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OECD RELEASES REPORT ON ESTONIAN ECONOMY



OECD President Angel Gurría with Prime Minister Andrus Ansip during his visit to Estonia in February 2009.

OECD Report Declares Estonia Open and Business-Friendly Nation

20 April - In Tallinn today, director of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) economics department national overview division Andrew Dean presented the economic report of the OECD Economic Development Review Committee (EDRC), which includes a thorough overview of Estonia's economic situation.

Foreign Minister Urmas Paet stated that the OECD report is an essential part of Estonia's process to join the OECD. "Acceding to the OECD means increased trust and wider interest among international investors," asserted Foreign Minister Paet. "Estonia joining this important and respected economic organisation will significantly enhance economic policy discussions in Estonia and strengthen the economic policy environment as a whole," he added.

During the OECD accession process, economic overviews are compiled about all the acceding countries. Estonia is the first of the currently acceding nations to have its report compiled. In addition to a description of the economic situation, the report gives recommendations for improving the economic situation and increasing stability in the future. Such thorough reviews by internationally recognised experts that address solely Estonia are very rarely done.

"The OECD report gives considerable attention to our budget policy. The principle that has so far been considered correct in Estonia-- that the budget should be at least balanced each year-- is recommended to be replaced by a budget strategy in which the budget should be balanced during an economic cycle," noted Minister of Finance Ivari Padar. The finance minister confirmed that Estonia had maintained a responsible budget policy. "In both 2008 and 2009, we have made profound corrections to our budget position. So far society has been understanding."

According to the OECD economic report, Estonia is already a very open and business-friendly nation, but it must continue to work hard.

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FOREIGN NEWS

Estonia and Australia to Begin Negotiations for Social Security Agreement

20 April - At his meeting today with Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Paet in Perth, Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith informed Paet of his readiness to begin negotiations for concluding an Estonia-Australia social security agreement.

Foreign Minister Paet emphasised the importance of the agreement. "We hope that the negotiations on the details of the agreement will proceed quickly," he said. "Concluding a social security agreement is essential for Estonia and for Estonians living in Australia in terms of resolving questions related to social and health insurance," he added.

At his meeting with Foreign Minister Smith, Paet emphasised that Estonia-Australia relations are unique because after World War II Australia accepted a great number of Estonian immigrants, who then found a new home in Australia. "Since 2005 there has been a travel and working visa system in effect between Estonia and Australia, which has brought many young Estonians here to discover Australia," he added. Thousands of Estonians have taken advantage of this opportunity.

According to Paet, trade between Estonia and Australia is increasing and grew by 2.5 times in 2008. "We hope to begin negotiations with Australia for concluding an agreement for the avoidance of double taxation," he added.

Estonia and Australia cooperate in many international matters. "We are partners in building up Afghanistan. Both Estonian and Australian soldiers are working in the southern part of Afghanistan," said Paet.

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OECD

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The report values the very good development of Estonia's e-services and e-government, which are used as an example for other nations.

The review addresses the current situation in Estonia in general and considers the challenges of the moment to be positive, recommending that Estonia support the transferring of resources to export and research-heavy sectors, which contain great potential for development. The OECD believes that the building boom that developed thanks to the flow of foreign capital is what made Estonia's economy vulnerable to the global crisis. According to the report, Estonia's gross domestic product will grow again in 2010 if export markets recover.

The goal of the report is to initiate an economic policy discussion in the country, during the course of which the best solutions for improving the economic situation will become clear. The recommendations are not requirements and are not meant to be followed to the letter.

The OECD is the world leader in economic analysis organisations, and its reviews and opinions are of great importance to the international community. The OECD regularly compiles similar economic overviews of its member states. Estonia was analysed for the first time.

Australia

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At the meeting, they also addressed Australia's co-operation with the EU and NATO, the security situation in the world after the war in Georgia, and developments in South-East Asia and the Pacific Ocean region. The Australian foreign minister expressed interest in the activities of the NATO cyber defence centre in Tallinn.

Foreign Minister Paet invited his Australian colleague Stephen Smith to visit Estonia.

Paet also met with Governor of Western Australia Kenneth Cominos Michael and Premier of Western Australia Hon Colin Barnett, with whom he discussed opportunities for developing relations between Estonia and the region of Western Australia. Estonia is tied to Western Australia and Perth by trade, including export of investment gold and wine, as well as the fact that thousands of Estonians live in the region.



Foreign Minister Urmus Paet with Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith and Honorary Consul Anu von Hattem in Perth, 21 April.

Estonian and New Zealand Foreign Ministers Wish for Reduction of Trade Barriers

18 April - Estonian Foreign Minister Urmus Paet and Foreign Minister of New Zealand Murray McColly confirmed during their meeting today in Auckland, New Zealand that both nations highly value a liberal economic system and think it is necessary to reduce trade barriers in the world.

The ministers signed a consultation agreement between the foreign ministries of Estonia and New Zealand. Foreign Minister Paet emphasised that the bilateral consultation agreement will create a foundation for closer co-operation between Estonia and New Zealand, which share the same values. "For the past two years there has also been a travel and working visa agreement that allows for simplified travel in effect, on the basis of which 54 Estonian citizens combined travel and work in New Zealand last year," said Paet.

Foreign Minister of New Zealand Murray McColly expressed profound interest in Estonia's economy and tax system during the meeting. The ministers noted that Estonia and New Zealand both support liberal economic and trade policy. "Avoiding protectionism is also essential for overcoming the current global economic crisis," emphasised Foreign Minister Paet.

McColly brought up New Zealand's positive and well-functioning relations with the European Union. Paet stated that it is very important that the European Union develop and value good relations with nations all over the world that share its same values.

While talking about opportunities for co-operation between research institutions, Foreign Minister Paet introduced the co-operation interests of the Estonian University of Life Sciences and Tallinn University. "Our universities are interested in research co-operation and exchanging experts with New Zealand universities in the areas of bio- and genetic technology, agriculture, and environmental protection," said Paet. Estonia is also interested in intensifying tourism ties between the two nations.

Both Estonia and New Zealand contribute to the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Paet and McColly confirmed plans to continue contributing and both emphasised the importance of building up the civilian sector in Afghanistan.

At their meeting, they also talked about developments in South-East Asia and the Pacific region, work being done to ensure energy security, and problems related to Antarctica.

Paet issued an invitation to the foreign minister of New Zealand to visit Estonia. The last visit of a New Zealand foreign minister to Estonia took place in 2006.

First Estonian Honorary Consulate Opened in New Zealand

17 April - Today Foreign Minister Urmus Paet opened the first Estonian Honorary Consulate in New Zealand in Wellington. The Estonian honorary consul in New Zealand is Tõnu Loorpärg.

Foreign Minister Paet stated that relations between Estonia and New Zealand are good, but

they could be more active. "Unfortunately we have lacked a representation in New Zealand up until now, although there is an Estonian community of a few hundred in this country," Paet said.

"Since 2007 a youth work and travel visa agreement has been in effect between Estonia and New Zealand. This is one opportunity for developing contacts between the two nations, with Estonian youth coming to New Zealand temporarily and vice versa," Paet said at the opening of the honorary consulate.

In Auckland, Paet also met with members of the New Zealand European Chamber of Commerce and introduced to them Estonia's economic environment and opportunities for investments. The New Zealand entrepreneurs expressed interest in co-operation regarding oil shale technology.

Last year Estonia's trade turnover with New Zealand totalled 28 million kroons in value, and the most common export articles were sports and fishing equipment. "There are also opportunities for increasing co-operation in the realm of tourism, since visiting Europe is becoming more and more popular among New Zealanders," said Paet.

Foreign Minister Urmas Paet gave a lecture about European security, including Estonian security, at the New Zealand Institute for International Affairs in Auckland.



Foreign Minister Urmas Paet with Honorary Consul Tõnu Loorpärg at the new Estonian Honorary Consulate in New Zealand, 17 April.

Foreign Minister Paet Opened New Honorary Consulates in Sydney, Perth

21 April - **Foreign Minister Urmas Paet opened Estonia's new honorary consulate in Sydney and Perth, Australia.** In Sydney, credentials were given to Honorary Consul Aivo Takis and in Perth to Honorary Consul Anu Ethel von Hattem.

The opening of the new consulate general in Sydney also marked the ending of the long-term honorary consul's work in Australia by Honorary Consul General Malle Tohver Tinn and Deputy Honorary Consul Vella Pihlak.

Foreign Minister Paet emphasised the importance of honorary consuls in representing the Estonian state and aiding citizens abroad. "Thanks to our honorary consuls, Estonia is represented in many more places in the world than we currently have embassies. And the travel and business interests of Estonians are constantly expanding," said Paet, thanking the honorary consul general for her excellent work.

"Honorary consuls play an essential role in introducing Estonia, mediating business contacts,

and helping Estonian citizens when needed," said Foreign Minister Paet at the opening in Perth. "Estonia and Australia share the same values, and we hope that with the help of honorary consuls our relations, which are based on common values, will become intensified through more business and tourism contacts," he added.

Estonia has three honorary consulates in Australia: Sydney, Tasmania, and the newly re-opened Estonian Honorary Consulate in Perth. There are about 10 000 people of Estonian descent living in Australia.

President, Prime Minister Meet with Delegation from US Congress

15 April - **President Toomas Hendrik Ilves met today with a delegation from the US House of Representatives whose main field of activity includes transatlantic relations and co-operation with the European Parliament.**

"The maintenance and development of the transatlantic association, which is based on common values, has not lost its topicality, quite the opposite – the need for it has increased," confirmed the Estonian head of state. "Our close mutual co-operation is extremely important for overcoming the global economic crisis as well as for resolving problems related to security policy, which include more than just Afghanistan."

The delegation from the US House of Representatives recognised Estonia for prioritising and raising awareness about cyber security. "Like many other countries, Estonia and the United States have come into close contact with this threat," said President Ilves. "The events in Estonia two years ago were definitely a wake-up call for many, demonstrating that this is a genuine problem that needs to be resolved. It also helped NATO make the decision to create a Cyber Defence Centre in Estonia."

The Estonian president stressed the fact that cybercrime almost always crosses national borders, and therefore an international convention needs to be created that would be binding on democratic countries and would make cybercrime subject to criminal prosecution everywhere.

At the meeting, Russia's relations with Estonia, NATO and the U.S. were discussed, as were the consequences of the Russian-Georgian war.

"Developing relations with Russia is extremely important, but we must also ensure that our own common values do not suffer as a consequence," said the Estonian head of state.

Prime Minister Andrus Ansip also welcomed the US Congressional delegation. In addition to financial and economic issues, topics related to security and the relations between the two countries were discussed. The US Congressional Delegation praised Estonia for its contribution to common missions and declared continued support for Estonia.

The prime minister stated that the regular visits of high-level delegations show the support of the USA for Estonia and express the great relations between the two states. "The United States of America did not recognise the Soviet occupation, and supported Estonia both during the regaining of independence and at striving towards NATO membership," Prime Minister Ansip declared. "Now we are great partners in the field of security. Co-operation in NATO has been a success, joint contributions have been made for ensuring peace in

the crisis areas of the world and the establishment of a civil society," he added.

It was jointly stressed that only shared values can be the basis for trusting co-operation. The prime minister declared that the statement by US President Barack Obama regarding the superiority of the NATO common defence principle is an extremely important declaration from the viewpoint of the security structure of both Estonia and the world.

The Prime Minister also introduced the information system of the government sessions and the public e-services of Estonia to the guests.

The US Congressional delegation visiting Estonia was led by Shelley Berkley. The prime minister also met with Virginia Foxx, Phil Gingrey, Paul Kanjorski, Ron Klein, John Carter and Steve Cohen.



Prime Minister Andrus Ansip with the delegation from the US House of Representatives at Stenbock House, 15 April.

President of the Republic Met with Polish Prime Minister

17 April - **At President Toomas Hendrik Ilves's meeting with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, the discussions centred on the European Union's Eastern Partnership and energy issues in the Baltic Sea Region.**

"The Eastern Partnership program initiated by the European Commission must become an effective and far-reaching helping hand for the target states in their convergence with the European Union," said the Estonian head of state. "However, it is important that the countries most interested in the Community's eastern neighbours had a greater role, also institutionally, in shaping the European Union's Eastern Partnership as well as our general common foreign policy."

President Ilves and Prime Minister Tusk talked at length about the problems related to Nord Stream and the Ignalina nuclear power station. They discussed the need to create a functioning and well-connected electricity market in the Nordic countries and Baltic region.

Speaking about gas connections, the Estonian head of state stressed that the diversification of energy sources and suppliers is critically important. President Ilves and Prime Minister Tusk also spoke about the future of the Via Baltica Highway that should stretch from Finland through the Baltic countries to Poland.

"The Via Baltica, if it were a well-functioning main road, would contribute to the development of the entire region, and thereby create a basis for future economic growth," said the Estonian head of state.

The Estonian head of state and Polish prime minister also stressed the importance of the current year on the entire region – it marks 70 years since the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the beginning of the Second World War, but also 20

years since the fall of the Berlin Wall.



President Toomas Hendrik Ilves greeting Polish Prime Minister Tusk in Kadriorg, 17 April.

DEFENCE NEWS

Estonian Defence Ministry Arranges Seminar in Afghanistan

21 April (BNS) - **A seminar on the relations of the parliament and the defence ministry in a democracy is taking place for officials of the Afghan Ministry of Defence, Parliament and security institutions at the initiative of the Estonian Defence Ministry in Kabul today.**

Speakers at the event sharing the Estonian experience include the Defence Ministry's Deputy Secretary General for planning Lauri Tumm and the ministry's adviser at the Afghan Parliament Ingvar Parnamäe. MP Mart Nutt is to speak about the parliament's co-operation with the ministry. On the Afghan side, Deputy Defence Minister Mohammad Akram and other senior civil servants are among the speakers.

In the reconstruction of Afghanistan, the main task of Defence Ministry advisers has been to develop local state structures and offer advice on work procedures among state institutions.

The primary objective of the reconstruction process is to achieve stability and internal security and ensure peaceful division of power. Equally important are economic and social development to reduce poverty, support for regional development and economic stability, and raising the general quality of life.

In addition to military contribution, Estonia has been looking for ways to support social and economic development, this mostly through the European Union and NATO and other international organisations.

Meetings are lined up for the visiting Estonian delegation at Afghanistan's parliament and its defence committee and at the British Embassy in Kabul.

Estonian military have been taking part in the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan since 2003. Right now about 150 Estonian defence personnel are deployed in that country. In addition, since 2006 eight civilian officials, including a health care expert and a police official, have served by rotation in that country.

Ministry of Defence Concluded Co-operation Memorandum with Estonian Defence Industry

21 April - **Minister of Defence Jaak Aaviksoo signed a co-operation memorandum between the non-profit Defence Industry Association (EKTL) and the Ministry of Defence.** The Defence Industry Association, which is an association of more than 20 enterprises that was formed in March, is an open organisation for all enterprises that have the necessary potential in their respective fields, with the objective of being a partner to the state in questions related to the defence industry.

"The development of the defence industry is the legal responsibility of the ministry and it is not possible to realise it without the inclusion of Estonia's national capital and the local enterprises," the minister of defence stated.

"In its time, the Republic of Estonia was well known for its strong military industry, we were even capable of building aircraft. Similarly, the goal of our defence industry today should be to provide some products for the wider world," said Minister of Defence Aaviksoo. "In addition to satisfying the needs of our Defence Forces, it is also important from an economic perspective to make our products available outside of Estonia," Aaviksoo stressed.

At the formal signing ceremony, Brigadier General Valeri Saar, Commander of the Estonian Air Force, acknowledged the long-standing co-operation with Estonia's defence industry. "The Defence Forces need enterprises that can design, manufacture, modernise, repair and maintain the weaponry, technology and the equipment of the Defence Forces. The Defence Forces also need construction companies that can build military structures, which have to meet special requirements – the Ämari airbase is definitely one of those," Brigadier General Saar noted.

The co-operation memorandum that was signed covers five areas of co-operation. The first is an obligatory counter-trade system that is guided by defence procurements of the state, according to which companies receiving large procurements from Estonia are obligated to buy products from Estonian enterprises. The second area of co-operation covers the support and consultation of defence related research and development in order to support Estonian entrepreneurs and scientists in transforming the relevant ideas into products and directing them onto international markets. The third area is the participation of Estonian enterprises in NATO and EU defence related procurements. The fourth area is the exchange of information and increased co-operation related to procurements of the Defence Forces, and the fifth area is increased international co-operation related to the defence industry.

ECONOMIC NEWS

Standard & Poor's Confirms Estonia's Rating on Previous Level

21 April (BNS) - **The Standard & Poor's rating agency confirmed Estonia's country ratings at the present level of A and A-1, with the outlooks remaining negative.**

"The agency says in its decision that strong institutions, as well as the low level of state debts

and considerable reserves are keeping the Estonian ratings. Besides, the ratings are supported by Estonia's competitive, flexible and open economy and outlooks of acceding to the euro zone," Bank of Estonia Vice-Governor Marten Ross said.

At the end of February the agency began an extraordinary revision of country ratings. The agency ultimately decided to revise the ratings without changing them.

"The agency maintaining the level of the ratings reflects the steps the government has taken this year, by which the deficit of this year's budget is contracted by 4.6% of the gross domestic product. Continuing improvement of the 2009 budget balance will reduce Estonia's need for external financing and simultaneously increases the opportunity of acceding to the euro zone," Ross said.

Standard & Poors justified leaving the Estonian country ratings outlook as negative by dangers due to the out-of-balance economies of Latvia and Lithuania. Besides, the ratings can later be affected by postponement of accession to the euro zone.

Estonian Publisher Eyeing US Book Market

15 April (BNS) - **One of the largest publishing houses in Estonia, TEA Kirjastus, is holding talks with the international bookstore chain Borders to start exporting and marketing business language textbooks and dictionaries in North America.**

Borders representatives have stated their firm desire to market the books, the Estonian American Chamber of Commerce and Industry said.

"Preliminary negotiations over export have already taken place and now details are being worked out," the president of the chamber, Krista Altok Tassa, said.

According to the chamber, TEA Kirjastus has started preparations for the printing of its books in the United States and is ready to adapt them for the American market.

Sale of and subscription to TEA books in the United States and Canada is already underway, and in the first week more than 20 000 dollars' worth of orders were placed.

"The interest in books published by TEA is great not only among exile Estonians but also among North American libraries and schools. Orders have been placed for everything starting with primers and ending with large reference books," Tassa said.

Under the co-operation agreement concluded in March, the Estonian American Chamber of Commerce and Industry represents TEA and another publishing house, Ilo Kirjastus, in North America.

PricewaterhouseCoopers: Estonia's Advantage Lies in IT

15 April (BNS) - **According to a study carried out jointly by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and the Hamburg Institute of International Economics, the Estonian capital Tallinn's international advantage lies in information technology.**

The comparative study of cities around the Baltic Sea suggests that Tallinn has a greater creative potential than Riga, Vilnius or the Polish city of Gdansk but lags behind Scandinavian communities, PwC said.

The strengths of Tallinn are achievements and capabilities in creating and adopting IT and software solutions, while the city's weak points are insufficient openness and competitiveness of higher education.

It appears from the study that one way to further improve the competitiveness of the Estonian IT sector is to introduce tax breaks for highly qualified and well-paid labour, for instance by setting a ceiling on the social tax.

The study embraced the Baltic capitals of Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius, and regional centres -- Turku of Finland, Umea of Sweden, Gdansk of Poland, and Kiel and Rostock of Germany.

Export Grew in February

15 April - **Export of Estonian goods grew in February by 650 million kroons compared to January.** Growth in export was last noted in October of last year. Import also grew in February.

Swedbank macroanalyst Maris Lauri said that the reason for export growth could be that companies that did not produce in December and January have once more resumed production.

"Perhaps there will be this recuperation in March and April. Business activity often becomes more intensive in the spring, but a critical change is not to be expected in the near future," Lauri explained.

Estonia to Become Point of Transit for Large Chinese Goods Flows

16 April (BNS) - **An Estonian logistics delegation visiting China in the last week of March achieved agreements in meetings with Chinese freight forwarders under which large flows of goods will start moving through this country, Enterprise Estonia (EAS) said.**

According to CEO of Transiidikeskuse AS Erik Laidvee, "A breakthrough was made as a result of which thousands of Chinese containers will start passing through the Muuga container terminal already within the next few months."

Representative of EAS in Shanghai Valle Feldmann said the Estonian side was very well prepared and offered a compact integrated solution which has not been designed on such a scale before. "The Chinese side took a surprisingly big interest compared with earlier visits by business groups."

Among the companies offering a transit chain from China straight to Moscow were Eesti Raudtee (Estonian Railway), Transiidikeskuse AS, the port of Sillamae, the Estonian Logistics and Freight Forwarding Association representing the Moscow Customs Terminal, and several forwarding enterprises.

"We were selling a unique transit chain that allows to ship goods from China through the port of Muuga to the discharge in Moscow, including concrete tariffs and deadlines," Laidvee explained.

Port of Tallinn Expects 400 000 Cruise Passengers in 2009

15 April (BNS) - **Tallinna Sadam (Port of Tallinn) expects to receive 400 000 cruise passengers this year compared to 375 000 in 2008.**

The port expects 306 cruise boat visits, eight more than last year. The first cruise ship, Norwegian Jewel, is scheduled to arrive in Tallinn on 3 May, and the last on 27 September, head of the port

company's cruise and passenger division Sirle Arro said.

During the season, up to six cruise boats daily on average are to visit the Old Port of Tallinn. Eight ships, among them the Aidaluna of Aida Cruises that was put into service this month, will be coming to Tallinn for the first time.

In addition, the Mein Schiff of Tui Cruises, a joint venture of the German travel company Tui and Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, is to pay five visits to Tallinn this year.

The port of Tallinna Sadam in Saaremaa, Estonia's largest island, is expected to receive six ships with some 2 000 tourists. The first cruise boat, Kristina Regina, is scheduled to arrive in Saaremaa on 15 June.

Kalev Leader of Baltic Sweets Market

16 April (BNS) - **According to a retail trade study by ACNielsen, Estonia's Kalev Chocolate Factory was the leader of the Baltic chocolate and sugar confectionery market at the beginning of the year with a 15.1% share, Kalev reported.**

CEO Kati Kusmin attributed the company's success to its very strong position on the domestic market.

"The results of the survey show that it is possible to become the leader of the Baltic market by having a very strong position in one market. Kalev accounted at the beginning of the year for as much as 40% of the volume of chocolate and sugar confectionery sold in all Estonia," Kusmin said.

It appears from the survey carried out in December and January that Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian residents' consumption patterns differ somewhat when it comes to chocolate and sugar confectionery. While Estonians overwhelmingly prefer various chocolate sweets, bars and assortments, in Latvia and Lithuania candy bars are very popular and sweets rank lower in preferences.

The core business of Kalev Chocolate Factory is production and sale of chocolate and sugar confectionery. The company's principal foreign markets are the Baltic states, Scandinavian countries and Russia.

CULTURAL NEWS

Translations of Ten Estonian Works to Be Published in Great Britain and Northern Ireland This Year

21 April - **On the evening of Monday, 20 April, Estonian Ambassador to the United Kingdom Margus Laidre and the directors of the British publishing houses Norvik Press and Dalkey Archive Press Neil Smith and John O'Brien presented the newly translated works of Estonian authors in English at the Estonian Embassy.** The presentation of the works was led by editor-in-chief of the publishing house Varrak, Krista Kaer. This year a total of ten works by five different Estonian authors will be published in English and Welsh.

Ambassador Margus Laidre stated that this was a historic event in Estonian literature translation. "Ten Estonian books translated into English within one year is an extraordinary event that once more confirms the importance of culture as a bridge to the hearts of other people," he noted.

The updated translation of of Anton Hansen Tammsaare's work "The Misadventures of the New Satan" ("Põrgupõhja uus vanapagan") is appearing for the first time in the United Kingdom, published by Norvik Press. The director of the publishing house, Neil Smith, said that they chose Tammsaare's book because it is the final work of one of the most significant Estonian authors of the 20th century, which in its own way sums up the life's work of the great author. "We definitely plan to continue publishing Tammsaare. We have already begun the translation of the first volume of 'Truth and Justice', and our goal is to publish all five volumes in English," he noted at yesterday's presentation.

Works that have already been released this year are Kristiina Ehin's "Burning the Darkness" ("Põletades pimedust") (Coiscéim, translation Ilmar Lehtpere; Pádraig Ó Snodaigh, Gabriel Rosenstocki translated into Gaelic); "A Priceless Nest" (novellas) (Oleander Press, translation Ilmar Lehtpere); and "My Brother is Going Off to War" (in collaboration with Hella Wuolijoki, Lapwing Publications, Northern Ireland, translation Ilmar Lehtpere); Ly Seppeli's "The Root of Memory" ("Mälujuur") (Lapwing Publications, translation Ilmar Lehtpere); Anton Hansen Tammsaare's "The Misadventures of the New Satan" ("Põrgupõhja uus vanapagan") (Norvik Press, old translation updated by Christopher Moseley); Mati Unt's "Diary of a Blood Donor" ("Doonori meelespea") (Dalkey Archive Press, translation Ants Eert); and Livia Viitol's "A Handful of Light" (translation Ilmar Lehtpere, Lapwing Publications). Still awaiting publication are Kristiina Ehin's "The Drums of Silence" (in Welsh, Cyhoeddiadau Barddas / Barddas Publications, translation Alan Llwyd) and Mati Unt's "Brecht at Night" ("Brecht ilmub öösel") (Dalkey Archive Press). Work is still being done to prepare another great work of Estonian literature for publication.

The book release at the Estonian Embassy took place during the annual London book fair, in which Estonian publishers were participating.

Arvo Pärt's Symphony No. 4 Premiered in Helsinki

15 April - **Estonian composer Arvo Pärt's Symphony No. 4 will be premiered in Helsinki's Finlandiatalo concert hall on Thursday, 16 April.** This is the European premier of the composer's newest work. The Helsinki City Orchestra will be conducted by Turkish conductor Cem Mansur.

Nearly 40 years separates Arvo Pärt's last symphony, Symphony No. 3, from this new work. The subtitle for Symphony No. 4, which is nearly 40 minutes long, is "Los Angeles"—the world premier of the symphony even took place in Los Angeles in the USA in January of this year, where the local orchestra was conducted by its long-time conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen. The composer has dedicated his great composition to Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who is held in prison in Russia. "With my composition, I would like to reach out, extending a hand to this prisoner and through him to all those imprisoned without rights in Russia," Arvo Pärt wrote in the introduction to the score of his Symphony No. 4. "I wish him peace of soul notwithstanding the circumstances, and I hope that my carrier pigeon one day reaches faraway Siberia," Pärt adds in his introduction to the score.

The concert in Finlandiatalo will begin with a performance of Pärt's symphony at 19.00. The concert will be broadcast live on the radio through co-operation by Estonian Classical Radio and Finnish Yleisradio.

President of the Estonian Republic Toomas Hendrik Ilves and his wife will attend the premier of Arvo Pärt's Symphony No. 4 at the Finlandiatalo concert hall.

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