

The President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, awarded this year’s Educational Awards today in Kadriorg to Leili Sägi from Pärnu Russian Gymnasium, Villu Baumann from Haapsalu Sanatory Boarding School, and Maia Lilje from Georg Ots Tallinn School of Music. The President’s special sciences award was given to Allar-Reinhold Veelmaa from Loo Secondary School.

“I have been a teacher myself and am well aware that the skill of sharing oneself and one’s knowledge is not easy to master. Yesterday, I felt this excitement again, as I went to give a lesson at Tallinn Secondary Science School,” President Ilves said. “Preparing and giving lessons demands lots of energy and consistent work. It also requires continuous improvement, as you are facing curious and inquisitive young people who have lots of questions and need guidance.”

The Estonian Head of State emphasised that teachers should be the ones to raise interest in students and offer them guidance. “He/she must inspire students to pursue their education and look for answers. Because if this is not done, some talents may be lost or never blossom, or some things may never come to be,” President Ilves noted.

“You all teach your colleagues and fellow countrymen apart from performing your regular work. You go above and beyond the call of duty and therefore shape the face of Estonia. It is you are the ones whose work will make Estonia develop in the centuries to come. This makes good teachers one of Estonia’s most valuable assets,” President Ilves added.

Ms Leili Sägi teaches Estonian language and literature at Pärnu Russian Gymnasium. She is also a leader of a Subject Society of Estonian Language as a Second Language in the town of Pärnu, Vice Chairman of a Federation for Teachers of Estonian Language as a Second Language, and expert in the peer evaluation of teachers. Ms Sägi has participated in the work of the development group of Estonian as a second language and Estonian literature within the foreign languages sphere of the national curriculum, and she has prepared methodological materials on Estonian literature for Russian-speaking gymnasiums and has published articles. Teachers of both Estonian and Russian speaking schools acknowledge the efforts of Ms Sägi, as these make their own everyday work much easier.

Mr. Villu Baumann is a manual training and technology teacher at Haapsalu Sanatory Boarding School. Mr. Baumann works with children with special needs on a daily basis; this

requires a different approach in order to match teaching with the abilities of children, while making it developing, therapeutic, and creative. Mr. Baumann actively participates in different events that take place in his field outside the school, and he is a member of both the Estonian Society of Manual Training Teachers and the National Manual Training and Technology Teaching Subject Committee. For years, Mr. Baumann has also guided a handicraft group that meets in Haapsalu Hobby Centre.

Ms Maia Lilje is a music history teacher in Georg Ots Tallinn School of Music. She has participated in various co-operation programmes in music schools, supervised research, and participated in professional standard and curricula development groups. In addition, Ms Lilje has been supervising practical work at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. People may know her from the Classical Music Radio of Eesti Raadio (Estonian Radio). She has also prepared, edited, reviewed and translated a number of written pieces on music.

The President's special science award was presented to Mr. Allar-Reinhold Veelmaa, a mathematics teacher in Loo Secondary School. Mr. Veelmaa has taught physics and information technology aside from mathematics. He has prepared and co-authored a number of teaching materials for both basic schools and gymnasiums, developed e-teaching materials, published a large number of speciality-related articles, and participated in the Tiger Leap programme.

This year, the President's Educational Awards were awarded for the ninth time. The award is funded by Sampo Bank. This year's awards were granted as follows: Ms Leili Sägi 75,000 Estonian kroons, Mr. Villu Baumann 55,000 Estonian kroons, and Ms Maia Lilje 45,000 Estonian kroons. The President's special sciences award of 60,000 Estonian kroons, which is funded by Skype Estonia, was awarded for the second time.

Photo: awarding of the President of the Republic's Educational Awards in Kadriorg on 14th October 2010. From the left: Mr. Villu Baumann from Haapsalu Sanatory Boarding School, representative of Skype Estonia Mr. Andres Kütt, Ms Leili Sägi from Pärnu Russian Gymnasium, President of the Republic Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, CEO of Sampo Bank Mr. Aivar Rehe, Ms Maia Lilje from Georg Ots Tallinn School of Music, and Mr. Allar-Reinhold Veelmaa from Loo Secondary school.

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