

Brussels, 2 December 2008

New European Union prize for literature

The European Commission is launching a new European Union prize for contemporary literature. The aim is to put the spotlight on the creativity and diverse wealth of Europe's contemporary literature, to promote more circulation of literature within Europe and encourage greater interest in non-national literary works. The first edition of the Prize will be awarded in autumn 2009.

The European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Mr Ján Figel', said: "*Books are an essential part of our history and the intellectual heritage of Europe. They reflect the particularity and the diversity of cultures as well as their common origins, and they promote intercultural dialogue. I welcome this new European Union prize, as it will help publicise and promote Europe's richness and cultural diversity. The fact that it will be awarded for the first time in 2009 is excellent timing, since 2009 is designated as the European Year of Creativity and Innovation.*"

A consortium comprising the European Booksellers Federation, the European Writers' Congress and the Federation of European Publishers are organising the selection process and award ceremony.

The European Prize for contemporary literature will consist of a prize for emerging talents in the field of contemporary literature (fiction) from each of the participating countries in 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively. The aim of the prize is to attract a wide audience of European citizens, to discover new emerging talents and promote their work, especially in countries outside their own. The prize will be a starting point for intercultural dialogue and a way to bring together cultural actors from the book sector from across Europe.

There will also be an award to a well-known European personality in literature to take on the role of 'European Ambassador of Literature' for a one year period.

The prize is financed through the Culture Programme of the European Union. The programme supports transnational 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.

Further information :

The prize :

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

Culture programme :

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