

TARTU
CITY OF
LITERATURE

International residency program for writers and translators
April-May 2026

Apply by 23 February!

Call for applications – Tartu City of Literature residency spring 2026

TARTU UNESCO CITY OF LITERATURE RESIDENCY PROGRAM FOR WRITERS AND TRANSLATORS

Tartu is the second largest town of Estonia, but is widely considered its intellectual capital – vitally significant in developing the educational system, culture, science and literature in the Estonian language. In 2015, Tartu was designated a UNESCO City of Literature, which has further enhanced the vibrant literary scene. Tartu City of Literature residency program aims to increase international exchange and communication, contribute to the mobility of writers and translators, offer a creative and inspiring environment, and provide writers with an opportunity to introduce their work to Estonian readers. The programme is open to all writers and translators (translating from Estonian to other languages) from across the world who meet the criteria described below. The residency program is coordinated by the Estonian Literary Society in cooperation with Tartu Literature House Foundation and in partnership with various other literary institutions.

The spring residency period includes the week of the [Tartu International Literary Festival Prima Vista](#), held from May 11–16. This year's festival, titled True and False, focuses on the borderlands between human beings and technology, nature and culture, and reality and imagination. It explores how artificial intelligence and artificial environments shape human identity and creativity, how literature helps preserve human experience, the role of imagination in the formation of identity, and what cultural authenticity means in a contemporary context. While all writers and translators are encouraged to apply, particular interest will be given to applicants who can establish a meaningful connection with the festival's theme. Traditionally, at least one public event with the resident is organised as part of the festival programme.

This call is for a 2-month residency period, April-May 2026. One applicant will be selected.

The deadline for applications is February 23rd. The results will be announced at the beginning of March.

What we offer:

- 2-month stay at the Karl Ristikivi residency apartment
- A scholarship of 600 euros per month
- Compensation of travel costs to and from Tartu up to 350 euros
- An opportunity to get engaged in the cultural scene of Tartu and to perform at different events, including [Tartu International Literary Festival Prima Vista](#) taking place May 11th-16th 2026.
- A contact person who is responsible for making arrangements for performances, meetings and tours and helps to engage in the local literary life

How to apply:

- Fill in the online application form available [HERE](#)
- Please upload a fragment (up to 5 pages) of a published text (in Estonian or English) or a fragment of a published translation (from Estonian into another language) in the respective section of the form

Criteria

- Upper intermediate level of spoken English.
- At least one published book (fiction or non-fiction), screenplay, theatre script or translation from Estonian into another language by the applicant.
- Interest in Estonian culture and literature.
- Readiness to participate in the local literary life, including events, meetings, interviews, festivals.
- Literary work during the residency.

Selection process

The resident will be selected by a committee of 4 consisting of the representatives of the Estonian Literary Society (coordinating organisation of Tartu City of Literature), the Tartu Department of the Estonian Writers Union, the Estonian Literary Museum and Tartu Literature House Foundation.

About the residency apartment

The residents will be accommodated in the former Karl Ristikivi Museum. Karl Ristikivi (1912–1977) was a renowned Estonian writer whose works are considered

among the core texts of 20th-century Estonian prose. The apartment, owned by the City of Tartu and managed by the Estonian Literary Society, was his last residence in Estonia before his exile in Sweden in 1943. The historical atmosphere of the apartment has been preserved, but all modern facilities are available. The gas-heated apartment (bedroom, living room, kitchen, bathroom and an exhibition room dedicated to Ristikivi) is on the first floor of the two-story house in a quiet residential district not far from the city centre. The administrative support (guidelines for using the facilities in the apartment, providing extra facilities if needed, etc.) will be offered by the Estonian Literary Society.

Frequently asked questions

Q: How strict is the length and schedule of the residency - do I need to arrive on April 1st and leave exactly 2 months later?

A: While the residency should be around 2 months, there is some flexibility in scheduling; arriving a couple of days later or departing a couple of days earlier probably can be arranged.

Q: Do I have to be in Tartu the whole time, or can I travel to other places in Estonia?

A: We encourage discovering the whole country so you can spend some time travelling around or staying in other cities; unfortunately, we cannot cover the costs of travelling to other places.

Q: Can I come with my partner or family?

A: The apartment is big enough to accommodate a family. Although residency projects are often a way of getting some rest from everyday matters, we completely understand if you choose to come with your partner, friend or family or have them visit for some time. Please note, however, that we only provide the reimbursement of travel expenses to the residents.

Additional information:

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Photos of the house and apartment by Lilian Mengel



