

# The German Federal President's History Competition Results of the 22<sup>nd</sup> History Competition 2010/2011 in Germany

## Report

In the 22<sup>nd</sup> competition students aged under 21 were asked to research the topic "Scandals in History". 3.631 students took part and submitted 1.152 contributions.

Scandals are considered indicators for the change of values in society. They provide information about moral standards and the boundaries of accepted social behaviour. In scandals societies negotiate the legitimacy of conflicting rules and shared values.

The heated discussion about the controversial railway project "Stuttgart 21", as well as the outrage about sexual abuse in schools and churches and dubious cases of dismissal in companies dominated headlines in German newspapers and magazines, while the participants sought the traces of scandals in history. How did children and adolescents perceive public debates about scandals? Which values did they attach importance to? And by what behaviour did they feel offended?

In their entries the participants examined the conflicting positions and intentions of individuals and groups involved in scandals. They displayed the different perspectives of the scandalizers and the scandalized, the media and the public. The students questioned critically the various forms of public outrage and plead for an objective investigation instead of premature judgments.

A significant number of contributions dealt with scandals during the "Third Reich" and the handling of Nazi crimes in German post-war society. Environmental and medical scandals were also very popular with the young researchers. Most of the contributions were set in contemporary and most recent history. The challenging topic "Scandals in history" motivated older students in particular. About a third of the participants were in upper school. 86% of the contributions were submitted by grammar schools students.

