

Article – Apply for 2021 edition of the Charlemagne Youth Prize

THE EUROPEAN **CHARLEMAGNE** **YOUTH PRIZE** 2021



The European Parliament and the International Charlemagne Prize Foundation in Aachen award the Charlemagne Youth Prize every year to projects by young people with a strong EU dimension. Applications for 2021 are open until 1 February 2021.

The prize

The three winning projects will be chosen from 27 projects nominated by national juries in each EU country. The first prize is €7,500, second prize €5,000 and third prize €2,500. If the situation allows it, representatives of all 27 national winning projects will be invited to Aachen, Germany, in May 2021 where the award ceremony will take place.

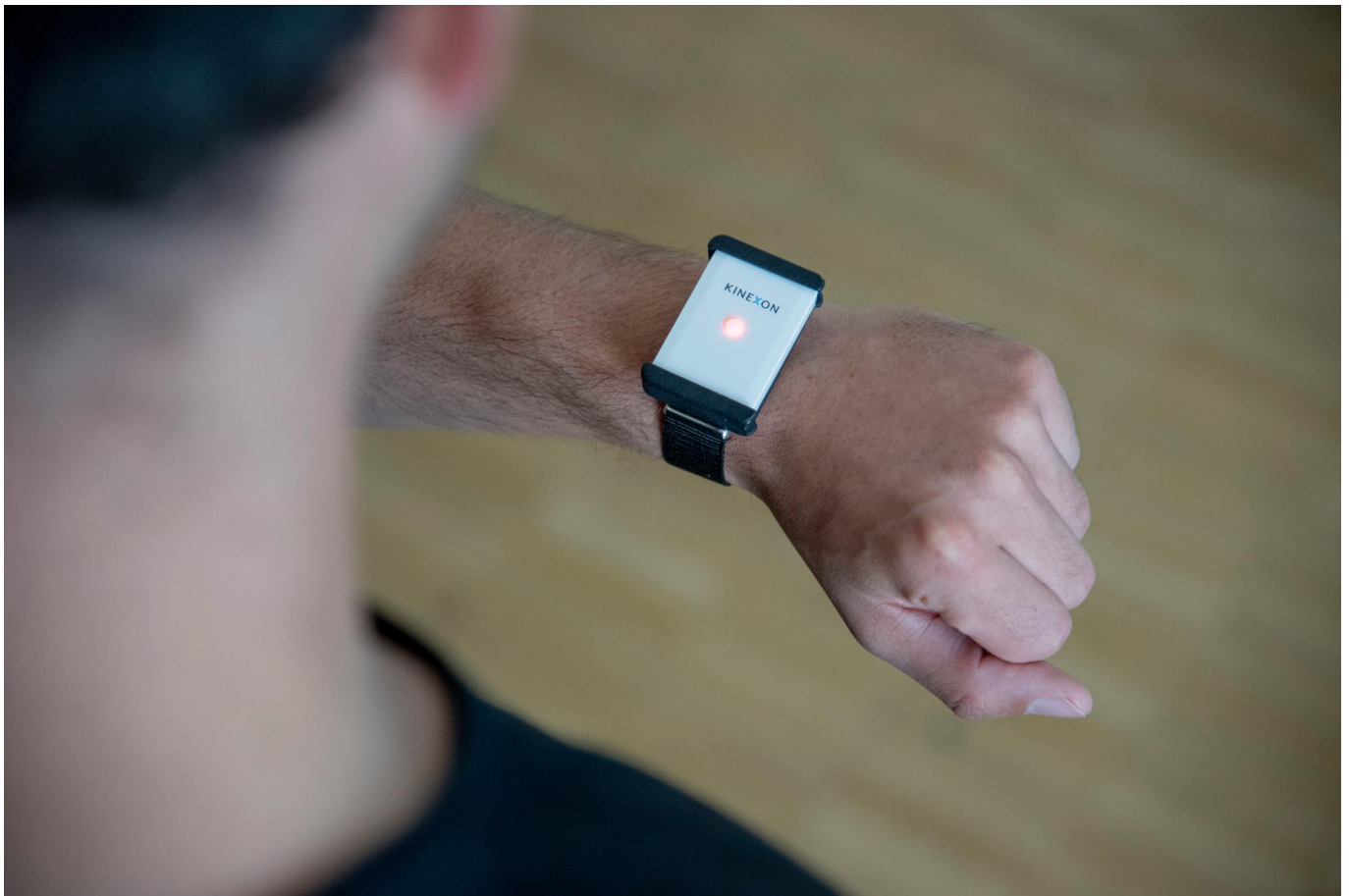
The rules

Projects must meet the following criteria to qualify:

- Promote European and international understanding
- Foster the development of a shared sense of European identity and integration

- Serve as a role model for young people living in Europe
 - Offer practical examples of Europeans living together as one community
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Germany: EIB provides KINEXON with €15 million to develop their internet of things technology



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- EIB finances soft- and hardware developer KINEXON with €15 million to support the company's expansion in the growing internet of things market
- KINEXON's precise real-time localisation and edge computing solutions are used in the worlds of industry and sport – they include SafeZone, an application that helps users keep a safe physical distance to avoid coronavirus infections and allows non-invasive contact tracing if an infection has occurred
- The loan is backed by a guarantee under the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the financial pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and KINEXON, a Munich-based global technology leader that develops hardware and software solutions, have signed a €15 million venture debt loan to promote KINEXON's real-time localisation

technology, which enables objects or people to interact in a smarter, more efficient way using the internet of things (IoT). The financing will help KINEXON to expand in Europe, the US and Asia and support the development of new products including enhanced data analytics and artificial intelligence. The transaction is supported by [the European Fund for Strategic Investments](#) (EFSI). EFSI is the financial heart of the [Investment Plan for Europe](#), under which the EIB and the European Commission work together to remove obstacles to investment and make smarter use of financial resources.

KINEXON's expertise is in sensor network development, edge computing and real-time process automation. In addition, the company focuses on the use of ultra-wide band technology, which offers superior accuracy, reliability, safety and scalability compared to Bluetooth or Wi-Fi. KINEXON's technology provides solutions in production and logistics – for instance in process analysis and optimisation, automation and robotics. In sport, the company enables in-depth performance analytics, injury prevention and next-generation fan engagement. It is also proving useful in the current pandemic: KINEXON's [SafeZone](#) application captures risk encounters live, to the nearest centimetre and on an anonymous basis. A small, wearable sensor warns users if they are below the physical [distance](#) recommended to prevent coronavirus infection. If an infection is detected in a group of employees or athletes, SafeZone identifies critical contacts with other team members in accordance with data protection regulations. The solution does not record any movement, position or health data of employees – it simply measures the distance between two sensors and the duration of contact. This technology provides effective protection and ensures business continuity.

"We are entering a period in which the internet of things is as common and as important as electricity or running water," said [Ambroise Fayolle, EIB Vice-President](#) in charge of innovation, lending in Germany and EFSI. "Already today, it is making our lives easier in many respects, from improved health to education, transportation, manufacturing or agriculture. At the EIB, we strive to support companies that shape the future. KINEXON is such a company and given how they seized the opportunity to make use of their knowledge and expertise during the COVID-crisis, I am thrilled that we can bolster their creativity and vision with EIB financing."

"Europe is in pole position to shape the future of IoT. With our real-time operating system, we want to play a leading role in connecting these 'things' and making them interact in a fully automated way. Over the past few years, the need for our solution has led to annual triple-digit growth," said Oliver Trinchera, co-founder and managing director of KINEXON. "With the EIB, we have found a partner that supports us in keeping that momentum up and even accelerating the digitalisation of the worlds of industry and sport. While the pandemic has brought a lot of challenges for economies around the world, it has also shown the need for more resilience and greater digitalisation of manufacturing and supply chains.

KINEXON is perfectly placed to address these trends – not least because of our most recent innovation SafeZone, which has become the pioneering digital solution in battling COVID-19."

KINEXON launched SafeZone just a few weeks after the COVID-19 lockdown in Germany. In the meantime, it has become the leading digital protection in the fight against COVID-19. Renowned companies and organisations are using the application. To develop this and other IoT technologies, KINEXON will receive the EIB venture debt loan in three tranches upon the completion of pre-defined milestones.

Background information

KINEXON

KINEXON is a global technology leader that develops groundbreaking hardware and software solutions for the internet of things (IoT). KINEXON Sports & Media provides performance and analytics solutions for more than 100 sports teams and leagues worldwide. In the United States, KINEXON equips more than 75 percent of NBA teams with next level technology that assists with performance profiling, conditioning, training loads and injury management. KINEXON Industries implements specialised real-time IoT solutions for industry 4.0, in order to capture, analyse and automate processes. The company pivoted during the COVID-19 pandemic to launch KINEXON SafeZone – a contact warning and contact tracing solution to combat the spread of COVID-19, which has been used by companies around the world. Founded in 2012, and headquartered in Germany, KINEXON has grown to more than 200 employees across offices in Munich, New York and Chicago.

Internet of things

The internet of things is a major global trend. It has the potential to fundamentally shift the way humans interact with the world around them. The IoT promises a future in which people and processes communicate and interact with each other automatically, almost as if by magic. To achieve this, it is important to know the exact location and status of all relevant “things” and to connect them. This requires real-time intelligence that enables everything to communicate as quickly and smartly as possible.

What do EU citizens think about nanomaterials?



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ECHA/PR/20/08

A recent survey carried out in five selected EU countries shows that citizens demand better labelling of everyday products containing nanomaterials and increased awareness of the risks and benefits of products containing

nanomaterials.

Helsinki, 16 November 2020 – A study, commissioned by the EU Observatory for Nanomaterials (EUON), measured and analysed how citizens in Austria, Bulgaria, Finland, France and Poland perceive nanomaterials and their potential risks to our health and the environment.

It found that despite manufactured nanomaterials being a common part of our everyday lives, general awareness about their nature, characteristics and properties is low. However, the level of awareness has increased compared to earlier surveys, and is expected to continue increasing in the future.

The study identified some concerns over the safety of some established and newer applications of traditional and more advanced nanomaterials. The general risk perception of nanomaterials was nevertheless lower than for other modern trends and technologies.

The results confirm that concerns often correlate with a lack of awareness of nanomaterials. People who know more about nanomaterials tend to be less concerned about the safety of using them in everyday products.

The majority (87 %) of study respondents want to know if the product they are buying contains nanomaterials. This information could be included, for example, on a label or packaging. They indicated that it would be particularly important to have the information on the product label for food and food-related products, medicines, cosmetics, clothing and textiles, toys, and detergents or household products.

The key recommendation of the study is to increase European citizens' awareness of nanomaterials, including their benefits and risks, to ensure the public can make informed choices. This is to be achieved through sharing of information and communicating the benefits and safety aspects of nanomaterials.

The study also recommends expanding the survey to all 27 EU countries. It outlines a need for further research to determine the most appropriate type of labelling for products containing nanomaterials and whether existing labelling requirements would need to be adapted.

If implemented, the recommendations aim to support authorities and regulators to improve the information and communication on nanomaterials. This will enable consumers to better understand how nanomaterials and nanotechnology are used in different products and address important information required by the general public to better understand the benefits and risks of nanomaterials.

Background

The study was carried out for the EUON by SC&C s.r.o., EcoMole s.r.o. and ReachSpektrum s.r.o.

It looked at factors such as shopping habits, trust in authorities, preferred information sources and labelling requirements among the general population.

EU nanomaterials observatory

The EUON aims to increase the transparency of information available to the public on the safety and markets of nanomaterials in the EU. A key purpose of the observatory is to create a one-stop shop for information, where EU citizens and stakeholders including NGOs, industry, and regulators can find accessible and relevant safety information on nanomaterials on the EU market.

The EUON uses a part of its funding to carry out studies on different aspects related to the safety and uses of nanomaterials in the EU.

Press release – InvestEU Fund for sustainable and social investment, MEPs ready for negotiations



On Friday, MEPs gave the green light with 480 votes to 142 and 64 abstentions for the negotiations on the renewed EU programme to support investments and guarantee access to finance. It will address market failures, sub-optimal investments and the investment gap in targeted sectors, for the period 2021-27.

In the adopted text, the Plenary backed reintroducing solvency support. MEPs believe that not all companies have the same level of access to market financing and certain member states may not have sufficient budgetary means available to provide adequate support to companies hit by the COVID-19 crisis. The solvency support will help recovering companies, safeguard employment levels, and counter-balance the expected distortions in the single market (up to around €11 billion).

InvestEU figures resulting from the latest MFF Compromise Package can be found [here](#).

More information about the adopted text, which will be the EP negotiating stance, can be found [here](#).

Press release – European values must prevail, even in a state of public emergency, MEPs say



On Friday, Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) that takes stock of the state of European democratic values in the context of national measures to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, with 496 votes to 138 and 49 abstentions.

In [Thursday's debate](#) with Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders, almost all speakers expressed concerns regarding the rights of citizens and vulnerable groups in a number of EU countries where state of emergency measures have been taken.

Uphold democratic principles and fundamental rights

In the resolution, Parliament points out that emergency measures pose a “risk of abuse of power” and stresses that they must be necessary, proportional and of a temporary nature when they affect [democracy, the rule of law, and fundamental rights](#). National governments should “not abuse emergency powers to pass legislation unrelated to the COVID-19 health emergency”.

Furthermore, members call on EU countries to

- end their “state of emergency”, or at least clearly define the delegation of powers to their executives, and ensure appropriate parliamentary and judicial checks and balances;
- refrain from unduly restricting the freedom of assembly or banning demonstrations to adopt controversial measures;
- refrain from adopting measures that profoundly impact on fundamental rights, e.g. sexual and reproductive health and rights (such as the *de facto* ban on abortion in some member states), while public health concerns do not allow for due democratic debate and safe protest;
- uphold the right to free and fair elections, especially in relation to changes to electoral legislation;
- ensure equal rights for those standing for election and campaigning, and consider alternative forms of voting;
- exercise utmost restraint in restricting the freedom of movement, especially in relation to the right to family life;
- guarantee the right to education by ensuring students have access to learning;
- guarantee access to asylum procedures despite the pandemic, and immediately evacuate the camps on the Greek islands and relocate asylum seekers to other EU countries; and
- find solutions to safeguard the rights of defendants through technology or judicial cooperation, and protect the rights of prisoners.

Quote

The rapporteur [Juan Fernando López Aguilar](#) (S&D, ES), stated: “This pandemic is turning out to be the worst crisis in the history of the European Union. Nevertheless, the European Parliament is fulfilling its duty towards citizens by fighting for their rights and freedoms, especially where governments are using the pandemic as an excuse to attack EU values. The Commission and the member states must step up their efforts to uphold fundamental rights, democracy and rule of law during this crisis and ensure that governments uphold democratic principles in their measures”.