, President of Hungary. "Hungary is truly honoured to be hosting the ceremony for Europe's most prestigious inventor award. I hope it will boost innovation in our country, as we attach great importance to the ability of society and its people to innovate and drive change and progress."

"The nominees that are being honoured at this event are without a doubt a strong reflection on Europe's capacity for innovation, and an indication of a regulatory environment that supports and promotes competition and progress," said EU Internal Market and Services Commissioner Michel Barnier. "The European Patent Office will soon be called upon to deliver unitary patent protection. Inventors can then receive protection for their inventions across 25 EU member states in one single step, meaning a removal of





bureaucracy and a lowering of the cost of patents. I trust this will stimulate further innovation," he said.

Background:

The European Inventor Award is the most prestigious prize for innovation in Europe. Launched in 2006, it is presented annually by the European Patent Office. The EPO partners with the country holding the EU Council Presidency at the time of the award ceremony, which is Hungary, and the European Commission. The awards, which are purely symbolic and involve no material recompense, honour inventive individuals and teams whose pioneering work provides answers to the challenges of our age and thereby contribute to progress and prosperity. Nomination proposals are submitted by the public and by patent examiners at the European Patent Office and Europe's national patent offices. The winners are chosen from among the nominees by a high-profile international jury, which includes prominent personalities such as European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek.

For more information, photos, videos and TV footage about the European Inventor Award 2011:

- Nominees 2011
<http://www.epo.org/news-issues/european-inventor/finalists/2011.html>
- The Jury
<http://www.epo.org/news-issues/european-inventor/about-1/jury.html>
- Full TV Footage and stock material
<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/2010/focus.cfm?&focusid=217&page=focus&sitelang=en>
<http://www.4msports-server.com/>
Username: epo2011
Password: eia2011
- Videos on YouTube
<http://www.youtube.com/EPOfilms>
- The European Inventor Award on Facebook and Twitter
www.facebook.com/europeaninventoraward
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Contacts:

Oswald Schröder
Spokesperson
European Patent Office
Erhardtstr. 27 | D-80469 Munich
Tel.: +49 (0)89 2399-1800
Fax: +49 (0)89 2399-2850
oschroeder@epo.org
press@epo.org
<http://www.epo.org/press>

Linda Szabó
Shepard Fox Communications

Telephone +36 1 372 0502
Fax +36 1 372 0505
Mobile +36 20 468 8782
linda.szabo@shepard-fox.com

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