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Vox Discipulorum



Changing Times

“This imminent feeling of threats coming from the world around us is not exactly there.”

In addition to our interview with Mr Mojmír Hampl, the head of the Czech Fiscal Council, economist and writer (see page 4), we had the privilege of being invited to Strakova Akademie (the government seat) to interview Mr David Král on the subject of the security of the Czech Republic in a changing Europe in regards to Russia, Ukraine, NATO, the European Union, and what these developments actually mean for Czech citizens.

→ PG. 2



Should ECP have school uniforms?

History, benefits, school uniforms around the world, and should they be compulsory?

In ECP, we do not wear school uniforms. However, have you ever wondered about where they came from, or how it grew into the everyday standard we see now? School dress codes take on interesting and fascinating differences across continents and cultures around Earth. Although, the biggest question remaining is, whether school uniforms should actually be mandatory for students, or if they should have the freedom to choose what they wear every day.

→ PG. 9

→ David Král Continued

Our first question to Mr Král was on the subject of the Visegrád Group and its importance to the Czech Republic in terms of economic growth, security, and stability. Mr Král stated that the group was founded in order to 'help each other on the way to the European Union'. In the Czech Republic's case, that was 'achieved with it joining Nato in 1999 and the EU in 2004'. Moreover, he emphasised the 'Ukrainian issue' and how it has become quite a 'polarising one'. When discussing the Visegrád Group in more detail, Mr Král noted how the leaders of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary will have 'their coordination before the European Council'. This, according to him, is a 'visible achievement'. One of the most important aspects of a group is reciprocity, shared interests and dialogue and that is, as highlighted by Mr Král, visible within the group. He believes that 'we have a lot in common in terms of grappling with the legacy of the past, the energy transition, safeguarding the conditions for our industry which needs to make let's say more effort to decarbonise, and similar views on migration as well as recent geopolitical issues'. In essence, he thinks that the format has 'proved itself and despite the ups and downs, it still has its value even nowadays'.

A pressing issue at the moment is European security in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We, therefore, asked Mr Král on what he thinks is the biggest threat to the Czech Republic's national security. Interestingly, he stated that we have to 'change our perception of security', seeing as the Czechs have traditionally thought about the 'memories of 1968' of 'Soviet tanks rolling over and invading our territory'. According to Mr Král, what we see in Europe is that 'this is not the case anymore' and that the threats to our security are much 'nuanced' and significantly more 'multifaceted'. The Czech Republic has become a leading expert in cyber security – something that has been recognised by the likes of the EU and NATO. This was also noted by Mr Král who stated that if you 'look at the various indexes' in relation to the 'legislative framework', we [the Czech Republic] are usually at the top'. While hybrid threats are still a new, developing threat – as noted by Mr Král – our intelligence services have been 'able to identify and counter these threats'. He also added that the 'origins of these threats are quite well defined in our structure' to combat these cyber threats. There has also been an 'increased recognition of the role of China as well'; however, as described by Mr Král, 'we try to see some kind of positive aspects and ways in which we can meaningfully engage with them'. Mr Král then went on to discuss the threats that we face from the Middle East and the role of 'regional actors like Iran'. However, he does not believe that they 'do not pose an immediate threat to Czech security. Instead, he argues that we should be 'more concerned about conventional threats, especially after the invasion of Ukraine'.

The Cold War: a conflict that polarised Europe and, to a wider extent, the global superpowers of our world today. The Czech Republic – a nation nestled in the centre of Europe – was greatly affected by the Cold War and the division of the Iron Curtain. On the subject of the Cold War, we asked Mr Král if he believes that European countries, including the Czech Republic, have become too complacent about their security since the end of the Cold War.

He compared the Czech Republic to Estonia where he was posted as an ambassador and he does 'see the difference'. He thinks that the 'geographic location of Czechia and the fact that the memory is waning: the memories of those who remember 1968 are not as strong today as they were some 20 years ago'. Moreover, as a country 'surrounded by EU members, mostly allies' – as stated by Mr Král – this imminent feeling of threats coming from the world around us is not exactly there'. He exacerbated his point further by saying that 'we are living in the words of our national anthem: we are living in a paradise which is isolated from the rest of the world'. This is 'largely prevailing in a part of the population, but of course it is not the case'. Moreover, Mr Král believes that security issues should be brought to 'the attention of the general public'. The people in our nation 'have to realise that we are not living in isolation from the rest of the world'. While there are numerous threats militarily, Mr Král also highlighted the impact of Covid-19. He mentioned that it showed 'the extent to which we are exposed to the global health risks' in relation to it uncovering 'some of the very important vulnerabilities of higher economies'.

Seeing as Mr Král served as the Czech ambassador to Estonia, we decided to ask him about the Russian threat and whether or not it is perceived differently here than it is in the Baltic States. According to him, the 'Baltic countries, unlike Czechoslovakia or Czechia, have been an integral part of the Soviet Union, they share a border with Russia and in the case of Estonia and Latvia at least, they host a Russian speaking population with some of them not even having citizenship, so they are really in a different position. 'I would say that the threat, the Russian threat, is of course perceived much more acutely in those countries, but at the same time, I would say these countries are much more determined to really tackle those threats with determination and with resolve'. Mr Král went on to discuss the 'positive developments', as he put it, in Czechia. He said, 'the number of people who are who want to join the what we call the active reserves basically has given has risen after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and I think this is an encouraging phenomenon for me as well to see that, especially young people are are taking you know the the threats and the the need to defend the country if such such need arises, take it seriously'. This tied in with our following question regarding the future security of the Czech Republic and Europe as a whole in the aftermath of the war in Ukraine. Mr Král believes that it will be 'absolutely instrumental'.

We asked Mr Král whether he thinks Europe could realistically return to normal diplomatic relations with Russia, or if the relationship has fundamentally changed for good. He suggested that 'we can speculate what the meaning of the victory and a defeat in a conflict is, but I think what is important to say is that it should be in the interest of the Czech Republic and Europe and NATO and the transatlantic allies that the peace that will be at the end of this process, I am sure that there will be such such a point in time; It cannot be something that will be dictated to the Ukrainians'.

By Natálie Soldanová, Y5, and Nicholas Edworthy, Y6.



"There will be pensions, the purchasing power is the question": Interview with Mojmír Hampl



This month, the ECP Times team had the privilege of interviewing Mr Mojmír Hampl, the head of the Czech Fiscal Council, economist and writer, on the subject of the Future of Czech Public Finances, particularly public debt, population ageing, and the financial burden these challenges may place on younger generations.

While not an immediate issue for teens, we asked Mr Hampl questions on whether or not our generation will have pensions in light of recent speculation that they might be scrapped. In response, Mr Hampl stated that this idea of there not being pensions for teens is 'an exaggeration, one that is not helping'. Instead, he highlighted the importance of what he called 'purchasing power' and what that will be like in the future. Emphasising his point further, Mr Hampl said that one thing should be 'absolutely clear: there will be pensions, the purchasing power is the question'.

One of the most important pieces of information one, especially a young generation, can receive is advice. Working past the retirement age does not sound ideal; however, that is the reality for many who either choose to do so or are forced to continue. In France, for instance, altering the retirement age ever so slightly has led to social outrage, protests and unrest. We asked Mr Hampl whether he has any advice for teenagers in order to minimise the possibility of having to work past the retirement age.

He gave three pieces of advice, all with different meanings. The first, very short piece of advice is to 'stay healthy for a longer period of time', ensuring financial security and reducing the risk of having serious health issues later which may necessitate the need to work for an extended period of time to cover the cost of medical bills. The second, rather fascinating, piece of advice given by Mr Hampl is to 'be engaged in public matters because it has an 'influence on your future'. One of the biggest takeaways from our questions regarding the retirement age is – as highlighted by Mr Hampl – 'to not leave it as a matter which is a matter for people who are in their 60s'.

Financial literacy, a topic that has been at the forefront of education for years, is being talked about now more than ever. One of the questions that is being asked is if our generation is actually financially literate in terms of managing money, spending and knowing how to save where possible. We asked Mr Hampl about the matter and if we are more financially literate than our parents and the generations that have gone before us. Our initial thought was that we are in fact less financially literate than our parents; however, Mr Hampl provided us with an incredibly interesting take on the situation. He, as a parent of two children, one in their late teens and the other in their early 20s, believes that '[our] financial literacy is so much higher compared to where we were when [he] was their age'.

Mojmír Hampl

Moreover, he mentioned what his children, along with our generation, understand. That being 'spending, saving, using credit cards, leaving the money aside, and investing'. He stated that this would have been 'unimaginable for [his] generation when [he] was 13,14'. Mr Hampl also believes that 'it has changed for the better' and can only 'improve going forwards'. We proceeded to ask Mr Hampl if he thinks there should be a dedicated lesson or subject on finances in schools across the country. He realised, following the foundation of a small non-profit organisation called INEV (Institute of Economic Education), that the 'the biggest problem is that the whole curriculum and the way how we tend to
transfer the amount of knowledge from one generation to another omits many important things, not only in the area of finance but in the area of law, for instance, so it is very complicated for the people to understand that. He also argues that 'many practical things, such as the labour market, your rights there, and how to behave, are missing from the school curriculum.

Another important issue we discussed with Mr Hampl was the growing Czech national debt and what could realistically be done to reduce it. With governments facing increasing financial pressures, we asked whether there was a way to improve the situation without placing an even greater burden on future generations.

Interestingly, Mr Hampl's response was rather straightforward. Instead of focusing on reducing the existing debt, he suggested that the immediate priority should simply be to avoid making the situation worse. As he explained, he would be 'more than pleased if we just do not make the things worse', arguing that preventing further increases in government spending could allow public finances to gradually move towards a more sustainable position. He also pointed to countries such as France, Italy, Belgium and Spain, where growing debt has significantly limited governments' ability to make financial decisions. Although reducing the national debt may seem like the obvious solution, Mr Hampl believes that, for the next few years, preventing the situation from deteriorating further would already be an important achievement.

Following our discussion on the Czech national debt, we asked Mr Hampl whether younger generations should expect to retire later, pay higher taxes, receive lower pensions, or perhaps face a combination of all three.



His response suggested that the latter is the most likely scenario. However, rather than viewing a higher retirement age as an entirely negative development, Mr Hampl offered a slightly different perspective. As people continue to live longer, he believes that working beyond the official retirement age could eventually become the norm, or even something to take pride in. Rather than introducing major changes to the pension system all at once, he suggested gradually increasing the retirement age, allowing people to work and save for longer. Although he acknowledged that our generation will most likely face a combination of later retirement, higher taxes and lower pensions, he stressed that smaller, gradual adjustments would be more effective in keeping the system financially stable in the long run.
Moving away from pensions, we also asked Mr Hampl what economic development would concern him the most over the next 20 to 30 years if he were 18 today. His answer was the slowdown in labour productivity growth across developed countries. In simple terms, labour productivity measures how much is produced for a given amount of work, and when its growth slows, so does the economy's ability to generate greater wealth. Mr Hampl explained that this is particularly worrying because economies are no longer growing as quickly as they once did, making it increasingly difficult to finance public spending and maintain living standards.

Continued on next page.

Mojmír Hampl

He also pointed to the COVID-19 pandemic, which he believes had a significant impact on the Czech economy, particularly as the country has traditionally relied heavily on labour and production. However, he emphasized that the slowdown in productivity growth began long before the pandemic and remains a much broader issue. For Mr Hampl, finding ways to reverse this trend is one of the most important economic challenges facing our generation.

In our current world, governments face pressure to spend more on defence, pensions, healthcare, and the green transition. We asked where the money can realistically come from without placing a burden on younger taxpayers. Mr Hampl told us that the money now comes from 'debt', seeing as 'this is where we started'. In Europe, 'we have got a specific European way of addressing this question; we want more of both: more weapons, more welfare state, more schooling, more pensions, yet at the same time more money on defense and decarbonisation'.

However, he emphasises the point that he does not believe this system is 'sustainable given the fact that the economic model is not as productive as it used to be, so I would rather advise to start making some hard choices and prioritise'.

But economic challenges are not the only concern for younger generations. We asked Mr Hampl whether governments tend to prioritise the interests of older voters, while overlooking the long-term financial interests of younger people. His response was quite direct: 'This is not a danger. That's the reality'. He explained that, as populations continue to age, older generations have increasing influence over political decisions, often favouring policies that benefit them in the short term. Interestingly, Mr Hampl suggested that this imbalance could eventually require changes in the voting system. One idea that he proposed is allowing parents to cast additional votes on behalf of their children, giving younger generations greater representation in elections. Although he acknowledged that this might be controversial, he believes such a reform could become necessary to ensure that the interests of future generations are not overlooked

By Nicholas Edworthy, Y6, and Klára Klímková



Q&A with Petr Koblic, head of the Prague Stock Exchange

1. Which IPOs are you most proud of? Are there particular sectors where the Prague Stock Exchange plays a unique role?



I am particularly proud of IPOs that have helped Czech companies grow and become successful international businesses. One excellent example is Colt CZ Group. When the company entered the Prague Stock Exchange in 2020, its market capitalisation was approximately CZK 9 billion. Today, it is worth around CZK 53 billion. Over just a few years, Colt has transformed itself into a major international player, using the capital market to support its expansion and acquisitions. Another successful example is Doosan Škoda Power, a leading Czech industrial company that completed its IPO in 2025, demonstrating that the Prague Stock Exchange can attract established industrial businesses as well. But the stock market is not only for large companies. Through our Start Market, we also provide smaller, growing businesses with access to investors and capital that might otherwise be difficult to obtain. This is what I consider the Exchange's most important contribution: helping Czech companies grow, innovate and compete internationally.

2. Are there any other exchanges anywhere in the world which Prague seeks to emulate?

I would particularly highlight the Nordic markets, especially Sweden. Sweden has developed an impressive investment culture, with strong participation from individual investors and a large number of listed companies, including smaller businesses. What I admire is not simply the size of the market, but the way the stock exchange has become a natural part of the economy. Companies see going public as a realistic way to finance growth, while ordinary people see investing as a normal way to build long-term wealth. Of course, Prague cannot simply copy Stockholm. We have different economic structures and traditions. But the underlying ambition is similar: to make the capital market a natural choice for both companies and investors.

3. Could and should the government do more to encourage early-stage investment, and if so, what?

Absolutely. The Czech Republic has many successful entrepreneurs and innovative companies, but we still rely too heavily on bank financing. We need to develop a stronger culture of equity investment. One important step would be to introduce a simple, tax-advantaged investment account that encourages people to invest regularly over the long term. Similar schemes have worked well in countries such as Sweden. The government should also support programmes that help smaller companies understand how to raise capital through the stock market. We have been advocating the creation of an IPO Sandbox, which would help entrepreneurs prepare for a potential public listing. And finally, I believe the state should consider listing minority stakes in selected state-owned companies, such as Prague Airport or Budvar. This could strengthen the Czech capital market while allowing the government to retain control over strategically important businesses.

4. What benefits does the partnership with Vienna bring?

Our relationship with Vienna is much more than a partnership. The Vienna Stock Exchange is also the majority shareholder of the Prague Stock Exchange. This gives us access to advanced trading technology, international investors and a much broader network of financial institutions. We share important infrastructure and expertise, which helps us operate efficiently and compete with much larger exchanges. At the same time, Prague remains focused on the Czech market. We understand local companies, investors and their needs. I see this as an ideal combination - the benefits of being part of an international group while maintaining a strong local identity.

Q&A with Petr Koblic, head of the Prague Stock Exchange

5. Does PSE have any other close relationships with other exchanges?

Yes. Stock exchanges may compete for listings and investors, but they also cooperate extensively. We work with other European exchanges through the Federation of European Securities Exchanges (FESE). This organisation represents the interests of European exchanges and plays an important role in discussions about financial regulation and the future of European capital markets. I have also had the honour of serving as President of FESE, which gave me a valuable opportunity to work closely with exchange leaders from across Europe. We also cooperate with exchanges in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly in areas such as technology, market data and the development of capital markets in our region.

6. What is your vision for the growth of the Exchange over the coming ten years?

My vision is quite simple: I would like the Prague Stock Exchange to become the natural first choice for Czech companies looking to raise capital. Today, many successful Czech businesses do not even consider going public. I would like that to change. In ten years, I hope we will have significantly more listed companies, representing a wider range of sectors, from traditional industry to technology and innovative businesses. I also want to see more Czech people investing in shares and funds, rather than keeping most of their savings in bank accounts. And we must embrace innovation. New technologies, including blockchain and digital securities, could make capital markets more accessible and efficient. We are already taking important steps in this direction. Ultimately, I do not measure success only by trading volumes or the performance of our index. I measure it by how much the Exchange contributes to the development of the Czech economy.

7. Are Czechs 'natural investors'? What can be done to encourage them to invest more?

I think Czechs are natural savers, but we are still learning to become investors. Traditionally, Czech households have preferred bank deposits, savings accounts and real estate. These may feel safe and familiar, but over the long term, keeping too much money in cash can mean losing purchasing power because of inflation. The good news is that attitudes are changing, particularly among younger people. Investing has become much more accessible through digital platforms, and more people understand the importance of building long-term financial security.

However, investing should not be confused with speculation. You do not need to become a professional trader or constantly follow stock prices. For most people, investing regularly, diversifying their portfolios and thinking long term is a much better approach. I would like investing to become as natural for Czechs as saving money is today.

8. Should schools like ECP play a more prominent part in providing students with financial understanding?

Definitely. In fact, I believe financial literacy should be considered one of the essential skills that young people acquire at school. Students learn mathematics, economics and history, but many leave school without a clear understanding of how inflation, compound interest, investing or pensions work. Yet these concepts will influence their financial decisions throughout their lives. I would encourage schools to make financial education practical. Let students create imaginary investment portfolios, follow companies, discuss financial news or even meet entrepreneurs and investors. And I would add one important message: you do not need to be wealthy to start investing. What matters most is starting early, being patient and understanding the risks. If students leave school understanding the difference between saving, investing and speculating, that is already a major achievement.

Continued: Should ECP have school uniforms?



History

The concept of school uniforms dates back to the thirteenth century, particularly 1222 in England. Archbishop of Canterbury Stephen Langton, who's religion was Roman Catholic, required students at schools associated with the church to wear a long and dark cloak called a "cappa clausa" to promote modesty and discipline.

Over 300 years later, in 1552, England's Christ's Hospital School introduced a uniform for poor and orphaned children. This one featured long blue coats and yellow stockings. Blue colour represented charity.

During the 17th and 18th centuries in England, uniforms became popular in private and religious institutions, reflecting social status, tradition, and order. The attire was formal - blazers, button-downs, ties, and caps.

With the expansion of the British Empire, uniforms eventually spread to countries like the United States, Australia, and Africa. In the US, uniforms were mainly restricted to private Catholic elementary schools. However, in the 1990s, the public school uniform movement took off. Uniforms were implemented to help reduce bullying, improve focus, and create safer school environments. For example, in 1994, the Long Beach School District in California introduced uniforms and their program saw early success. Many other schools followed

Benefits of school uniforms

- Unity - School uniforms reduce social and economic differences and allow students to focus on their studies rather than what everyone else is wearing.
- Discipline - They contribute to the school environment with respect and responsibility because of proper dress code.
- Identity - Some people might argue that uniforms give students a sense of school pride and belonging to the team.

However, one of the cons of school uniforms is that students are not able to fully express themselves in terms of fashion.

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School uniforms around the world

Today, school uniforms vary widely across the globe and they range from strict dress codes to casual, everyday clothing.

Japan: They are known for their “seifuku” uniforms, which consist of sailor-style tops and pleated skirts for girls and standing-collar uniforms for boys, known as “gakuran”. Also, students wear modern blazers, which are meant to represent respect for education.

India: Their uniforms vary massively. In some areas, only white shirts and coloured bottoms are required, usually in government schools. In private or higher-grade institutions, traditional “salwar kameez” or “saris” are worn.

Europe: The United Kingdom was mentioned earlier and today, the style is still pretty similar to the 17th and 18th century. However, in contrast, there is France, where most public schools do not require uniforms. (Classic uniforms occasionally appear in private schools).

Ghana: Their uniforms feature vibrant colours and include traditional patterns called “Kente” or locally-made fabrics. Interestingly, different days of the week may require different uniform combinations and Fridays are often designated for traditional Ghanaian clothing. The aim is clear - to celebrate their cultural heritage.

Should they be compulsory?

Supporters of compulsory uniforms argue that it is important to promote a sense of unity and equality. This is done by reducing social and economical differences among students. An additional benefit of uniforms is that they simplify morning routines and minimise fashion-related distractions. Also, they reduce peer pressure.
Opponents argue that compulsory uniforms restrict students’ freedom of expression and individuality, as already said before. This freedom is important during crucial developmental years of each child. Uniforms may also place a financial burden on families.

In conclusion, whether school uniforms should be compulsory remains an open debate. Communities are still figuring out how to balance school unity and individual self-expression.

By Sonia Seddiqi, Y5

Fallen Leaves, Not Fallen Trees🍂



Every autumn, millions of leaves fall from trees, covering streets and parks before being swept away and treated as waste. But what if those same leaves could become something useful? Instead of ending up as rubbish, they could be transformed into paper bags, packaging and other everyday products. This is exactly what the Ukrainian company Releaf is doing, turning something most of us barely notice into a potential alternative to traditional paper.

So, how does it work? First, fallen leaves are collected, cleaned and dried. They are then processed to extract their natural fibres, which are turned into pulp (the basic material used to make paper). This pulp can be shaped into paper products without relying on the wood pulp normally obtained from trees. In other words, what once covered the ground can eventually become the bag you carry your shopping in.

The environmental benefits are particularly interesting. According to the company, its technology can significantly reduce water consumption and carbon emissions compared with conventional paper production. It also gives new value to organic waste and could help reduce our dependence on trees as a source of raw materials.

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Of course, leaf-based paper is not a perfect solution, and its overall impact still depends on how it is produced and disposed of. Nevertheless, it offers a fresh perspective on sustainability. Perhaps the future of packaging is not just about finding new materials, but about learning to see value in things we have always considered useless. After all, the next time you step on a pile of autumn leaves, you might be walking over the raw material for someone's next shopping bag.

By Marko Obradović, Y5



Poetry

Once upon a sunlight
There came a voice
Voice of song, willow and thunder.
Beyond what came to be, there was a slumber.

Once upon a witch and their spells
There came kids and jingle bells
Voices of little gifts
Those which came to bear witness

Once upon a field of dreams
There came a poet, a singer and someone real
Voices of yours, voices of stories
Over the hills and full of queries

by Klára Holišová, Y3

Who is responsible for the consequences of the Nepal floods?



The Nepal-Tibet floods were a massive glacier collapse and rock-ice avalanche in the Himalayas on August 26th 2026. This sparked a controversy on what caused such a serious disaster all of a sudden.

One side of social media blamed the government of China for their lack of warning. They accused China of sitting on satellite and disaster monitoring data that could have bought Nepal precious minutes of warning.

Another side of this story came from survivors and local officials that had been aware that the flood was coming down. They said there wasn't enough time to react before the disaster arrived.

Nepal's own authority said "the Nepali side needs to be more proactive to finalize data sharing" meaning that the flood was due to Nepal's lack of follow through.
However, the important question that this raises is: how could Nepal effectively prepare for a disaster of such high magnitude without any information? Even without formal data sharing, why didn't China think to take any initiative of their own?

While these are notable questions, it is important to understand that we do not know the utmost specifics and contingencies of data sharing agreements between Nepal and China. Additionally, Chinese officials claimed that it was difficult monitoring hazards in the remote Himalayan regions, specifically Himalayan terrain at high altitudes. Alongside this, monitoring networks had supposedly been compromised by the 2015 earthquake, however, it is hard to distinguish the extent to which this is true.

In conclusion, it is hard to explicitly say who was responsible due to the lack of specific information. We do not know whether China had any helpful information to begin with nor do we know why they did not help Nepal or what stopped them. On the contrary, we cannot say exactly what happened in Nepal nor did we confirm how effective they were in properly requesting data.

By Kriti Grama, Y3

WHITE CHOCOLATE RASPBERRY COOKIES



Ingredients:

- 170g unsalted butter, melted
- 200g light brown sugar, packed
- 50g granulated sugar
- 1 large egg + 1 egg yolk
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 250g all-purpose flour
- ¾ tsp salt
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 60g frozen raspberries
- 225g white chocolate chips

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 180°C and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Set aside.
- In a large bowl combine melted butter, brown sugar, and granulated sugar. Mix until fully combined.
- Note: If the mixture looks separated or grainy, keep whisking until it comes together into a thick, shiny paste.
- Add in the egg, egg yolk, and vanilla extract. Mix well.
- In a separate bowl mix together the flour, salt and baking soda. Add the dry ingredients to the wet, mix until just combined and no streaks of flour remain. Fold in the chocolate. DO NOT OVER MIX.
- Last, fold in the frozen raspberries. Mix until evenly distributed.
- Quickly (before the dough gets too wet) scoop out rounded balls and place 2 inches apart on the baking sheet. Bake for 12 mins or until edges are golden brown and the centers have puffed up and slightly underdone.
- Allow to cool before eating!



Bakery Review: RYE by Martin Auer

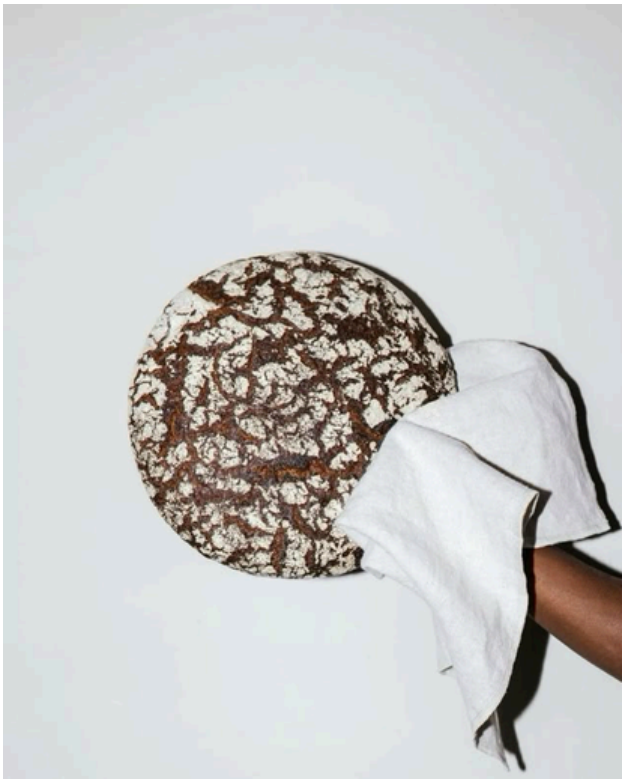
Austria has given the world many wonderful things: classical music, beautiful mountains, schnitzel and, apparently, $60 bread. Austrian bakery RYE by Martin Auer has opened in SoHo, New York, selling a single 100% organic rye sourdough loaf for $60. The loaf weighs around 3.3 pounds and is made from organic Austrian rye flour, water and salt, with fermentation taking up to 24 hours.

Of course, you don't have to buy the whole loaf. A quarter costs $15, half costs $30, and individual slices with toppings are from around $6-14, depending on the toppings. At this point, I would expect the bread to personally greet me, solve my problems and call my mother. But somehow, people are actually buying it. And honestly, the idea is ridiculous yet brilliant. What better place to sell extremely expensive bread than New York, where almost anything can become a luxury experience if you put it in a minimalist shop and call it artisanal.

So perhaps Martin Auer has not made a terrible business decision after all. He simply discovered the golden rule of American consumerism: take something completely ordinary, make it sound exclusive, charge an unreasonable amount of money for it, and someone will probably buy it.

By Natálie Soldanová, Y5





Streaming, upcoming or soon to be announced films and series



Not only did the year 2026 bring Nasa's successful Artemis II mission and total solar eclipse directly passing over Greenland, Iceland, Portugal and the northern part of Spain in August, but it also brings an amazing run of films and series that are already streaming, upcoming, or soon announced.

This year, all films in the top 5 highest-grossing films of 2026 passed the $1 billion mark in the GLOBAL box office.

In first place is Spider-Man: Brand New Day, which made $2.51 billion, the highest-grossing movie of the year. I had an amazing experience when I went to see it in Moravia with my grandma over the holidays. As a big fan of the Marvel series and Tom Holland, it was my dream to go and see the film. It touched many heavy themes and sensitive subjects, such as loneliness, yearning for belonging, misinterpretation and loss. But it helps us understand that no matter what problems show in front of us, we can fight them.

In second place is The Odyssey, which made $1.77 billion and is the highest-grossing R-rated film in the history. One of my favourite of Christopher Nolan's movies, everything was done by hand and the huge cyclops was done by professional puppeteers. Moreover, it was done by one of the oldest and only rented cameras directly from IMAX. It has an amazing resolution, immersive scale and much more to offer. However, it is very difficult to operate, obnoxiously loud and very bulky. And many people on the internet shared, that the story isn't completely true.

Coming in third place is Toy Story 5, which made $1.15 billion. Fourth is Michael, which made $1.02 billion, the highest-grossing biographical film of all time about the King of the Pop. And in fifth place is The Super Mario Galaxy Movie, which made $1.01 billion, and was actually the first film in 2026 to pass the $1 billion mark.

Now, we reach the upcoming and rumoured films and series. What is confirmed are Avengers: Doomsday on December 17, 2026, a part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe; Digger in late 2026, a comedy film about oil tycoon in America, starring Tom Cruise; Dune: Part 3 on December 17, 2026, continuing the plot from Part 2, having the original cast; Star Wars: Starfighter on May 27, 2027, with a plot following a working-class galactic rogue 40 years after the Battle of Yavin, starring Ryan Gosling; and last but certainly not least The Batman Part II on February 17, 2028, starring Robert Pattinson as a maturing Bruce Wayne and a yet to be announced actor for Harvey Dent (Two-Face). It is suspected that Sebastian Stan, known for playing Winter Solider in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. Upcoming series include Ahsoka season 2, releasing on January 20, 2027 and a new, a little controversial, reboot of Harry Potter on HBO for Late 2026/2027.

The most rumoured film to come out is the next James Bond film, as many people started to debate who would be worthy of being called the Agent 007. Top 5 actors that 'resemble' James Bond are: Henry Cavill, mostly known for his roles as Superman and Geralt of Rivia; Aaron Taylor-Johnson, mostly known for his acting in Bullet Train as Tangerine alongside Brad Pitt; Jacob Elordi, known for acting The Creature in Frankenstein alongside Oscar Isaac; Paul Mescal, acting in Gladiator II as Lucius; and lastly Tom Holland, being mostly know for his role as the MCU's Spider-Man.

However, as a big fan of the James Bond films, these actor choices are not the James Bond people need. There are many criteria that need to be followed: James Bond must always have blond coloured hair, blue eyes, a fit body, and a drinking problem. And, most importantly, the actor shouldn't be too famous.

Controversial Technology Roundup



Samsung came out with their first foldable in 2019 called the Galaxy Fold. This was one of the most controversial phones to this day.

This is because there were countless cases where the inner screen was broken or partially turned off. Many of the users initially thought that the screen was peelable and it was a plastic film that is meant to come off. No foldables have fixed this problem until now.

The iPhone Duo solved this problem by adding a replaceable screen that you can change. Apple named the iPhone Duo meaning a pair of things. People have had a mixed reaction to the new name comparing it with the Duolingo owl and the Duolingo team has not ignored this.

The Iphone duo has a nanotexture display with impressive visuals and a premium feel. Many people prefer it over the Samsung foldables because of this alone.

Apple Homeview-

On November 13th Apple announced the Homeview. It is a 7-inch smart home display and it runs a brand new homeOS software.

The device features a square display. It looks like a tiny TV attached to a speaker base (similar to the homepod) and includes a built-in camera that can recognize up to 6 people, showing their personal calendar and photos.

Due to EU technology laws, Apple cannot sell it in Czechia or the whole EU as of now.

By Jacob Lobkowicz, Y1

Creatine and protein powder, heard of it?



Young people are increasingly interested in protein powder and creatine. Why? Social media of course! There are multiple temptations for experimenting with such supplements, whether it be to achieve largely unrealistic physical ideals promoted online or just to improve athletic performance. We see fitness influencers promoting protein shakes and creatine as well as portraying supplements as vital to building muscle. A University of Michigan Nursing study tracking over 800,000 adolescents showed that past-year creatine consumption increased by 90% in males and 168% in females between 2019 and 2024. This rise coincided with the growth of online fitness culture, which researchers suggest may be an influencing factor.

Protein bars, yogurts and protein shakes. You see them everywhere right? So why not just take them in their most concentrated form? Well, that is not always the best idea. The vast majority of us already meet our daily protein requirements through our regular diet and do not need additional protein from supplements, especially if they are not from a trusted source.
Although protein powder can be a convenient source of protein, relying on it too heavily, particularly when replacing more nutritionally varied foods, could mean missing out on essential nutrients. Growing bodies need a balance of protein, micronutrients, healthy fats and carbohydrates. Furthermore, the long-term effects of excessive protein supplementation during adolescence have not yet been fully understood.

So, if you are thinking that you should take extra protein because you want bigger muscles, that may not necessarily be effective. Protein helps repair and build muscle tissue after it is broken down by exercise, however, surplus protein on its own will not directly have an effect on muscle growth. Exercise stimulates muscle development.

There are also some exceptions to this. People who struggle to receive their daily amount of protein because of dietary restrictions or food availability must find an alternative source of protein. This can come in the form of eggs, dairy, tofu, beans, lentils, legumes or acceptable doses of protein powder. Overall getting in some extra protein is not a bad thing but in excess it can cause problems, especially for youth.

Creatine does not provide protein. It is a supplement that helps muscles generate ATP for short bursts of time because it increases intramuscular energy stores and improves short-term power output. Creatine is relatively well researched when it comes to adults but less so when it comes to the long-term effects on adolescents. Nevertheless, some side effects could include weight gain - due to water retention in the muscles - muscle cramps, dizziness and nausea. The ISSN suggests creatine only be used by youth who are involved in a serious competitive environment and under appropriate professional supervision. Creatine does not replace proper nutrition or training, it only supports high intensity exercise.

Ultimately, protein powder and creatine are not essential for most young people. It is more important to have a balanced diet, a sufficient amount of sleep and the appropriate physical training. The most important thing to remember is that most social media fitness advice is not law and probably not backed up by scientific evidence. And if you really must use these supplements then ask for professional nutritional advice or at the very least research it heavily and talk about it with your parents.

By Christina Mruck, Y3

Where to go on your next holiday

All affordable and unreal places in to visit for your next holiday



Pictured above: Balacar, Mexico

Europe:

Spain:
San Sebastian:
-per night approx.6 000-8 000 czk per night near the beach
-beautiful turquoise water beaches
-clear water
-soft sand
-Recommended places to go: Beach of La Concha, Urgull (mountain peak)
-recommended stay: 2-4 days
-great mountain walk on the Urgull mountain



Montenegro:
Žabljak:
-per night approx.1.000 czk
-beautiful mountains
-green nature
-warm lights at night
-beautiful lakes
-great quality food



North America:

Mexico:
Riviera Maya:
-per night approx.2.000-5.000 czk max.
-beautiful clear water
-white sand beaches
-cyan clear water
-Stay near Tulum/Akumal for all 7–8 days.
You could spend most of your time at a gorgeous beachfront resort, with:
turquoise Caribbean water, snorkeling, Akumal, cenotes, jungles, resort days, and sunset beach dinners

Bacalar:
-per night approx. 1.500–4.000 CZK max.
-incredibly clear turquoise and deep-blue water
-beautiful lagoon with seven shades of blue
-Stay near Bacalar Lagoon for all 7–8 days.
~Choose a quality boutique hotel with direct lagoon access.
You could spend most of your time relaxing by the gorgeous lagoon, with:
turquoise freshwater, kayaking, swimming in the lagoon, jungle surroundings, hidden cenotes, nearby boat trips across the lagoon, sunset views over the water, peaceful nature and boutique hotels

Where to go on your next holiday

Asia:



Philippines:
Palawan (El Nido):
-per night approx. 1.500–4.000 CZK max.
-incredibly clear turquoise water
-white-sand beaches
-majestic limestone cliffs rising from the ocean
-Stay near El Nido town or Corong Corong for all 7–8 days.
You could spend most of your time in a beautiful tropical hotel, with:

- turquoise lagoons
- island hopping
- hidden beaches
- snorkeling with tropical fish
- limestone cliffs
- secret lagoons surrounded by jungle
- boat trips through Bacuit Bay
- sunset views over the ocean

Vietnam:
Phu Quoc:
-per night approx. 1.000–3.500 CZK max.
-crystal-clear turquoise water
-white-sand tropical beaches
-lush green palm trees and tropical forests
-Stay near Bai Khem or Ong Lang Beach for all 7–8 days.
You could spend most of your time at a beautiful beachfront resort, with:



- turquoise ocean water
- snorkeling and coral reefs
- palm-lined beaches
- boat trips to the An Thoi Islands
- tropical jungle
- waterfalls in Phu Quoc National Park
- sunset beach dinners
- luxury-style resorts at affordable prices

By Sia Chiriță, Y1

Stand with Ukraine
Člověk v tísni
All money raised from sales of the ECP Times goes towards medical equipment in Ukraine.
Stand with Ukraine

The ECP Times is a student-led paper. The views expressed do not represent those of The English College in Prague.

The Puzzle Pages

Easy

								9
				2			8	
1				5	9		3	
			3				5	
9					5	2		4
		4			1	6		
	7				4	1		
	1			8				
2	3	5						6

Moderate

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				7				
		6				4	3	
	8				1			
	6	4		2	9			
	2		4		7		1	3
		5	9			7		
2				6	4		9	
4								

Hard

9					5	7		
4	2	6		1				
		8	9					
					2	8		5
	5						3	1
		4					5	2
	1			7			8	
			3		8		4	

3 LETTER WORDS
KIA
TEE

4 LETTER WORDS
ACTS
ALGA
ARTS
ATOM
BOAR
EAST
ECHO
ECON
ELLE
FEED
FINE
GURU
HICK
IDEA
ITCH
LOON
MEN'S
METS
NINE
NOEL
~~NUKE~~
OGRE
OMIT
ONES
POTS
RACE
RIBS
SEED
SOUR
TARN
TRIG
URGE

5 LETTER WORDS
ADOBE
ALOHA
ALONE
CLASS
DESKS
EERIE
EGRET
EMBER
ERECT
HIDES
INTER
PIANO
RAMIE
REBID
RIDGE
SCRIP
SHOAL
SKEIN
SLEET
TAKEN
THETA
TONIC

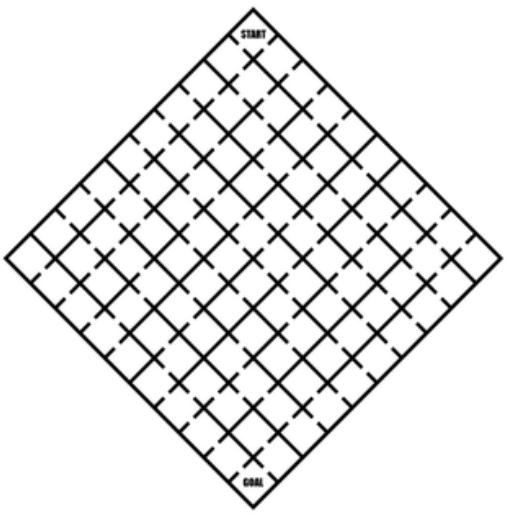
6 LETTER WORDS
GALORE
IN SITU
NORRIS
SET OFF
SOLIDS
STARTS

7 LETTER WORDS
DESERTS
TREATED

8 LETTER WORDS
AUTOBAHN
EMERGENT
SPLUTTER
TERMINUS

9 LETTER WORDS
ANTIPODES
ASSISTANT
MENAGERIE
PERMITTED

10 LETTER WORDS
LAST RESORT
TRADE ROUTE



November

WORD SEARCH DIRECTIONS: Find and circle the vocabulary words in the grid. Look for them in all directions including backwards and diagonally.

A	T	Y	L	A	F	L	Q	E	V	A	V	Z	F	F	R	I	E	R	G	R
G	T	M	I	H	C	E	Y	G	M	E	D	I	R	Y	A	H	S	S	J	G
R	D	T	J	N	F	A	M	I	L	Y	H	D	A	V	T	F	T	X	T	Z
U	A	Q	R	A	P	A	I	W	I	L	D	L	C	H	I	L	L	Y	S	N
J	F	U	E	C	I	I	C	B	A	D	Q	I	S	R	I	H	S	K	E	A
E	Z	Q	M	E	V	A	L	G	C	G	C	O	J	M	Y	Z	E	L	V	T
D	E	V	E	P	V	S	Y	G	N	O	V	E	M	B	E	R	V	L	R	I
U	F	E	M	N	D	Z	A	R	R	I	M	Z	H	J	A	I	A	A	A	V
T	S	T	B	G	K	C	U	K	G	I	V	T	S	W	K	U	E	B	H	E
I	T	E	R	F	I	W	T	Y	Z	S	M	I	M	W	R	D	L	T	U	A
T	U	R	A	M	T	L	U	B	K	N	P	F	G	I	E	A	D	O	A	M
A	F	A	N	Z	V	X	M	T	R	U	I	H	C	S	C	A	J	O	Y	E
R	F	N	C	U	U	G	N	O	Q	O	B	Z	H	K	K	M	T	F	E	R
G	I	S	E	B	A	K	C	U	K	D	C	Q	F	M	N	N	O	E	K	I
F	N	G	S	Y	D	A	M	W	Y	V	A	R	G	R	S	S	A	A	R	C
I	G	U	Z	Q	I	U	X	F	F	H	I	E	L	B	B	O	G	H	U	A
A	P	P	L	E	C	I	D	E	R	D	B	O	N	F	I	R	E	B	T	N
D	L	C	C	B	M	I	G	R	A	T	O	R	Y	B	I	R	D	S	X	T
B	B	C	L	Z	H	C	D	Y	C	R	A	N	B	E	R	R	Y	X	A	S
A	I	P	O	C	U	N	R	O	C	Z	L	E	X	N	B	C	G	R	Q	H
T	S	A	E	F	P	U	M	P	K	I	N	C	K	K	S	U	E	Q	W	R

ACORN, APPLE CIDER, AUTUMN, BLACK FRIDAY, BONFIRE, CHILLY, CORNUCOPIA, CRANBERRY, FAMILY, FEAST, FOOTBALL, GOBBLE, GRATITUDE, GRAVY, HARVEST, HAYRIDE, LEAVES, MIGRATORY BIRDS, NATIVE AMERICAN, NOVEMBER, PECAN, PILGRIM, PUMPKIN, REMEMBRANCE, SCARF, STUFFING, SWEATER, THANKSGIVING, TURKEY, VETERANS



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