

The Centre for Ethics of the University of Tartu, the President's Academic Advisory Board and the Minu Eesti (My Estonia) initiative present

## **The President's Writing Bee 2009**

President Ilves is inviting youngsters all over the country to enter the writing bee, on the topic "**What can I do for Estonia?**"

At the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu today, 27 February, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves launched a writing bee for students from schools and universities all over Estonia. In his introduction, President Ilves outlined why he had chosen "What can I do for Estonia?" as the theme of the essays to be submitted.

"That's a question we all need to answer honestly, or else Estonia will go awry," he said. "And it's not only a question for politicians or pundits or people who are well-known. Estonia is a democratic country, and our welfare depends on all of us. In fact, it's a question that all of Estonia's citizens should answer, and anyone who calls Estonia home. Only by doing so can we seek solutions to our problems, so that young people return when they go abroad, and to avoid people destroying their health. Answering that question will gift society with tolerance and solidarity, an enterprising spirit and a sense of caring about others. These are all things that we have a very clear need for today.

"Let this writing bee follow on from the 'What kind of Estonia do I want to live in?' essay contest from two years ago. The 326 pieces of writing that were submitted back then spoke of things we should be proud of: the freedom we've won; our language and our culture; the beauty of our

natural environment; the achievements of our athletes and cultural figures. They complained of a lack of tolerance, true care, honesty, justice and sense of responsibility. They took aim at politicians who make promises they never keep. They underscored concerns about young people leaving their country behind; about insurmountable barriers between national groups; about people only being able to make something of themselves in our bigger towns and cities. Unfortunately, they spoke little of what they could do as citizens to make Estonia the kind of place they wanted it to be.

"New ideas and innovative approaches are born in the imaginations of the young. The history of our nation has shown that it's often the get-up-and-go of young people that makes the impossible possible.

"That's why I'm calling on students – from primary and secondary schools, and colleges and universities – to think, in a creative way, about the opportunities facing Estonia and to come up with their own solutions in terms of helping the country out of the crisis. It's only together that we'll overcome it. Doing so, however, requires the contribution of every citizen. The aim of this writing bee is to get people thinking about what they personally, individually, can do for their country. What should we be focussing more attention on? How can we turn the global financial crisis to our advantage? Which of our resources and skills have yet to be tapped? What do we have to learn from our history and from previous generations? How can we get through hard times? What can we adopt and adapt from other countries, and what example do we set for them? What would keep young people in Estonia?"

## Rules

- The competition is open to students from all level of schooling as well as college and university students (including those studying for Master's degrees and doctorates).
- Essays must be 2-4 pages long (max. 10,000 characters) and formatted in MS Word with line spacing of 1.5.
- The deadline for submitting essays is **25 March 2009** (Annunciation Day).
- Essays should be submitted by e-mail to [eetika@eetika.ee](mailto:eetika@eetika.ee) or by post to the Centre for Ethics, University of Tartu, Ülikooli 7, 51003 Tartu.
- **Be sure to include your name, age and contact details and the name of your school/college/university.**

## Judging criteria

Every essay will be read by at least two people. They will be judged on three things: **clarity of thought** ; **e**  
**ngaging presentation**  
; and  
**originality**

. Assessment will be anonymous and take place over a number of rounds. The jury for the final round will be the President's Academic Advisory Board, which will convene on 20 April. The winners will receive awards and be invited to attend a session of the advisory board at Kadriorg. All participants will receive a signed photo of President Ilves. The most interesting essays will be published in the Eesti Päevaleht newspaper and in the Akadeemia journal.

More information about the competition is available online at [www.eetika.ee](http://www.eetika.ee) or by calling 737 5426.

The writing bee is being organised by the Centre for Ethics of the University of Tartu in cooperation with the President's Academic Advisory Board and the Minu Eesti (My Estonia) initiative. Also contributing to the competition are Eesti Päevaleht and the Akadeemia journal. The writing bee is being supported and its prizes sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Research.