



more students to receive our assistance for their studies



The Zdeněk Bakala Foundation, following interviews held in Prague on September 5th-6th, has announced this year's SCHOLARSHIP recipients: Jiří Hron from Dolní Cerekev; Benedikt Peško from Babice nad Svitavou; Adam Přáda from Ostrov; Tereza Růžičková from Třebíč; Jennifer Za Nzambi from Chrudim; Tomáš Kačo from Nový Jičín; Jana Parolková from Břeclav; Marek Svoboda from Slušovice; and Aranka Hrušková, Libuše Jánková, Pavel Mráz, Nikita Poljakov, Jana Smutná, Jiří Jelínek, Johana Typoltová, and Kryštof Vosátka from Prague. First, based on their application, essay, and recommendations from teachers, these students were invited for interviews, where they had to respond in English to questions from the 12-member Selection Committee. "Choosing the best students is an extremely difficult task. And it is becoming increasingly difficult each year, as the candidates become stronger and stronger. What matters is not only the students' academic aptitude, but also their personality. What we are interested in during the interviews is how enthusiastic and informed they are about the field they want to study, and how they respond to simple questions," said Michaela Bakala, Chair of the Zdeněk Bakala Foundation's Board of Trustees and the Selection Committee, during the announcement ceremony held at Forum Karlín, Prague. Pictured is one of the new recipients, Tomáš Kačo, who has been admitted to the Berklee College of Music. At the end of the interviews, Tomáš played his piano improvisation.



Selection Committee Voices Optimism and Enthusiasm

This year, the Selection Committee featured, among others, Pavel Telička, a member of the European Parliament, Michal Pěchouček, a professor at the Czech Technical University in Prague, and Ondřej Jonáš, an investment banker. What are their impressions of the interviews?

Pavel Telička: "It was medicine for my nerves, which have been shattered by the situation in the Czech Republic. We saw excellent candidates with bright futures, who, I hope, will return to the Czech Republic and contribute to our country's change."

Ondřej Jonáš: "I really liked most of the students. I have lectured at Harvard and Princeton. The candidates I heard at the SCHOLARSHIP interviews would definitely succeed at these universities."

Michal Pěchouček: "The interviews gave me an opportunity to talk to excellent and inspiring young people. I was fascinated by all of them. Choosing the winner was really difficult."

Pictured left are the scholarship recipients and members of the Committee at Forum Karlín.



98% for NATO and 94% for the EU

A survey of this year's 270 applicants to our SCHOLARSHIP program, conducted by Datank, showed that these talented young people – 90% of whom expressed an interest in world politics – view the Czech Republic's membership in the European Union and NATO positively (94% and 98%, respectively). The Velvet Revolution of 1989 is also viewed positively, with support from 96% of respondents.

These young people tend to be sceptical about the domestic political situation, however, with political culture being the major cause for dissatisfaction. The students pointed out large-scale corruption and low voter turnout. Other negative phenomena include the country's poor law enforcement and slow economic growth. But the respondents remain optimistic about security issues, with most believing the country faces no security risks.

Pictured is the press conference presenting the survey. The guests included Bakala Alumni Karolína Křelinová (in the middle) and Martin Bernát.