



## students seeking our **SCHOLARSHIP** this year



Pictured is the Selection Committee conducting the interviews at DOX last year.

### Where do they come from, and where are they headed?

This year, most of the students applying for our scholarship program (with the deadline on 31 May) come from in and around Prague (35%), other regions of Bohemia (25%), Brno and South Moravia (20%), and Ostrava and North Moravia (15%). Thirteen of the applicants are Czechs living abroad.

These students' educational backgrounds include state-run grammar schools, private secondary schools, foreign secondary schools and universities, Charles University in Prague, Masaryk University in Brno, the University of Economics in Prague, and conservatories and other art schools in the Czech Republic.

The universities that the applicants aspire to attend include American institutions like Harvard, Columbia, and MIT; British universities, including Oxford and Cambridge; and first-rate schools in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Asia.

Since the SCHOLARSHIP program's launch, the number – and quality – of applicants has risen steadily each year, from 147 applications in 2009 to 230 last year.



Pictured is the press conference, with Bakala Scholar Dominik Miketa in the middle.

### How do students find out about us?

Today's world is largely shaped by communication technology – and our SCHOLARSHIP program is no exception. A questionnaire revealed that most of this year's applicants learned about us on the Internet, browsing our Web site and Facebook page. We also learned that applicants appreciated the option of communicating with us through Zendesk and Zopim chat systems.

Word of mouth has provided a further boost. We have found excellent "Ambassadors" in the Fulbright Commission and the International Studies Centre of Masaryk University, Brno. Furthermore, many teachers post printed copies of our newsletters on notice boards to spread the word to students; in fact, about 10% of this year's applicants found out about us from a teacher. Finally, Bakala Scholars themselves are playing an increasingly critical role in informing other students about the Foundation.

How many students are going to join our family of 72 scholars this year? We will know more after the interviews with the Selection Committee, to be conducted in Prague on September 5-6.



Pictured is this year's final at Liechtenstein Palace, Prague.

### Agora bolsters students' debate skills

Given the weight that the Selection Committee places on students' ability – and willingness – to defend their opinions during their interviews, we have established a partnership with the student debate contest Studentská agora. The decade-old organization teaches Czech secondary students the rules of debate, and the skills it takes to make clear and convincing arguments, by hosting debates on issues like: Should ritual killing of animals be banned? Should social networks be made inaccessible to children under 15? Should alcohol advertising be banned? In order to augment the challenge, teams do not choose their side; that is determined through a blind drawing.

This year's final was won by the team from Dr. Václav Šmejkal Secondary Vocational and Grammar School in Ústí nad Labem.