

Press release

## **Thanks to the Bakala Foundation some more 13 grantees will study at prestigious universities abroad**

- In the past six years the Bakala Foundation has supported some hundred gifted students through its SCHOLARSHIP program.
- New scholarship holders will study natural sciences, psychology or criminology at universities in Europe and the US.

Prague, 30 September 2015: The Bakala Foundation awarded this year's scholarships for young talents to students who want to study at one of the top ranking universities. The Foundation has been giving out scholarships under the Scholarship Program for six years. As in the previous years, students are very interested in the Scholarship. In total, out of 238 candidates 22 were selected to be interviewed by evaluation committee made of experts.

13 best students could rejoice after the interviews at receiving a scholarship that will partially cover their expenses for studying at prestigious international universities. The amount of money provided varied according to the country where students want to study, and also according to the personal preferences of students. In some cases students apply only for a partial scholarship to cover only some of their study and living expenses. The Foundation guarantees to support the scholarship holders for the whole time of their study program that they acquired the scholarship for.

*"Every year we become more convinced that education is the best investment. Every year the students have better English and improve in the communication skills when engaged in complex interviews with the members of the jury or in their written essays in a foreign language. Meeting these talented students is an incredibly positive experience for us and keeps encouraging us in our efforts. I am thankful that we take part in making their dreams come true and personally help them,, but also that we can contribute to a better reputation of our country and to the overall improvement of the Czech society,"* said Michaela Bakala, Chairman of the Bakala Foundation Board.

Every applicant had to submit an essay on one of the three main topics as part of their application. Applicants could discuss the question whether socially disadvantaged groups should have a priority access to elite education, or explore the role universities should play in the future education. How different will higher education be from today, will the students study the same fields of studies or will the field evolve into something completely different. Applicants could also reflect in their papers on the role of educational institutions in the context of the growing chasm between the understanding and interpretation of freedom of expression and religious freedom.

Students selected for the interviews had 25 minutes to convince the jury committee why they are the right candidates for receiving the scholarship. Members of the jury were interested not only

in their motivation to study the particular field of study and their already achieved study results but also in their plans for future, their attitude to education, their willingness to engage in public life and extracurricular activities.

*"When I look every year at young people who apply for the Scholarship program I see their desire for high-quality education. Each one has a clear idea about their career and life goals. I am glad we can help them on their way to education they dream about,"* said Radek Špicar, the director of the Aspen Institute Prague, who has been a member of the selection committee for several years.

The new grantees are high-school or university students who come from six regions in the Czech Republic (South Moravia, Central Bohemia, South Bohemia, Pardubice, Moravian-Silesian Region and Prague). The range of disciplines they want to pursue at universities abroad is quite broad. Most students will study natural and social sciences (4 students per each). Three other students will pursue their degree in humanities, and two other in applied sciences. Five female and eight male students received financial help from Bakala Foundation. Altogether, the Foundation supported six students admitted to the bachelor study programs and seven applicants in master programs.

One of the successful applicants is convinced that it is worth it not to give up. Adam Lalak has participated already in three interviews with the selection committee and only this year succeeded. Thanks to the granted scholarship he will continue to pursue at his master's degree in philosophy at the University of Cambridge where has already earned his bachelor's degree. Apart from his studies Adam is also active in supporting free Tibet. He worked with Tibetan refugees in India. Adam's hobby is logic. He has created a card game to learn logical thinking and the use of logical operators.

Adam has become one of the hundred scholarship holders who have been supported financially by Bakala Foundation through the SCHOLARSHIP program. The long-term statistics of the program indicate that talented young people from all over the Czech Republic apply for the scholarships. Majority of applicants is interested in studying social sciences 35%, and humanities 25% of applicants. Approximately 20% of applicants want to pursue their degree in applied sciences and about 10% of applicants want to study at art schools.

Evaluation Board Scholarship program in 2015:

Michaela Bakala, Chairwoman of the Bakala Foundation Board, businesswoman and philanthropist

Petra Buzková, Lawyer and former Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies

Kristyna Borsodi, Academic advisor to Bakala Foundation

Pepper de Callier, Columnist, author and coach

Miloš Čermák, Journalist and writer

Cyrlil Höschl, Psychiatrist and university professor

Alan Krautstengl, President of Anglo-American University

Ján Michalčák, Vice President of Bakala Scholars

Michal Pěchouček, Scholar and specialist in the field of computer technology

Jonathan Stein, Senior editor Syndicate

Radek Špicar, Director of the Aspen Institute Prague, vice president of the Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic

Vanda Thorne, Scholar, academic director of New York University in Prague

Michael Žantovský, Former diplomat, author, translator and director of the Vaclav Havel Library

#### Bakala Foundation

Bakala Foundation has offered financial support to talented Czech students through the SCHOLARSHIP program for the last six years. Scholarship holders receive financial support to achieve their academic dreams. The program is opened for talented students from the Czech Republic who want to study an undergraduate or postgraduate study program at universities abroad and are younger than 33 years. Grants provided through the Scholarship program are not just one-way ticket for a semester or year abroad. Students who have excellent academic results and are unable to finance their studies on their own are supported throughout the whole study program . More on the program see [www.bakalafoundation.org](http://www.bakalafoundation.org).

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