

# EIT Awards winners announced: new wave of innovators changing the face of Europe

The EIT (European Institute of Innovation & Technology) rewards Europe's top entrepreneurs and change-makers who bring solutions to key challenges in the fields of climate, energy, digitisation, food, health and raw materials.

Europe's most ground-breaking entrepreneurs and innovators were honoured last night at the EIT Awards ceremony at one of Europe's most important innovation forums, INNOVEIT, in Budapest.

Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said: *"The winners of this year's EIT Awards are absolutely inspiring. The EIT Community and the EIT Awards show how many young Europeans have the talent, creativity and determination to help us tackle the big challenges facing our continent. The EIT is vital in offering young people the chance to transform their best ideas into products, services and jobs. To promote more innovators like these, Europe has to better integrate entrepreneurship and innovation into education – that's exactly what the EIT Community does."*

## 2017 EIT AWARDS WINNERS

### EIT CHANGE Award – rewards graduates who spur innovation and bring about societal change

Florence Gschwend (Switzerland), co-founder and Director of Operations of [Chrysalix Technologies](#), for the BioFlex process that enables contaminated waste wood from construction and demolition to be transformed into inexpensive fuels, materials and chemicals, contributing to a cleaner tomorrow for us all.

Awarded €15,000.

*"Being an entrepreneur never occurred to me before getting in touch with the events and programmes organised by EIT Climate-KIC. They helped bring out the entrepreneur in me, and this award is now a major step in pursuing my goal of implementing the BioFlex technology in the real world. In 10 years' time, I want to be converting one million tonnes of waste wood every year,"* said Florence Gschwend.



Budapest, 17 October 2017

**EIT Innovators Award – recognises innovation teams developing a product or service with a high potential for societal and economic impact**

Martin Steinberg (Sweden), Project Leader at the Karolinska Institute, for the Stockholm3 Test (STHLM3), an innovative cancer-detecting blood test. The test detects the risk of aggressive prostate cancer by combining five protein markers, more than 100 genetic markers, clinical data and a proprietary algorithm. Developed with the support of EIT Health, this non-invasive blood test reduces the number of unnecessary biopsies by 50% compared to current clinical practice.

Awarded €50,000.

*“All the members of the STHLM3 team hope our work will have a significant positive effect on society by reducing individual harm from over-diagnosis, mortality and overall healthcare costs. Most importantly, aggressive cancers will be detected early in more men, giving them a greater chance of survival. EIT Health has been a catalyst for this project, and for the close collaboration between academia, industry and healthcare providers we needed for testing, validation and market access,”* said Martin Steinberg.

**EIT Venture Award – recognises Europe’s most promising ventures**

Hans Constandt (Belgium), founder and CEO of Ontoforce, for DISQOVER, an innovative search tool that finds medical data faster, smarter and simpler to heal patients more effectively. DISQOVER aggregates data from an unlimited number of public, third-party and private sources. Supported by EIT Health, this advanced search technology will have a global impact on bringing drugs to market faster.

*“We are becoming a world leader in semantic search, and the EIT Community has contributed in many ways to this success. Many of their experts advised us and helped us to pivot, optimise our pitch, meet customers and partners, review our materials, develop go-to-market strategies and much, much more. I accept this award on behalf of an extremely intelligent and motivated team that truly believes we can heal patients by democratising Big Data,”* said Hans Constandt.

Awarded €50,000.

**EIT Audience Award – a new Award chosen by all participants of INNOVEIT**

Carsten Mahrenholz is co-founder and CEO of COLDPLASMATECH GmbH, the company behind the innovative “Plasma Patch” – a Star Trek-like device that uses cold plasma to kill multi-resistant bacteria and treat chronic wounds. Carsten’s goal is to pioneer the next step in modern medicine, by *“fighting a problem that could take us back to the Middle Ages: antibiotic resistance”*.

*“This Award is very important to us at COLDPLASMATECH, because it will help us on our journey to reach the patient. It proves that the product speaks to the people and this is what we want to do - bring this technology to the people,”* said Carsten Mahrenholz.



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*“The EIT Awards promote the outstanding achievements of European entrepreneurs who bring solutions to today’s major challenges and create the future of Europe. This year’s winners and nominees are impressive agents of change. Their vision, courage and inventiveness are an inspiration to entrepreneurs and students everywhere,”* said Martin Kern, EIT Interim Director.

The winners were chosen by an international jury from among 20 nominations. Each finalist was selected for driving European innovation through ground-breaking products, services and processes that address global challenges in the fields of climate, energy, digitisation, health and raw materials. This year’s list of nominees stood out for its high percentage of women entrepreneurs (8 finalists, an increase of 22% over last year) and the high number of nominees related to climate change products or services (35%) and digital technologies (22%).

The full list and profiles of the 2017 EIT Awards winners can be found [here](#).

Watch the first interviews with the winners [here](#). Photos of the winners can be found [here](#).

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**Background****EIT – Europe’s largest innovation community**

The EIT is an independent EU body set up to boost innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe. The EIT Community brings together leading companies, universities and research labs to form dynamic cross-border partnerships – Innovation Communities – that develop innovative products and services, start new companies, and train a new generation of entrepreneurs. We are active in the areas of climate ([EIT Climate-KIC](#)), digitisation ([EIT Digital](#)), energy ([EIT InnoEnergy](#)), health ([EIT Health](#)), raw materials ([EIT RawMaterials](#)) and food ([EIT Food](#)). Next year, two new Innovation Communities will join us in the areas of urban mobility and added value manufacturing.

The EIT Community powers entrepreneurs across Europe to turn their best ideas into products, services and jobs. To date, it has supported the creation of more than 300 innovative start-ups and more than 400 new products and services. More than 1,200 students have graduated from EIT entrepreneurial education programmes. EIT-supported start-ups and scale-ups have raised more than EUR 600 million in external capital and created more than 6,000 jobs.

For more information visit: [innoveit.eu](http://innoveit.eu).

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