

Today in Kadriorg, the President of the Republic of Estonia, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, announced the winners of the President’s essay-writing competition, “In and Out – Through Estonia’s Doors”; in total, 98 works from 22 different countries were sent to the competition.

The winners of the President’s essay-writing competition, “In and Out – Through Estonia’s Doors” – are **Margit Tõhk, Ragnar Mägi, Kadri Raudsepp** and **Mihkel Kama**.

President Ilves emphasized in his speech, which he made in Kadriorg, that he has always held close to his heart the issue of bringing talented Estonians back to their home country. “One place where there has been intense debate on this issue is the President’s Academic Advisory Board. In co-operation with the Centre for Ethics of the University of Tartu, we found that a more wide-ranging discussion could be held on this topic by giving the Estonians living abroad or those who have returned a chance to express their opinions,” President Toomas Hendrik Ilves told.

“Verbal expression can diminish quite soon once it has been expressed, but it will last longer if written down. I thank all the participants of the essay-writing competition with all my heart,” President Ilves added.

The Head of the Centre for Ethics of the University of Tartu, Professor Margit Sutrop, said that the essay-writing competition began out of a wish to collect stories from the hearts and minds of people, relaying why they have chosen to depart for another country and what encourages them back. “When reading these stories we found that emotions are the reasons for both leaving and returning. When people go abroad to search for themselves, they come back to discover Estonia,” Sutrop told.

Apart from the winning submissions, the following categories were also acknowledged: the best piece in a foreign language, which was won by **Catherine Oliver**, and the best piece by a student, which was written by **Rein Leetmaa**

A raffle was held between all the participants to identify the winner of a prize donated for the competition by OÜ Digira; it went to the youngest participant of the essay-writing contest, 11-year old **Dorothy Harriet Purre**.

The goal of the essay-writing contest was to collect the personal experiences of people that relate to

- going abroad and returning;
- the openness of people in both Estonia and other countries and the opportunities for self-actualization both here and there;
- (re)integration both here and there.

The essay-writing contest was organized by the Centre for Ethics of the University of Tartu and the President’s Academic Advisory Board.

This year, the President’s essay writing contest is taking place for the third time. In 2009, essays about “What Can I Do for Estonia?” were collected and in 2007, “In What Estonia Do I Want to Live?”.

Support for the organisation of the essay-writing competition was provided by the Office of the President, the Ministry of Education and Research within the National Programme “Value Development in Estonian Society 2009–2013”, the Akadeemia (the Academy) and Akadeemiake (Little Academy) magazines, the Estonian Language Foundation, Digira and Petrone Print publishers.

For additional information about the essay-writing contest, please contact:

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