



Czech Economic Society has awarded The Young Economist of 2023 Award

Prague, November 30, 2023

Every year, The Czech Economic Society awards 'The Young Economist of the Year Award' to economists aged 30 years or younger who sign up by submitting their original research papers. The selection of laureates is governed by the regulations of the award. The President of the CES, Daniel Münich, together with the CES President-Emeritus from the early 1990s, Karel Dyba, and historically first laureates of the prize, has ceremoniously handed over the awards of the 30th year of the competition at a General Assembly of the Czech Economic Society, which took place on November 30, 2023, at the building of the Economic Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Národohospodářský ústav AV ČR). After handing over prizes, a panel discussion of historically first laureates of the Young Economist Awards from early 90s of the past century followed focussing on 30 years of the Czech economy and economics, including own professional careers. The Young Economist competition prize is supported by the Council of Scientific Societies of the Czech Republic. CES media partners are Roklen24 and Bankovníctví Magazine.

The winner of the 30th year of the Czech Economic Society's Young Economist of 2023 Award is Theodor Kouro. The prize has been awarded for a paper, "Let me Choose What I'm Best at: A Natural Field Experiment with Volunteers". Theodor Kouro studies at CERGE at Charles University in Prague and is a research assistant at CERGE-EI, a joint workplace of CERGE and the Economic Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. He is also a visiting student at the Kenneth Griffin Department of Economics, University of Chicago. In the paper, which falls under behavioural and experimental economics, Theodor Kouro investigates whether volunteers are willing to provide more effort when allowed to choose their volunteering task. He also analyzes in detail whether the increase in their effort results from better matching their abilities with the task or whether they like to have a choice. Based on the results of an extensive natural field experiment amongst high school students, he concludes that volunteers who can choose their task increase both the quantity and quality of their output because the choice allows them to match their abilities with the performed activity. The results also show that the possibility of a choice can motivate volunteers when they are not financially rewarded for their efforts.

The second place in the Young Economist of The Year competition has been awarded to Artem Razumovskii for his paper "Interim Deadline for Procrastinator". Artem Razumovskii studies at CERGE at Charles University in Prague. He is also a research assistant at CERGE-EI, a joint workplace of CERGE and the Economic Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. In the awarded paper, he investigates the issues of partial time inconsistency in the form of procrastination, meaning the inability of people to commit to a detailed schedule for the assigned task and the attempts at pushing increased work effort into the future, which stem from this

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inability. In his paper, he formulates an original model with three types of agents that differ in whether they are aware of the fact that they will not keep up with the self-imposed interim deadlines of ongoing work for the assigned project and how accurately can they estimate increased costs of work effort stemming from it. The main conclusion of this paper is that there is an optimal design for interim deadlines and a work effort for completing assigned tasks, which increases the welfare of all three types of agents. However, it is indicated that the optimal interim deadline can only be self-imposed by agents, who know that they will not keep up with the given schedule and can also estimate future costs of increased work effort needed. Contrary to that, the second type of agents, who underestimate the costs related to procrastination, cannot set their interim deadlines optimally, in which case, surprisingly, self-imposed deadlines lead to a decrease in their welfare.

The third place in the Young Economist of The Year competition goes to Alexander Hansak for a paper "Quantifying the Effects of Basic Income Programs in the Presence of Automation". Alexander Hansak is a post-doc researcher at CERGE-EI, a joint workplace of CERGE and the Economic Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. In his paper, he analyzes the impact of tax reforms, introducing a universal base income concept. In the paper, he contributes to the quantitative labour market theory by innovatively enriching the existing idea of universal basic income by interconnecting it with the automation of work, where robots replace existing workers. The study reveals a negative relation between the generosity of universal basic income and the size of investment into robotic automation. Generous basic income decreases marginal effective tax rates for unemployed people and reduces their incentives for investing in skills. This mechanism subsequently leads to their increased engagement in sectors requiring lower qualifications, which could be automated. This effect increases employment in this sector and discourages firms from investing in robots.

The Czech Economic Society awards 'The Karel Engliš Prize' for the best paper on economic policy. 'An Honourable Recognition by the President of the CES for an Excellent Paper' may be awarded to the paper by an author under 25 years of age who has not been awarded by the Czech Economic Society in the past.

The Karel Engliš Prize dealing with economic policy has been awarded to Peter Kravec. The author is a graduate of the Institute of Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences at Charles University. Currently, he works as a data analyst in BNP Paribas Personal Finance. In a paper titled **"The Effect of Financial Incentives on Vaccination Rates: Quasi-Experimental Evidence from Slovakia"**, he investigates the impact of a nationwide conditional cash transfer programme in Slovakia, starting at the end of the year 2021, aimed at boosting COVID-19 vaccination rates among the elderly population. Based on administrative data maintained by the National Health Information Center of Slovakia, Peter Kravec analyzes the causal effect of the financial incentive on the willingness of the elderly population to undergo vaccination. Using modern methods for identifying causal relations and cost-benefit analysis, he concluded that the financial incentive significantly increased vaccination rates within the elderly population. However, when evaluating the overall costs associated with this government intervention, it turns out that the cost exceeded the benefits of saved lives and averted hospitalization.

An Honourable Recognition by the President of the CES for an Excellent Paper for authors aged 25 years or younger has been awarded to Martina Lušková, a student of the Institute of Economic Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences at Charles University, for a paper titled "The Effect of Face Masks on Covid Transmission: A Meta-Analysis". The paper investigates the impacts of wearing face masks on transmission of COVID-19 disease. The author has conducted a technically precise quantitative meta-analysis based on estimates and conclusions from tens of primary studies. Using Bayesian model averaging methods, the author has revealed

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the key factors behind individual studies' dissimilarity. The final meta-analysis, which considers the impact of heterogeneity of methods and variables used from primary studies, has decisively pointed to a positive effect of face masks, which led to a decrease in transmission risk by 13% to 16%.

More information about the CES's awards and laureates of past years can be found on the CES website <https://www.cse.cz/en/page/young-economist-of-the-year-award>.

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Note for editors:

The Czech Economic Society (CES) is a civic association of professionals and supporters of the field of economics. The primary mission of the CES is to help develop and popularise the economy in the Czech Republic in a way that respects and supports opinion plurality and the independent development of economics courses. The CES is a member of the Council of Scientific Societies of the Czech Republic.