



## Press release

Paris, June 26, 2025

# "TALENTS TO CHANGE THE WORLD": CAMPUS FRANCE AND CITÉ INTERNATIONALE ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION OF THE "YOUNG TALENTS" AWARDS FRANCE ALUMNI

*On the occasion of the 3rd edition of World Alumni Day, Campus France and the Cité internationale universitaire de Paris welcome nearly 700 participants on June 25, 2025 to celebrate the international talents trained in France and their achievements, with the presentation of the "Young Scientific Talent," "Young Artistic Talent," and "Committed Establishment" awards. In all, over 200 events are taking place worldwide for this global operation supported by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.*

Launched in 2023 at the initiative of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, and organized by Campus France in partnership with the Cité internationale universitaire de Paris, World Alumni Day 2025, on the theme "**Talents to change the world**," honors the inspiring career paths of international talents trained in France who have become agents of change in their countries and sectors of activity.

## Awards ceremony in Paris honors outstanding alumni

On Wednesday June 25, the **Cité internationale universitaire de Paris**, as part of its **100<sup>th</sup> anniversary**, welcomes nearly 700 participants for the Paris event of the 2025 season. On the program: an afternoon of "*job fair*" open to alumni and Cité internationale residents, and a **France Alumni Awards ceremony attended by:**

- **Mr. Philippe Baptiste**, Minister in charge of Higher Education and Research, who will present the **Prix Jeune Talent Scientifique** (Young Scientific Talent) to Afghan doctoral student in immunology **Mrs. Muzhda Haem Rahimi** (Afghanistan) - see *profiles of the 5 finalists in Appendix*.
- **Mr. Mohamed Mbougar Sarr**, Senegalese novelist, Prix Goncourt 2021, guest of honor France Alumni
- **Mr. Jorge Chaminé**, opera singer and former Cité internationale resident, who will present the **Prix Jeune Talent Artistique** (Young Artistic Talent) to the young Lebanese-Tunisian pianist **Mr. Zakaria Bourouba**
- **Mrs. Anne-Marie Descôtes**, Secretary General of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs will present the **Prix des Établissements Engagés** (Committed

Establishment) to the **Fondation universitaire Paris Nanterre** and to **Excellia Alumni** for their dynamic leadership of their international alumni network.

[Link to the detailed program](#)

⇒ To find out more about the winners and runners-up, see *Appendix 1*.

### A job forum dedicated to alumni

From 2 pm onwards, the Cité internationale welcomes 300 participants, alumni and campus residents for a "job fair" in the presence of more than **20 French and international companies**, including Safran, Veolia and Saint-Gobain -see *appendix 3*.

At the same time, there will be discussion sessions on career prospects in 4 specific fields, led by former students with remarkable backgrounds:

- 3:00 pm | AI & mathematics
- 3:30 pm | Luxury management
- 4:00 pm | Entreprendre, a French word
- 4:30 pm | Sustainable development

### 200 events worldwide in spring-summer 2025

As in the first two editions, French embassies, institutions and alumni associations are organizing more than 200 "France Alumni Day" events around the world to showcase the successes and achievements of former students and graduates who chose France for their studies.

[Find out more about the worldwide program on](#)

Nearly 90 of the events organized by French embassies receive financial support from the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

### 4 France Alumni Day events to discover:

- **Germany**: "Careers and valorization of studies and research in France", revolves around practical workshops and a speed-networking dedicated to academic and professional career paths in connection with France.
- **Morocco**: inauguration of the alumni house in Casablanca
- **Argentina**: France Alumni Day Argentina festival with food stalls, job fair, alumni/future starters meetings, round tables, competition.
- **China**: job fair in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

### About Campus France

The Campus France agency strengthens the appeal of French higher education by promoting it to international students. It is also responsible for managing French and foreign government scholarship recipients, providing support to students and researchers on exchange programs, organizing the France Alumni network and analyzing student mobility in France and around the world. In France, the agency coordinates the Campus France Forum (more than 370 institutions). It relies on its 275 Campus France offices worldwide, operating under the authority of French embassies in 134 different countries.

## About France Alumni

Launched in 2014, the France Alumni network allows international alumni in France to stay connected with their peers and with France. Hosted by Campus France via a web platform, the network now has 530,000 members worldwide. The platform also gives rise to over 3,200 partnerships with French and foreign companies and institutions. More than 3,300 France Alumni events (such as meetings and networking events) have been held around the world since 2014.

## About the Cité internationale universitaire de Paris

In 2025, the Cité internationale universitaire de Paris celebrates its 100th anniversary. This historic anniversary is a unique opportunity to reaffirm a century of commitment to peace, cultural dialogue and solidarity. Since 1925, the Cité internationale has been a place where students, researchers and artists from all over the world learn to live together and share a common goal: to build a future based on mutual understanding and the search for common solutions to major global challenges. From March to December 2025, the campus will be alive with cultural, scientific and festive events open to all.

### Press contacts

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## APPENDIX 1

### WINNERS OF THE FRANCE ALUMNI / CIUP 2025 AWARDS

**Young Scientific Talent Prize: Muzhda Haem Rahimi (Afghan), PhD student in immunology at Lyon I University**

**L'Oréal Unesco Prize 2024 - Alumna France Excellence** - Born in Kabul, Muzhda studied pharmacy at Kabul University. After a first internship in France in 2008 at the Hospices Civils de Lyon, in the field of hematology and immunology, she continued her studies between Afghanistan and France, specializing in immunology. In 2019, she was appointed Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at Kabul University. Then, after the Taliban came to power, and restrictions were imposed on women, she decided to apply for a doctoral fellowship at **the Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1**. Thanks to a collaboration between UCBL's Institut des Sciences Pharmaceutiques et Biologiques (ISPB) and Kabul's Faculty of Pharmacy, she began a thesis in 2022 at the Physiopathology of immunodepression associated with systemic inflammatory responses laboratory (PI3 - Université Claude Bernard Lyon 1).



She is interested in the inflammatory and immunosuppressive mechanisms responsible for immune alterations in patients admitted to intensive care. In the long term, her work could help reduce mortality in intensive care and improve the prevention of secondary infections.

**Young Artistic Talent Prize: Zakaria Bourouba (Lebanese-Tunisian), pianist and engineer in statistics and quantitative finance**

Zakaria Bourouba is a passionate pianist whose musical journey began at the age of four. In 2013, he was awarded the first **national piano prize**, a distinction that underlines his precocious talent and deep commitment to music. Nurtured from the start by the works of Beethoven - his favourite composer - Zakaria developed an artistic sensibility marked by the expressive power of the classical repertoire.



Over the years, he has broadened his musical horizons, exploring jazz and blues in particular. Inspired by the harmonic richness of classical music and the rhythmic freedom of jazz, he now composes original pieces combining these two worlds. This fusion reflects a quest for a singular artistic identity, at the crossroads of genres.

Alongside his musical career, Zakaria is pursuing a demanding degree in **statistics and quantitative finance at the Université Paris-Dauphine**. Currently on a work-study program with **BNP Paribas**, he is developing his skills in data analysis, modeling, and risk management.

**Prix des Établissements Engagés: Fondation universitaire Paris Nanterre and Excelia Alumni**

The "*Prix des Établissements Engagés*" (Committed Establishment) recognizes both a remarkably dynamic approach to international alumni networking and a thorough understanding of the strategic issues involved. At a time when links between alumni, higher education establishments and the professional world are becoming increasingly important, this award highlights initiatives that strengthen the international influence of French higher education.

For this first edition, Campus France and CIUP have chosen to distinguish two exemplary winners: the **Fondation universitaire Paris Nanterre** and **Excelia Alumni**, for the quality of their commitment, the structuring of their networks abroad and their ability to mobilize their alumni communities around meaningful and impactful projects.

## APPENDIX 2

### SCIENTIFIC PRIZE FINALISTS

#### Finalists of the Prix "Young Scientific Talent"

**Laura Cantini**, Italian mathematician, CNRS researcher at Institut Pasteur



CNRS researcher Laura Cantini is developing mathematical methods for processing the massive data available in omics databases. Its aim is to provide tools for understanding the development of organisms and human diseases. A mathematician by training, in 2016 she obtained a PhD in computational biology from the University of Turin (Italy). She then worked on the integration of molecular data related to cancer.

Her career took a turn for the better in 2018 when she was awarded the **L'Oréal-UNESCO** Prize for Women in Science. Thanks to this grant, she was able to spend some time at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA), where she began processing single-cell sequencing data. Back in France, Laura Cantini develops innovative strategies for analyzing multi-omics data at the Institut de biologie de l'École Normale Supérieure, then in the team she creates in 2023 at the Institut Pasteur.

She is a CNRS research fellow, team leader at the Institut Pasteur and holder of a springboard chair at the Paris AI Institute (PRAIRIE). Her laboratory focuses on the development of machine learning and AI methods capable of co-analyzing the vast amount of single-cell omics data available and translating it into usable biological knowledge. **Dr. Cantini's work has been recognized by numerous awards and grants, including an ERC StG fellowship, Sanofi's iTech awards and the CNRS bronze medal.**

**Sarah Gebai**, Lebanese-Brazilian engineer, founder & CEO Tremblless

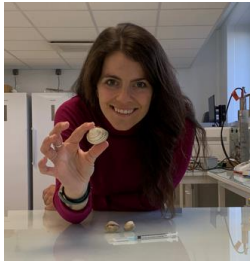


Mechanical engineer Sarah Souheil Gebai is continuing her research into a bracelet designed to reduce involuntary tremors. Born in Brazil, she grew up in Lebanon before settling in Lyon after starting her doctorate in engineering sciences in Paris.

She has made France her country of research, and has taken as her field of study a pathology that affects 60 million people worldwide: essential tremors. Author of more than 25 scientific publications and cited more than 120 times by her peers, Sarah Souheil Gebai is determined to develop and market her product through the creation of her company "TrembLess".

**Awards: Jury's "Coup de cœur" award at the Young Research Prize, organized by the Metropolis and City of Lyon - BPI France grant - IPHD Prize.**

**Alicia Bruzos**, Spanish researcher, University of Caen



Graduated in biology from the University of Santiago de Compostela in 2015, followed by a master's degree in bioinformatics at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. In 2022, she defended her doctoral thesis at the University of Santiago de Compostela, where she studied the genetic basis of underwater[2] contagious metastases. After her PhD, she completed a postdoctorate at the Francis Crick Institute at University College in London[3]. In 2023, she was awarded a Marie Skłodowska-Curie scholarship to continue her research at the Université de Caen

Normandie, where she currently works.

Alicia L. Bruzos studies transmissible cancers in bivalve mollusks, a rare form of cancer where tumor cells spread between individuals. Her work aims to understand the genetic and evolutionary mechanisms that enable the transmission and persistence of these cancers, drawing parallels with human metastases. She has contributed to several major discoveries in genomics of human cancer...

L'Oréal Unesco Young Talent Award for Women in Science - Post-doctoral researcher at the University of Caen as part of the European WINNING Normandy project supported by the Normandy Region.

**Elisabeth Ngonu**, Cameroonian biologist, PhD student at the University of Yaoundé x CIRAD (IRD), specialist in parasitology.



Winner of the 15th edition of the **Prix Jeunes Talents Afrique subsaharienne pour les femmes et la science**, organized by the L'Oréal Foundation and Unesco, Elisabeth Ngonu benefits from a research grant for a thesis in the South (ARTS) from the IRD. A doctoral student in biological sciences, the young woman was honored for her research into the prevention of onchocerciasis, a parasitic disease commonly known as "river blindness". Her work aims to contribute to the development of a sustainable strategy to combat river blindness, reducing not only its impact on the health of affected populations, but also on their income.

She is a research assistant at the Molecular Parasitology and Genetic Epidemiology Research Unit, part of the Institut Supérieur de Recherche Scientifique et Médicale (ISM) in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Would you like to get in touch with one of the winners and/or finalists? Contact us to make an appointment:

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## APPENDIX 3

### EXHIBITORS AT THE *JOB FAIR*

#### Institutions and associations

[Bernard Gregory Association](#)

[Association pour l'emploi des cadres  
\(APEC\)](#)

[Business France](#)

[Paris School of Engineering \(EIVP\)](#)

[The Foreign Trade Advisors of France \(CEE\)](#)

[Normandie attractions](#)

#### Businesses

[Ascii Qualitatem Sarl](#)

[BlueLink](#)

[Critical Building](#)

[Evolving Consulting](#)

[Equinix](#)

[Saint-Gobain Group](#)

[Starting Monday - Tourism employment](#)

[Safran](#)

[The Sanctuary Group](#)

[Veolia](#)

[88Jobs](#)