

## **Fund for a national prize for innovative practices in employment and social policy announces**

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### **Juhani Ilmarinen received the first National Prize for Innovative Practices in Employment and Social Policy**

The Fund for a national prize for innovative practices in employment and social policy has decided to award the National Prize for Innovative Practices in Employment and Social Policy, presented for the first time in 2008, to Professor **Juhani Ilmarinen** at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. The prize was presented on Friday 7 November by President of the Republic **Tarja Halonen**, who acts as the patron of the prize. The prize is awarded for an activity or innovation, which has supported ageing employees' coping and staying on at work or improved their working conditions or employment opportunities. The prize is 17.500 euros.

Professor Juhani Ilmarinen is well-known and esteemed both in Finland and worldwide for his research, development, and pioneering in ageing and the quality of working life. Professor Ilmarinen is to a high degree credited with the Finnish focus on activities maintaining and improving the work ability in efforts to solve the problem of ageing workforce. Ageing has not been considered an issue of age discrimination in working life, and age has not been seen as any obstacle to working. Instead, the experience brought by age has been seen as a wealth that benefits the entire work community.

Juhani Ilmarinen (born in 1945) began his research in the field of ageing in Germany already in the 1970s, and since the early 1980s he has been working at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. There Ilmarinen and his working group developed, for example, the Work Ability Index, which has been translated into 26 languages and is today an everyday tool within occupational health services. An outcome of this work was the 1989 agreement reached between the labour market organisations on workplace health promotion in Finland. Professor Ilmarinen has developed good practices within the action programme Respect for the ageing and been active in a cabinet committee on ageing people at work that built the foundation for national programmes promoting the work ability of ageing people. He has also published several books and over 500 articles.

Currently Ilmarinen is the director of the Work and Life Course Theme at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, which produces new methods for the extension of work careers and for the prevention of exclusion.

#### **The prize highlights best practices in coping at work**

The objective of the prize, awarded now for the first time, is to have impact on attitudes and keep up the social debate on ageing employees coping and well-being at work.



The activities and innovations awarded have to be practical and applicable on a wider scale. The focus is on producing and distributing good practices. The prize can be awarded to an individual, a research institute, or a work community. It can be awarded to one or more recipients at one time. In future the choice of activities and innovations awarded will be on practical worklife innovations and solutions that improve the well-being and copying at work of ageing employees.

The prize is presented by the Fund for a national prize for innovative practices in employment and social policy, the actors of which include the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Sitra.

At the same event, the fund also presented two grants of 16.000 euros for research on ageing to Researcher **Sari Irni**, Lic.Soc.Sc, and to Docent **Raili Moilanen**, D.Sc. (Econ). The aim of the grants is to promote research that produces new information, benefiting the working life, on increasing the coping and wellbeing at work of ageing employees. More on the website of the Finnish Work Environment Fund: [www.tsr.fi](http://www.tsr.fi)

[www.tyoelamapalkinto.fi](http://www.tyoelamapalkinto.fi)

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**Appendices:**

CV and picture of Professor Juhani Ilmarinen