

Today, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves presented the prizes for the "What Can I Do for Estonia?" essay-writing contest. Today, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves presented the prizes for the "What Can I Do for Estonia?" essay-writing contest.

"The essay-writing contest that is being concluded today is your common contribution to the upcoming brainstorming workshops. You are setting an example for those who will be gathering on May 1," said the Head of State said.

The best basic school writers were Heleene Tambet from the Viljandi Rural Upper Secondary School, Madleen Maria Kirja from Tallinn's Old Town Educational College and Hanna-Maria Vask from Pärnu's Old Town Basic School.

The upper secondary school students who received recognition were Merle Purre from Tallinn's 32nd Secondary School, Tanel Lindlo from the Kunda Upper Secondary School and Liisa Udevald from the Rakvere Occupational School.

The best university students were Kaisa Kulasalu, a student of literature and folklore at the University of Tartu, Siret Schutting, a student of journalism and public relations at the University of Tartu, as well as Karoliina Raudsepp, a student of political science and international relations at the University of Aberdeen.

President Ilves announced the essay-writing contest entitled "What Can I Do for Estonia?" on February 27 in Tartu at the Estonian Literary Museum. At that time, he called upon young people to creatively ponder the new opportunities opening up for Estonia and to suggest solutions for how Estonia can recover from the crisis.

"We can only recover from this crisis together," stressed the Head of State. "Common action presumes a contribution from every citizen. The goal of the essay-writing contest is to encourage people to think about what each of us can do for Estonia. Where should we make our greatest investment? How can we turn the global economic crisis into an advantage for Estonia? What are our unused resources and skills? What can we learn from our history and past generations? How can we survive these difficult times? What are the positive things that can be adopted from other countries and how can we set an example for others? What will convince young people to stay in Estonia?"

The Centre for Ethics at the University of Tartu, in cooperation with the President's Academic Advisory Board and the My Estonia initiative organized the essay-writing contest. The essay-writing contest was supported by the Ministry of Education and Research, who provided bookstore gift certificates as prizes. The President's Academic Advisory Board evaluated the essays that reached the final round.

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