

# European Inventor Award 2013 goes to outstanding inventors from Austria, France, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and the US

---

## URL

<https://www.epo.org/news-events/news/2013/20130528a.html>

## Location

Home ▶ News & events ▶ News ▶ 2013 ▶ 20130528a

---

28 May 2013

The EPO today announced the winners of the **European Inventor Award 2013**, which honours outstanding inventors for their contribution to social, economic and technological progress.

Some 500 guests attended the award ceremony at the Beurs van Berlage in Amsterdam, including Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands, Sander Dekker, the Netherlands State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science, and Michel Barnier, the European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services.

The 2013 awards were presented in five categories, in addition to the Popular Prize:



Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrix of the Netherlands watches the ceremony

**Lifetime Achievement: Martin Schadt (Switzerland)**, inventor of the world's first flat-panel liquid crystal display, better known as LCD. Schadt's technology has paved the way for the low-energy devices, such as flat screens, tablet computers and mobile phones, now used by millions of people worldwide.

**Industry: Claus Hämmerle and Klaus Brüstle (Austria)** from Austrian manufacturer Julius Blum for their invention of a damper system for soft closing of furniture doors, drawers and wall cabinets. 'Blumotion' has seen enormous market success worldwide and has become an industry standard.

**Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: Pål Nyrén (Sweden)** for inventing pyrosequencing — a far faster, less complicated and cheaper method of sequencing DNA strands. Its combination of lower costs and greater speeds has revolutionised the study of the building blocks of life, and opened up new avenues for research into personalised treatments and cures for life-threatening diseases such as cancer.

**Research: Patrick Couvreur, Barbara Stella, Véronique Rosilio, Luigi Cattell (France, Italy)**, a team at Paris-Sud University, for their invention of nano-capsules - 70 times smaller than red blood cells and protected by a biodegradable coating - which destroy cancer cells without harming healthy tissue.

**Non-European Countries: Ajay V. Bhatt, Bala Sudarshan Cadambi, Jeff Morriss, Shaun Knoll, Shelagh Callahan (USA)**, for creating and developing Universal Serial Bus (USB) technology, one of the most important advances in computing since the silicon chip. An industry standard today, USB not only allows users to more easily connect devices to a computer, it also streamlines work for hardware and software developers. It is found in billions of electronic devices all over the world, from webcams to cell phones and memory sticks.

The winner of the **Popular Prize** was **José Luis López Gómez (Spain)**, whose invention to use a unique 'independent guided' wheel design rather than a standard axle on high-speed passenger trains makes those trains some of the most comfortable and safe in the industry. The new technology also helps to reduce energy consumption, premature wear and costs of maintenance. An electronic system monitors the speed at which the wheels are rotating. Due to the wheels' slightly conical shape and the difference in length between the inner and outer tracks on a curved section of track, the system can determine the wheels' exact contact point. Pneumatic struts attached to the wheels then move the wheels to the best position.



José Luis López Gómez, winner of the first European Inventor Award Popular Prize

"Innovation holds the key to safeguarding quality of life and economic prosperity in Europe," said EPO President Benoît Battistelli at the award ceremony. "All of the inventors honoured here today have been truly exemplary, not only in coming up with ingenious solutions to challenges of our time, such as healthcare and climate change, but also in improving people's lives through the quality of the products and services that we are using every day, and by creating jobs to promote economic wealth. They demonstrate Europe's creative drive and inventive spirit, and the role played by patents in supporting this."

Accepting his award, Patrick Couvreur, winner in the Research category, said he was "especially happy" to receive it as it recognised the need for more medicines to treat cancer, and pancreatic cancer in particular.

Pål Nyrén, winner in the SMEs category, said it was "a real surprise to be nominated" and added that he was "even more surprised" to win the award.

Bala Sudarshan Cadambi, one of the team who won in the Non-European countries category, said that "a problem is often an opportunity". He described how the team's invention, USB, had helped his mother to use her digital camera, and teammate Ajay Bhatt's daughter to take her music with her.

A winner in the Industry category, Claus Hämmerle stressed the important role his colleagues had played in developing the soft-close hinge. He said the award celebrated "the success of a team of specialists".

Popular Prize winner José Luis López Gómez recalled how his brother had told him that it would be difficult to develop something new because everything had already been invented. But "everything can be optimised to improve the quality of life," he told the audience.

Lifetime achievement winner Martin Schadt said he was "very surprised" to receive the award "because my colleagues did beautiful work too. It must have been a difficult decision."



#### Further information

› [European Inventor Award 2013](#)

---

Last updated: 22.2.2017