

New Writing Competition

“IMAGINE DIGNITY”

“Humankind / Nature / Artificial Intelligence: What Kind of World Do We Want to Inhabit in 2040?”

Already in 2021 and 2022, the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (BMEIA), in cooperation with the Austrian Literature Society (ÖGfL), initiated a writing competition titled “Internationale Literaturdialoge” (International Literary Conversations), which was very well received.

In 2023, the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs celebrates a special anniversary—50 years of international cultural work in Austria. It is taking advantage of this anniversary to place global challenges of the future even more firmly in the focus of art and culture with a new initiative called “*IMAGINE DIGNITY*”.

IMAGINE is the aspiration to help shape our common future with creative visions and a new culture of dialogue between the arts and sciences. **DIGNITY** encompasses human dignity as well as the dignity of nature and its ecosystems. If we humans see ourselves as part of nature, this holistic understanding of *DIGNITY* also has its inner logic. This image of humankind and nature is contrasted by artificial intelligence, the most powerful technologies that humanity has invented so far. With ChatGPT and comparable systems of generative artificial intelligence, the discussion about the opportunities and risks of artificial intelligence has reached the general public. It seems that, as with the global climate and biodiversity crisis, no country in the world can turn back the wheel of time. What matters now is prudent human intelligence. This opens up a unique opportunity for art and culture to get involved in shaping the future.

The Project: In the frame of the initiative “*IMAGINE DIGNITY*”, the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the Austrian Literature Society (ÖGfL) are conducting a **new writing competition**. Essays and literary prose are to be written on the **subject of “Humankind / Nature / Artificial Intelligence: What Kind of World Do We Want to Inhabit in 2040?”**

In just 17 years, it will be 2040. And yet, given the climate and biodiversity crises and the rapid pace of technological developments, no one can predict exactly what kind of world we will live in by 2040. But what kind of world do we want to live in by 2040? How can we reconcile human dignity and the dignity of nature, how can we stop global warming and species extinction and regenerate nature and its ecosystems? What are our expectations of generative artificial intelligence and other powerful digital technologies, how can we make

use of their advantages and minimise their risks? What technologies with great potential for change are not yet on our radar? How might artificial intelligence help us to break the deadlock of increasing social division and set the course for new humanistic cohesion in a more-than-human world?

These are just some of the questions that the new writing competition aims to address with a view to 2040. We are looking for **essays** and **literary prose** on the broadly understood subject outlined above.

Writers* who live and work in Austria or who have Austrian citizenship, regardless of their place of residence, are eligible to submit their texts. In order to promote international literary contacts, applicants are also expected to nominate an international writer* (i.e. not living in Austria and not holding Austrian citizenship) whom they propose to write an independent essay or literary prose text on the above-mentioned subject of the competition and from whom they have already obtained the willingness at the time of submission to also write an essay or literary prose text on the subject if the submission in question is successful. The texts will be translated into English. A total of eight projects will be selected, i.e. a total of 16 texts will be produced, which should contain approx. 18,000 characters including blanks. The submitting writers selected by the jury and the international authors nominated by them will each receive a **remuneration of € 2,000** for their texts. The nomination of writers* from EU candidate countries and the focus countries of Austrian foreign culture is particularly welcomed.

Payment mode: Funding for the individual projects will be provided in two instalments. The first half of the remuneration will be remitted in 2023 after the announcement of the jury's decision, the second half after completion of the text in spring 2024.

Categories:

- a) Essay
- b) Literary prose

Requirements for participation:

- The submission must be made by the Austrian participant in the project
- Nomination of an international writer* and his/her willingness to submit an independent essay/prose text on the above-mentioned subject, documented in writing.
- The target language of the work is German (or an official language recognised in Austria) and English, respectively
- At least one independent literary publication (excluding self-published publications or publications released by self-publishing companies) as well as a list of publications including a description of previous projects

Documents to be submitted:

- Short biographies (min. 300 characters) of all contributors* and persons involved in the project.
- Project description (1 DIN A4 page)

- Account number of the applicant

Submission deadline: 22 October 2023

Submissions are to be sent by e-mail directly to elke.atzler@literaturdialoge.at and to office@ogl.at.

Selection procedure: After reviewing all submissions, the jury will select eight projects by **6 November 2023 (tbc)**. The winners* will be presented in the frame of the international book fair and reading festival Buch Wien (**8 to 12. November 2023**)

The two institutions issuing the call for submissions will be granted the right to publish the selected texts digitally, in print media and as part of a book publication, as well as to present them as part of exhibitions.

Realisation: until **end of February 2024**

Result: Publication on the project website "IMAGINE DIGNITY". The winning texts will be published digitally, in print media, in exhibitions and, in the longer term, as part of a book publication. Austrian representative authorities abroad, in particular Austrian Cultural Forums, which are geographically touched by the writers* associated with successful submissions, will be invited by the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs to hold events on the winning submissions concerned.

In case of further questions please contact: Elke Atzler and Manfred Müller, Austrian Literature Society

We look forward to lively participation and many innovative project submissions!

With kind regards,

Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Head of the Department for International Cultural Policy in the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

Manfred Müller, Head of the Austrian Literature Society