

Twelve European Authors receive the European Union Prize for Literature

The names of twelve European authors to receive the first ever European Union Prize for Literature were announced today by the European Commission, the European Booksellers Federation (EBF), the European Writers' Council (EWC) and the Federation of European Publishers (FEP). The prizes will be presented during an Award ceremony in Brussels on 28 September. In recognition of his oeuvre and literary success Henning Mankell, the well-known and bestselling Swedish author, has accepted the role of Ambassador of the European Union Prize for Literature for this year.

The award ceremony on the 28th of September will be attended by the Commission President **Jose Manuel Barroso**, the Commissioner for Education and Culture **Ján Figel'**, the prize winning authors, the newly-appointed Ambassador of the European Union Prize for Literature **Henning Mankell**, and many European writers, artists, publishers, editors and other personalities from the European book publishing and cultural scene. It will be held in the Flagey Theater in Brussels.

Commissioner Figel' said: *"This prize spotlights the excellence of literary talents in Europe and all they have to offer. It underlines Europe's strength in the quality and creativity of its literary output. The prize is aimed at getting the works of new authors off the book shelves and into the hands and hearts of people across Europe."*

EBF President, **John Mc Namee**, commented: "Today's prize announcements are the culmination of a lengthy collaboration between the European Commission, EBF, EWC and FEP. To have such a prize is wonderful for authors, publishers and booksellers. It's an opportunity to bridge cultural gaps within Europe and create a greater understanding of each other. EBF are delighted to be involved and look forward to future years working together. "

"The creative writer is one of mankind's best sources of richness. Writers give us the future by creating alternative ways of living, or by criticising and envisioning new realities. The European Union Prize for Literature is a celebration and acknowledgment of the work by prominent talents who constitute the driving force behind the classics of tomorrow," said **Pirjo Hiidenmaa**, EWC President.

FEP President, **Federico Motta** added: *"Today's announcements highlight the fundamental role of all players in the book value chain: transforming wonderful acts of creativity by individual citizens of different European countries, with different languages and cultures, into works that are appealing to people across the whole continent and that contribute to increasing the diversified European cultural heritage."*

The Award Ceremony will follow the '**Culture in Motion**' Conference – the conference presenting project results from the EU's *Culture* programme – and will precede the **European Culture Forum** on 29 and 30 September and will be bringing together 600 interested parties from the field of culture. The authors and their works will then be presented during the **Frankfurt Book Fair** in October and other promotional activities will be going on throughout the year and in 2010.

Background

The aim of the prize is to put the spotlight on the creativity and diverse wealth of Europe's contemporary literature, to promote the circulation of literature within Europe and encourage greater interest in non-national literary works.

The prize will be granted in three phases, in the years 2009, 2010 and 2011, with 11 or 12 winners each time. By 2011, a winner will have been announced for each of the 34 countries participating in the EU Culture Programme. The phases are as follows:

Phase 1, **2009**: Austria, Croatia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Sweden.

Phase 2, **2010**: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Finland, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia and Spain.

Phase 3, **2011**: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Serbia, The Netherlands, Turkey and United Kingdom.

In order to select the 2009 winners, national juries were set up to choose a talent in the field of contemporary literature (fiction) in their country.

The value of the Prize is a lump sum of 5 000 Euros for each winner. Additionally, measures will be also taken within the Culture Programme to stimulate the translation of the winning authors' works.

The prize is co-funded through the European Union's Culture Programme and a Consortium consisting of EBF, EWC and FEB. The Programme supports trans-national cultural cooperation projects involving operators from a minimum of three different countries participating in the programme. It also provides specific support for the translation of literary works and is open to all cultural sectors except audiovisual, for which a separate programme exists. The Programme also supports the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage, the European Prize for Contemporary Architecture (Mies van der Rohe Awards) and the European Border Breaker Awards (for debut artists who reach audiences outside their own country).

The first twelve winners of the European Prize for Literature are:

AUSTRIA

Winning author: **Mr Paulus Hochgatterer**

Book awarded: *Die Süße des Lebens* (2006) – in English: *the Sweetness of Life*

Publishing house: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, Wien

CROATIA

Winning author: **Mrs Mila Pavicevic**

Book awarded: *Djevojčica od leda i druge bajke* (2006) – in English: *Ice Girl and Other Fairy-tales*

Publishing house: Naklada Bošković, Split.

FRANCE

Winning author: **Mrs Emmanuelle Pagano**

Book awarded: *Les Adolescents troglodytes* (2007)

Publishing house: Editions P.O.L, Paris

HUNGARY

Winning author: **Mrs Szécsi Noémi**

Book awarded: *Kommunista Monte Cristo* (2006) – In English *Communist Monte Cristo*

Publishing house: Tericum, Budapest

IRELAND

Winning author: **Mrs Karen Gillece**

Book awarded: *Longshore Drift* (2006)

Publishing house: Hachette, Dublin

ITALY

Winning author: **Mr Daniele Del Giudice**

Book Awarded: *Orizzonte mobile* (2009) - in English : *Movable Horizon*

Publishing house: Giulio Einaudi editore

LITHUANIA

Winning author: **Laura Sintija Černiauskaitė**

Book Awarded: *Kvėpavimas į marmurą* (2006) - In English *Breathing into Marble*

Publishing house: Alma Littera

NORWAY

Winning author: **Mr Carl Frode Tiller**

Book Awarded: - *Innsirkling* (2007) - in English : *Encirclement*

Publishing house: Aschehoug

POLAND

Winning author: **Mr Jacek Dukaj**

Book Awarded: *LÓD* (2007) – In English *ICE*

Publishing house: Wydawnictwo Literackie

PORTUGAL

Winning author: **Mrs Dulce Maria Cardoso.**

Book Awarded: *Os Meus Sentimentos (2005)*

Publishing house: Asa Editores

SLOVAKIA

Winning author: **Pavol Rankov**

Book Awarded: *Stalo sa prvého septembra (alebo inokedy) (2008)* - In English *It Happened on September the First (or whenever)*

Publishing house: Kalligram

SWEDEN

Winning author: **Mrs Helena Henschen**

Book Awarded: *I skuggan av ett brott (2004)* . In English *The Shadow of a Crime*

Publishing house: Brombergs

The CVs for the 2009 winners:

AUSTRIA

Winning author: Mr Paulus Hochgatterer

Book awarded: *Die Süße des Lebens (2006)* – in English: *the Sweetness of Life*

Publishing house: Paul Zsolnay Verlag, Wien

Biography:

Paulus Hochgatterer, born in 1961, lives as a writer and child therapist in Vienna. He has received diverse literary prizes and commendations, most recently the Elias Canetti Stipend of the town of Vienna, and is the author of several novels and story collection.

CROATIA

Winning author: Mrs Mila Pavicevic

Book awarded: *Djevojčica od leda i druge bajke (2006)* – in English: *Ice Girl and Other Fairy-tales*

Publishing house: Naklada Bošković, Split.

Biography:

Mila Pavičević was born in Dubrovnik on the 4th of July 1988. She reads Comparative literature and Greek language and literature at the Zagreb University. She received several literary awards for young writers in Croatia.

FRANCE

Winning author: Mrs Emmanuelle Pagano

Book awarded: *Les Adolescents troglodytes (2007)*

Publishing house: Editions P.O.L, Paris

Biography:

Emmanuelle Pagano was born in Aveyron in September 1969. She lives today in Ardèche, with three children, born in April 1991, September 1995 and May 2003. She graduated in Fine Arts, and has done university researches in the field of esthetics in the cinema as well as the multimedia.

HUNGARY

Winning author: Mrs Szécsi Noémi

Book awarded: *Kommunista Monte Cristo* (2006) – In English *Communist Monte Cristo*

Publishing house: Tericum, Budapest

Biography:

Szécsi Noémi (1976), writer and translator. She graduated in Finnish and English in Budapest, and studied cultural anthropology in Helsinki. She published her first novel, *Finno-Ugrian Vampire* in 2002, reprinted in 2003 due to its success. The script based on the novel was shortlisted by the workshop of *Sundance Institute*. *Communist Monte Cristo*, published in 2006 – besides being a historical novel and a saga of a family – is an artistic interpretation of the history of communist idea in Hungary based on elaborate research.

IRELAND

Winning author: Mrs Karen Gillece

Book awarded: *Longshore Drift* (2006)

Publishing house: Hachette, Dublin

Biography:

Karen Gillece was born in Dublin in 1974. She studied Law at University College Dublin and worked for several years in the telecommunications industry before turning to writing full-time. She was short listed for the Hennessy New Irish Writing Award in 2001, and her short stories have been widely published in literary journals and magazines. *Longshore Drift* has been translated into German, and is published by Verlagsgruppe Random House.

ITALY

Winning author: Mr Daniele Del Giudice

Book Awarded: *Orizzonte mobile* (2009) - in English : *Movable Horizon*

Publishing house: Giulio Einaudi editore

Biography

Daniele Del Giudice was born in Rome in 1949. The first novel he published was *Lo stadio di Wimbledon* (Einaudi 1983). This book was followed by *Atlante occidentale* (Einaudi, 1985), a novel about changes of perceptions and feelings, an anthropological mutation caused by science and widespread technology, set in Geneva in the enormous nuclear accelerator in the heart of Europe where a young physicist works on matters tiniest elements and where new languages and objects are created. This attention to the scientific sector, to innovations in daily behaviour and shared perceptions, is also present in later novels and short stories such as *Nel museo di Reims* (Mondadori, 1989), *Staccando l'ombra da terra* (Einaudi, 1994), and *Mania* (Einaudi, 1997), Daniele del Giudice's books have won many awards: the Viareggio Prize in 1983, the 1995 Bagutta Prize, the Selezione Campiello Prize in 1995 and in 1997 and, in 2002, the Accademia dei Lincei award for fiction. In addition to his novels, Del Giudice has published essays on Italo Svevo, Thomas Bernhard, Robert. L. Stevenson and Primo Levi. He lives in Venice, where he teaches Theatrical Literature at the Theatre Faculty of the IUAV, the University Institute of Architecture.

LITHUANIA

Winning author: Laura Sintija Černiauskaitė

Book Awarded: *Kvėpavimas į marmurą* (2006) - In English *Breathing into Marble*

Publishing house: Alma Littera

Biography:

Prose writer, playwright. She was born in Vilnius, on December 8, 1976. In 1994 she left Vilnius Senvage School and in 1996 – enrolled into Vilnius University Department of Extramural Studies to study the Lithuanian language and literature. In 1998-1999 she worked as a freelance publicist at magazine *Malonumas*, in 2000 – as a language editor at children magazine *Genys*, in 2001-2002 as a journalist at magazine for young mother *Tavo vaikas*. In 1993 she won the republic competition of young philologists and was awarded with 1st rank diploma for the best pupil prose. In 1994 she also won a competition of the First Book organized by the Writers Union. In 2001 a play *Liberate the Golden Foal* (Išlaisvink auksinį kumeliuką) won a play competition organized by The Fairies Theatre and Vilnius University Philology Department. In 2003 a prose and plays selection *Liučė Skates* (Liučė čiuožia) is published and appears among 12 best books of the year selected by the experts of Lithuanian Literature Institute. The same year play *Liučė Skates* is staged in a National Youth theatre. In 2004 *Liučė Skates* (Liučė Čiuožia) wins a first prize among 300 participators in an international play fair Theatretrefen organized in Berlin.

Since 2004 – the member of Lithuanian Writers' Union

NORWAY

Winning author: Mr Carl Frode Tiller

Book Awarded: - [Innsirkling](#) (2007) - in English : *Encirclement*

Publishing house: Aschehoug

Biography:

Carl Frode Tiller (born [January 4, 1970](#) in [Namsos](#)) is a author, historian and musician. His works are in [Nynorsk](#) (lit. "New Norwegian"), one of the two official [Norwegian standard languages](#). Tiller debuted in 2001 with the novel *Skråninga* (Downward Slope), which was recognized as the best initial work of the year with the [Tarjei Vesaas' Debut Prize](#). Downward Slope was nominated for the [Brageprisen](#) (the Brage Prize is a juried award). In November 2007 Tiller was awarded the Brageprisen for his novel *Innsirkling* (Encirclement). In the fall of 2007 *Innsirkling* received the [Norwegian Critics Prize for Literature](#) and was nominated for the premiere Scandinavian literature prize, the [Nordic Council's Literature Prize](#).

POLAND

Winning author: Mr Jacek Dukaj

Book Awarded: *LÓD* (2007) – In English ICE

Publishing house: Wydawnictwo Literackie

Biography

Jacek Dukaj (born in 1974) is one of Poland's most interesting contemporary prose writers, whose books are always eagerly anticipated events. Dukaj studied [philosophy](#) at the [Jagiellonian University](#). He successfully debuted at the age of 16 with a short story *Złota Galera* (*Golden Galley*). He is known for the complexity of his books, and it is often said that a single short story of Dukaj contains more ideas than many other writers put into their books in their lifetime. Popular themes in his works include the [technological singularity](#), [nanotechnology](#) and [virtual reality](#), and because of this his books often can be classified as [hard science fiction](#).

PORTUGAL

Winning author: Mrs Dulce Maria Cardoso.

Book Awarded: *Os Meus Sentimentos (2005)*

Publishing house: Asa Editores

Biography

Dulce was born in Trás-os-Montes, in 1964, in the same bed where both her mother and her grandmother were born. She regrets the lack of memories related with her journey, in Vera Cruz, to Angola. From her childhood she remembers the mango tree in the backyard, the sea and the involving space that shaped her soul. She returned to Portugal in 1975. Later, she graduated in the Law Faculty, in the University of Lisbon; she wrote screenplays and spent some time with *uselessness*. Dulce also wrote short stories. She has faith, a family and a pocket full of friends. She kept on writing and enjoying *uselessness*. She lives in Lisbon. Her premiere novel, *Campo de Sangue*, published in 2002 and written with the support of a Fund of Literary Creation, from the Portuguese Culture Ministry, was distinguished with the Grand Prize "Acontece de Romance".

SLOVAKIA

Winning author: Pavol Rankov

Book Awarded: *Stalo sa prvého septembra (alebo inokedy) (2008)* - In English *It Happened on September the First (or whenever)*

Publishing house: Kalligram

Biography

Pavol Rankov (b. 01.09.1964 Poprad, Slovakia)

Pavol Rankov is a writer of prose fiction, essayist, journalist, information scientist and university pedagogue, after completing his secondary schooling in Bratislava studied library science at the Philosophical Faculty of Bratislava's Comenius University (1983-1987). He worked as a methodologist in the Slovak National Library in Martin (1987-1990) and in the Slovak Pedagogic Library in Bratislava (1991-1992). From 1993 he has worked at the Department of Library Science and Scientific Information at Comenius University in Bratislava. He participates in projects with Slovak Radio. He lives in Bratislava.

SWEDEN

Winning author: Mrs Helena Henschen

Book Awarded: *I skuggan av ett brott (2004)* . In English *The Shadow of a Crime*

Publishing house: Brombergs

Biography:

Helena Henschen was born in 1940 and raised in Stockholm. She has an artistic background and has worked as a graphic designer. Henschen has both written and illustrated children's books and she was one of the founders of the famous Swedish design company *Mah-Jong*.

Biography of Mr Henning Mankell, the new Ambassador of the European Union Prize for Literature

Snow, deep snow, is one of Henning Mankell's first memories, and later in life, after choosing to divide his time between Moçambique and Sweden, Henning states: - I stand with one foot in the snow and one foot in the sand.

Henning Mankell was born in Stockholm on the 3rd of February 1948.

At the age of six his grandmother taught him to read and write and for Henning Mankell that was a profound experience.

- I can still remember the miraculous feeling of writing that I a sentence, then more sentences, telling a story. The first thing I wrote was a one-page summary of Robinson Crusoe and I am so sorry I do not have it any more; it was at that moment I became an author.

Henning Mankell was soon bored with secondary school and left at the age of 16 to work as a merchant seaman. He worked for two years as a stevedore on a Swedish ship ferrying coal and iron ore to Europe and America.

After having signed off Henning Mankell settled in Paris in 1966. He stayed there for a year and a half in a constant shortage of money, although he experienced the activism and political debate. Thereafter he went to Stockholm to work as a stagehand. While working as a stagehand he wrote his first play, *The Amusement Park*, about Swedish colonial interests in the 19th century's South America.

In 1972, shortly after his father died, Henning Mankell's first novel *The Stone Blaster* was released. It tells the story of the workers' union movement and is still in print in Sweden. It is about an old man looking back on his life and on Swedish society and the need for solidarity, a theme that is frequently recurring in Henning Mankell's works and in his life.

Having published his first novel Henning Mankell emasculated his dream of going to Africa and arrived in Guinea-Bissau the same year as *The Stone Blaster* was published.

- I don't know why but when I got off the plane in Africa, I had a curious feeling of coming home.

Since then Henning Mankell has spent a great part of his life on the African continent. After living in Zambia and other countries, he was invited in 1986 to run the Teatro Avenida in the capital of Mocambique, Maputo. Since his arrival in 1986 he is spending at least half the year in Maputo working with the theatre and writing. Living and working in Africa, has given Henning Mankell another perspective on Sweden and Europe. The Teatro Avenida has since the beginning been concerned with the political and social issues that are topical in Mocambique.

From the early 1970's Henning Mankell has divided his time between writing novels and directing at various theatres. His ambition to expose the lack of equality in society has also been the same, regardless of artistic expression and context.

In 1979 Henning Mankell published his first novel for the publishing house Ordfront, *The Prison Colony that Disappeared*. This is also where he met his editor and good friend Dan Israel. However, in 2001, after more than 20 years with the publishing house, Henning Mankell and Dan Israel left Ordfront to start a publishing house of their own, Leopard Publishing House.

In the beginning of the 1980's Ordfront published one novel a year by Henning Mankell, among them the novel *Daisy Sisters*, released in 1982. This novel has meant very much to Henning Mankell. It is a story about two generations of working women in the era after the Second World War.

In 1984 Henning Mankell became the head of Kronobergsteatern in Växjö, Sweden, in which he introduced a new view of what to perform. He wanted to produce only Swedish plays, which turned out to be a success. His work at the theatre resulted in him not publishing anything between 1984 and 1990.

In 1990 Henning Mankell made an effective comeback, publishing two books in the same year, *The Eye of the Leopard*, a haunting novel juxtaposing a man's coming-of-age in Sweden with his life in Zambia, and the first book in the series about Joel, *A bridge to the Stars*. *A Bridge to the Stars* won the prestigious Rabén & Sjögren award for best children book that year. The year after the first novel in the series about the detective Kurt Wallander, *Faceless Killers*, was released. The novel was an immediate national success claiming several awards. However, it was not until the third book about Wallander, *The White Lioness*, that the series about the detective from Ystad became the international bestseller it is today.

While the Wallander-series gained international interest Henning Mankell kept writing other novels as well. In 1991 the second book in his series about Joel was released, *Shadows in Twilight*. In the years following 1991 Henning Mankell published one Wallander-detective story each year.

In 1995, in addition to the Wallander mystery *Sidetracked*, Henning Mankell released two other novels. One of them, *Secrets in the Fire*, was the first part of the trilogy about the African girl Sofia, the girl who lost her legs when she accidentally stepped on a landmine.

In 2007 Henning Mankell completed his trilogy about Sofia with the novel *Eldens vrede* (which is published the United Kingdom in July 2009). The second part, *Playing with Fire* came in 2001, and the first part, *Secrets in the Fire*, came in 1995. All the books about Sofia separately addresses issues close to Henning Mankell's heart. In the first one it is landmines, in the second one AIDS and in the last one Sofia has grown to become a young woman and mother of two children and struggles to make ends meet.

The books about Sofia have been a great success and are read by school children all over the world, raising awareness of some of the problems that the people in Africa are facing in their daily struggle for survival. Since he came to Africa Henning Mankell has been passionately dedicated to resolving the problems tearing the continent apart. He is especially committed to the fight against AIDS and devotes much of his spare time to his "memory books" project, which aims to raise awareness of the catastrophe. Parents dying with AIDS are encouraged to record their life stories in words and pictures, but not just for the children they leave behind, but also as a human chronicle

- Maybe in 500 years these "memory books" will be a great record of African times. My hope is to store them in the new Alexandrian library in Egypt.

In 2003 Henning Mankell published a book entitled *I Die, But My Memory Lives On* which he hoped would raise awareness of AIDS in the West. The foreword of the book is written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Henning Mankell's tenacity to African issues resulted in him being invited by the Federal President of Germany Horst Köhler in 2005 to join his initiative Partnership with Africa. Among the other participants were the former Secretary General of the UN, Koffee Annan, and Ghana's President, John A. Kuffour.

In October 2007 Henning Mankell and his wife since 1998 Eva Bergman, a Swedish theater director, donated money to the Swedish welfare organization SOS Children's Villages to fund the construction of three villages in Mocambique for orphans. The money will be used to build 15 houses which will become the home for 150 children

Also, Africa has had a great influence on his work. His award winning novel *The Chronicler of the Winds* (1995) is set there, and is deeply influenced by traditional African storytelling. On the rooftop of a theatre in an African port, a ten-year-old boy lies, slowly dying of bullet wounds and on that roof top he tells his story. Furthermore, half the Wallander mysteries were written there.

Henning Mankell's Wallander is not only a literary success; in 2008 BBC adapted three of the Wallander stories into 90-minute episodes for TV, starring Kenneth Branagh as Wallander. The three novels are; *One Step Behind*, *Firewall* and *Sidetracked*.

After Henning Mankell completed the Wallander-series in 1999 he has written twelve novels and a number of plays. In 2004 *Depths* was published, a lyrical and evocative novel about a Swedish naval engineer during World War I and his devastating plunge into obsession. In 2008 Mankell released a new thriller, *The Chinese*. It was published in seven countries simultaneously and apart from being a crime story it also discusses the tremendous transformation undergone by China in the last twenty years and the repercussions this has and will have domestically as well as globally.

Henning Mankell was in June 2008 given an honorary doctorate at St Andrews University

This year, Henning Mankell received the honor to sit in the jury of the Berlin Film Festival, Berlinale 2009. The jury consists of several of the film industry's most significant personalities.

Furthermore, Henning Mankell is currently working on a play about the British biologist Charles Darwin and his journey with the ship the Beagle. He also just had première with August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* at Teatro Avenida in Maputo, Moçambique.

Further information:

- The prize:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc627_en.htm

- The Culture in motion conference

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/news1904_en.htm

- The Culture programme:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm

- Culture policy developments:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm