

“There are many teachers in Estonia who put their hearts into their work, are innovative and are characterised by modern ways of thinking; they all need recognition and to be celebrated. Therefore, let us take a wider look and admit that the attitude our state and people have towards teachers reflects, in fact, the attitude we have towards the future of Estonia. The attitude towards the Republic of Estonia,” told President Ilves today in Kadriorg, in handing over the educational awards of 2011.

This year’s Educational Awards went to Viivi Maanso (Assistant Professor Emeritus of Tallinn University), Andres Talts (teacher of mathematics/educationalist at Tallinn Secondary Science School), Reet Noorlaid (English teacher/educationalist at Tartu Miina Härma Gymnasium). The President of the Republic’s Special Physical Sciences Award went to Hilja Afanasjeva (educationalist at the Science School of the University of Tartu).

According to President Ilves, a teacher’s skills in motivating young people to become interested in different areas and to guide young people towards finding their strengths will also guide Estonia’s choices and opportunities in following global developments.

“When speaking about the quality of education and learning environment, I cannot only focus on renovating school buildings or building new ones. It is important to attach value to teachers’ contributions when making state budget related choices and to provide teachers with opportunities for personal and professional growth and development,” the Estonian Head of State added.

The President of the Republic’s Educational Awards are financed by **Sampo Bank**. According to the bank’s CEO, Aivar Rehe, every euro invested into education represents the best possible investment at both individual, company and national level.

“I have the greatest pleasure to use these awards to acknowledge, on behalf of Sampo Bank and Danske Bank Group, those whose everyday work is aimed at creating Estonia’s most valuable capital – educated, smart and entrepreneurial people,” Rehe added.

Viivi Maanso is a long-term teacher and lecturer of Estonian language and literature,

educational scientist and prolific author of educational literature. She has developed the subject syllabus of Estonian language and literature for years and participated in the work of the official essays' evaluation committee of the National Examination and Certification Centre. Apart from giving lectures, she has also supervised practical educational work and organised in-service trainings. Viivi Maanso's contribution to the development of educational glossary is immense. She has participated in the national grammatical correctness committee, the Estonian language educational literature committee and the educational terminology committee for years. She is also an honorary member of the Estonian Native Language Teachers Association and the Estonian Native Language Association.

Andres Talts has worked as a teacher of mathematics at Tallinn Secondary Science School since 1991. When teaching his subject, he uses different contemporary information technology tools, and prepares appropriate teaching materials. Andres Talts's extra-curricular activities in improving the quality of teaching mathematics are remarkable. He is a member of the state mathematics examinations evaluation committee of the National Examination and Certification Centre, and has analysed and prepared graduation examinations. Talts also teaches trainee teachers of mathematics in Tallinn University and supervises their practical work.

Reet Noorlaid has worked as an English teacher in Miina Härma Gymnasium for 45 years. Apart from regular lessons, she has also taught Business English and journalism language classes; thanks to her initiative, students have enjoyed the opportunity to study written translation and synchronous interpretation under the supervision of lecturers of the University of Tartu. She has supervised practical linguistic studies at the university for years, and has been a member of the official English language examination evaluation committees. Noorlaid is a member of the Estonian Association of Teachers of English (EATE). She is an active promoter of educational software.

The President of the Republic's Special Physical Sciences Award went to **Hilja Afanasjeva**, educationalist at the Science School of the University of Tartu

For years, she has worked with gifted gymnasium students who are interested in mathematics. She can be considered, figuratively speaking, as the teacher of the largest mathematics class in Estonia. Every year, more than 300 students from approximately 200 schools take part in her advanced mathematics courses. Apart from teaching, Hilja Afanasjeva is also a highly prolific author of educational materials.

The awards are distributed as follows: Viivi Maanso 4,793 Euros, Andres Talts 3,515 Euros and Reet Noorlaid 2,876 Euros (respectively, 75,000, 55,000 and 45,000 Estonian kroons). The

President of the Republic's Special Physical Sciences Award is financed by **Skype Estonia** and the amount is 3,834 Euros (60,000 Estonian kroons).

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone 631 6229