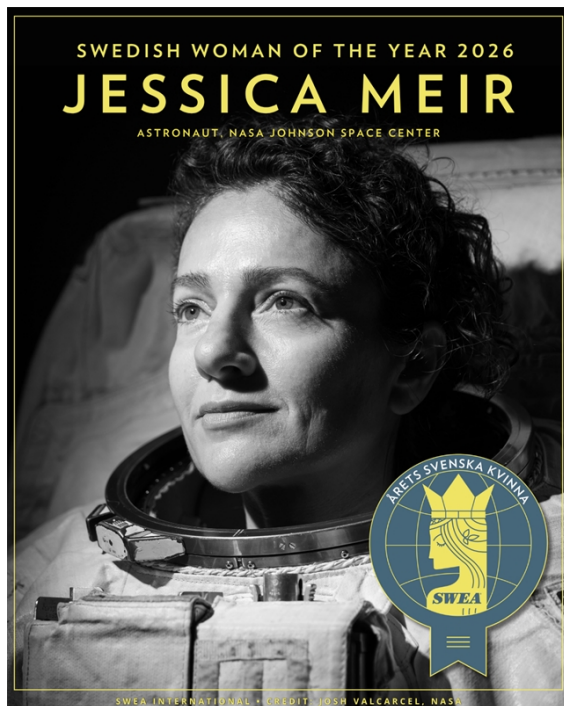




## NASA astronaut Jessica Meir named Swedish Woman of the Year 2026

SWEA International has named astronaut Jessica Meir Swedish Woman of the Year 2026, following a vote by SWEA members around the world. The announcement was made today during a live online meeting with SWEA members, where Jessica participated from the International Space Station (ISS), approximately 400 kilometers above Earth.



Jessica Meir is an astronaut at the NASA Johnson Space Center and commander of Crew-12 on the International Space Station (ISS). She is the first Swedish woman in space and one of Sweden's most internationally recognized astronauts.

She is currently on her second long-term mission and leads an international team of astronauts conducting research and technology development for future space exploration. This work also contributes new knowledge that is important for life on Earth. Jessica Meir holds both Swedish and American citizenship and is considered the second Swedish citizen in space after Christer Fuglesang.

In 2019, she gained international attention when she, together with fellow astronaut Christina Koch, completed the first all-female spacewalk in history.

## Jessica Meir on receiving the honorary award:

*"I am humbled and honored to be voted the Swedish Woman of the Year 2026. From my current vantage point at 400 km above Earth here on the International Space Station, one gains a literal global insight, understanding that we humans are truly all in this together on our one shared home planet. I am extremely privileged to have this opportunity, and consider it my duty to broadly promote this perspective. From the other finalists' extraordinary resumes to the captivating SWEA members I've met in recent years, it has also become clear to me that for Swedish women, the sky is certainly not the limit! Tusen tack SWEA!"*

## Lotta Rigby Fors, President of SWEA International:

*"SWEA is extremely proud to appoint Jessica Meir as Swedish Woman of the Year 2026. The fact that she participated in our ceremony live from the International Space Station makes this year's award completely unique. It says something about both her exceptional mission and the global reach she represents. Jessica Meir is a symbol for what can happen when passion, persistence, and great visions are given space. Her journey inspires people all over the world to dare to dream big and follow their visions, no matter how far away they may seem."*

With her background as a researcher in marine biology and physiology, her leadership, and her ability to inspire new generations, Jessica Meir is an international role model for Sweden and a symbol of Swedish research and international collaboration.

The award will be presented in connection with SWEA Sveriges Sommardagar 2026 in Malmö on August 6, 2026.

## Background Information

**The nominees** for Swedish Woman of the Year 2026 included four remarkable women: **Anna Bjerde**, Managing Director of Operations at the World Bank and one of its three most senior operational leaders; **Jessica Meir**, astronaut at the NASA Johnson Space Center and commander of Crew-12 on the International Space Station (ISS); **Kristina Kappelin**, journalist, author, and director of the cultural center Villa San Michele in Capri, as well as Sweden's Honorary Consul in Anacapri; and **Tove Ågren**, aerospace engineer at NASA Ames Research Center focusing on advanced space technology and development for future Mars missions.

Learn more about the nominees here: [Swedish Woman of the Year – SWEA International](#)

**Swedish Woman of the Year** is SWEA International's highest honorary award and has been presented to 35 women since its founding in 1989. Through their work and expertise, all recipients have served as ambassadors for Sweden on the global stage. One of the key criteria for the Swedish Woman of the Year award is that she distinctively represents and promotes Sweden in the world. This means that she directly or indirectly enhances Sweden internationally and creates curiosity about the country. Through her actions, Sweden's reputation and standing abroad are strengthened. The Swedish Woman of the Year award aims to showcase the diversity of women's achievements and expertise, inspire growth and development regardless of life circumstances, and recognize both well-known and lesser-known Swedish women.

**SWEA International** is a global network for Swedish and Swedish-speaking women who live – or have lived – abroad. With 5,700 members in 67 chapters worldwide, SWEA is the largest nonprofit organization promoting Sweden outside of Sweden. Every year, SWEA awards scholarships and donations totaling more than 2 million SEK.

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