

THE PRAGUE POST

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'Anti-graffiti law net first convictions'

BEFORE READING

Think about your town and describe it. Have some of the buildings been reconstructed and painted recently? What do they look like now? Are they in good condition? Or have you seen them damaged by graffiti?

What is graffiti? Why do you think some people spray paint on buildings?

We do not need to discuss if it is a good or bad thing to damage buildings (or means of public transportation), or the fact that people have spent money on trying to make the whole town look nicer. The answer is obvious. Think about places where graffiti would not be damaging. What steps could town halls and sprayers take?

Is there any punishment for sprayers who destroy public property? Would you suggest any punishment? What kind?

AFTER READING

Answer the following questions:

1. What did Tom and his friends do?
2. What was their punishment? Do you agree with the decision of the court? What do you think about the decision of Tom's father?
3. What does the new graffiti law say?
4. What does Tom say about graffiti?
5. How much money has the city of Prague spent on removing graffiti from city buildings, trams and buses?
6. What was the result of the implementation of the graffiti law?
7. What other ways does city try to reduce graffiti?
8. What do some Prague Mayors say about alternative punishments and jail? Do you agree with them?
9. What is Prague 6's anti-graffiti program about?
10. What do sprayers seek, according to the article? Are there other ways of gaining the audience and respect? Give examples.

Discussion:

What do you think about the words of Mr. Krajánek: "Many of them (sprayers) do it exactly because it is

forbidden."? Discuss if what is forbidden is more attractive for people. Why? Why not?

Vocabulary:

sentence – rozsudek, trest
amendment – pozměňovací návrh
probation – podmínka (soudní)
civic service – civilní služba
tag – jmenovka
jail – vězení
to flop – propadnout, skončit fiaskem
charge – obvinění, obžaloba
deterrent – odstrašující, odrazující
to sue – podat žalobu
to curb – brzdit, potlačit
scrawl – čmáranice, klišyháky



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'Group pushes for domestic violence law'

BEFORE READING

What do you understand as domestic violence? Discuss a definition of domestic violence with your classmates. Think of examples.

Do you think that there is domestic violence in the Czech Republic?

Do you think that any kind of domestic violence should be punished by law, or that only "serious" violence (like breaking someone's arm or

threatening someone's life) should be considered a criminal act?

Do you think that violence between partners should be considered a private matter?

Does the Czech Republic have any laws dealing with domestic violence?

AFTER READING

Answer the following questions:

1. What does the organization Rosa focus on?
2. What is Rosa planning to do regarding the country's legal code?
3. How many people in the Czech Republic have been victims of domestic violence?

4. Is there any legislation on domestic violence in EU? What about its member countries?

5. What do Czech people think about domestic violence, according to STEM poll?

6. Why is stopping domestic violence so important? Give examples.

Discussion:

After reading the article and seeing the statistics, would you change some of your answers to questions in BEFORE READING section?

In groups think about causes of domestic violence and discuss what could be done in order to lower it.

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Do you think that it is better for individual countries to be part of a bigger “supranational” formation, or to be neutral and not integrate? Discuss this question in groups and defend your ideas and thoughts.



Imagine an international formation, which would include several countries. These countries would keep their identity but they would cooperate (in the realms of security, economy, education, etc.), help each other (in cases of natural disasters, etc.), ensure the human rights are respected and observed, and they would work towards sustainability and good environment.

In your exercise books make two columns. Write possible advantages and benefits of such a formation in the first column and possible disadvantages in the second column. Compare your lists with your classmates. Discuss your points.

What supranational formations do you know of? Do you know how they function and what their role is?

What do you know about the European Union (EU)? Work in groups and write down everything you know about its history, its mission and about the relationship between the EU and the Czech Republic. Do you think that it is important to know these things? Why? Why not?

In this issue of *Newspapers in Education* you will learn a little bit about the EU. Because it is a very broad subject, you will also be asked to do some of your own research.

WHAT IS THE EU?

European Union is an organization of European countries dedicated to increasing economic integration and strengthening cooperation among its members. It works to promote and expand cooperation among its members in several areas, including economics and trade, social issues, foreign policy, security, and judicial matters. The European Union wants to deliver stability, peace and economic prosperity. It also wants to raise standards of living and strengthen the Union's voice in the world.

The European Union is based on the rule of law and democracy. It is not a new state replacing existing ones. All decisions and procedures are derived from the basic treaties ratified by the member states.

The European Union headquarters is in Brussels, Belgium.

Principal objectives of the Union are:

- * Establish European citizenship (Fundamental rights; Freedom of movement; Civil and political rights);
- * Ensure freedom, security and justice (Cooperation in the field of Justice and Home Affairs);
- * Promote economic and social progress (Single market; Euro, the common currency; Job creation; Regional development; Environmental protection);
- * Assert Europe's role in the world (Common foreign and security; The European Union in the world).

The EU is run by five institutions, each playing a specific role:

- European Parliament (elected by the peoples of the Member States);
- Council of the Union (composed of the governments of the Member States);
- European Commission (driving force and executive body);
- Court of Justice (compliance with the law);
- Court of Auditors (sound and lawful management of the EU budget).

In 1986, the European Council adopted the flag that has become the emblem of the European Union. The background of the flag symbolizes the blue sky, twelve golden stars form a circle, representing the union of the peoples of Europe. The number of stars is fixed, twelve being the symbol of perfection and unity.



Discussion:

Have you been to, so called, Benelux countries? Have you noticed anything weird when crossing the borders? Probably yes. You probably did not even notice crossing the borders. Nobody was checking you. Did you find it comfortable? Would you like

to have this in more countries?

Have you been to any EU countries that accepted euro recently? Did you find it easier to use one currency in more countries?

HISTORY OF THE EU

The process of European integration was launched on May 9, 1950 when France officially proposed to create "the first concrete foundation of a European federation". Six countries - Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands - joined from the very beginning. In 1967 the name European Community was adopted. There were several waves of accession: 1973 - Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom; 1981 - Greece; 1986 - Spain and Portugal. In 1991 the governments of the 12 member states signed the Treaty on European Union (commonly called the Maastricht Treaty), which was then ratified by the national legislatures of all the member countries. The Maastricht Treaty transformed the European Community into the European Union. In 1995, Austria, Finland, and Sweden joined the EU, bringing the total membership to 15 nations.

Now the EU is preparing for the accession of 13 more European countries.

THE EU NOW

The member states of the EU first decided in 1993 in Copenhagen that the countries of central and eastern Europe could join the EU if they fulfilled a number of criteria. The Czech Republic responded to this in 1996 by applying for membership. Other candidate countries applying for the membership are: Bulgaria, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Turkey.

Series of priority were drafted to ensure that the Czech Republic and other candidate countries will be prepared to assume the obligations of EU Membership. The candidate countries must meet the following criteria: democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for minorities; a functioning market economy, and the capacity to cope with competitive pressures; the ability to take on the obligations of membership.

The Czech Government prepared a National Program for the Preparation of the Czech Republic for membership, which is updated each year. The results of the preparations are presented every year by the European Commission in its Regular Report to the Council.

The European Union must also prepare itself for enlargement by: making the institutional changes necessary for enlargement: that means ratifying the Treaty of Nice; providing the budgetary means. An Intergovernmental Conference agreed in Nice (December 9, 2000) on a new Treaty reforming the institutional framework of the European Union. The Nice Treaty also allocated the number of votes each future member would have in the Council, as well as the number of seats in the European Parliament. During the Nice Council, member states also expressed their wish that new member states take part in the next elections for the European Parliament in 2004. This means that the Czech Republic could enter the EU in 2004, if it meets all the requirements of the EU and if the EU is ready for the enlargement.

Discussion:

Do you know how the Czech Republic was rated in this year's Regular Report prepared by the EU? Looking at our society and country, what do you think were the weakest points?



(Answer: It was discrimination against the Roma, corruption, economic crime and public finance, social expenditure (pension and health-care), and the lack of a police ethics code.)

What concrete things must the Czech Republic do to meet criteria in different fields? What changes will the entrance of the Czech Republic into the EU bring to the people of the Czech Republic? What about schools and education system? Do research. Use the Internet, talk to people who understand this issue, visit the information center, read newspapers.

(Example: The value-added tax (VAT) will be raised by 17 percent. Labor market will be freer.)

It is important to realize that the candidate countries and the EU are in the state of negotiation and that there will be "wins" and "concessions" on both sides. The countries of the EU have rights and obligations at the same time. Numerous economic analyses have concluded that the benefits of enlargement outweigh the costs.

Even though the Czech Republic is not a member of the EU yet, the EU has given us a helping hand in several fields. The EU helps the candidate countries to prepare for accession to the EU by providing different funds, for example: Phare (helps the countries in their transition towards democracy and market economy), ISPA (provides finances for transport and environmental infrastructure projects), SAPART (supports agricul-

ture). The total annual financial allocation for EU funded activities in the Czech Republic in the period 2000-2002 is approximately 171 million EUR (CZK 5.4 billion).

Activity:

Think about other unions or formations. Choose one, do a research and prepare a five-minute presentation about it for your class.

How to get more information?

Because the question of whether or not the Czech Republic will enter the EU is not only on the government and the EU, but it also depends on Czech citizens, every citizen should try his/her best to understand the role, obligations and rights that our republic would have after joining the EU. Do you know where you can get necessary information?

Here are two ideas:

- Visit, or call The European Union Information Center, Rytířská 31, Praha 1, T: 221 610 142, www.evropska-unie.cz.
- The European Union Information Center co-operates with the educational institutions and schools, and acts also as a co-organizer of seminars, lectures, and discussions on topics related to the European integration process. You can have seminars at your school. Enquire about these possibilities.

Sources:
www.encarta.msn.com
www.europa.eu.int
www.evropska-unie.cz
www.praguepost.com



DID YOU KNOW?



Have you ever seen a teenager that's not chewing gum? If you want to be in you must chew gum! But do you know the history of the chewing gum how we know it today?

In 1845, Mexican General Antonio Lopez Santa Anna was defeated by

the Americans in Texas. After this battle he was captured and permitted to return home to Mexico. Instead of going straight home, the General went to New York City. Like many of his countrymen, Santa Anna chewed chicle. It was a dried juice of a tree found in the jungles of Mexico and Central America. He believed that chicle could replace rubber and looked for an American inventor to help him. One day he met a man named Thomas Adams. Adams tried to make toys, masks, and rain boots out of chicle, but every experiment failed. Santa Anna left for Mexico and a huge amounts of chicle remained with Mr. Adams. One day, he was in a store when he saw a little

girl buy a piece of wax to chew. Adams had seen the General break off small pieces of chicle from time to time and chew it. He tested the chicle and he decided to add flavoring to it. Shortly, he opened the world's first chewing gum factory. Thus the chewing gum industry was born.

Today, the average American chews 300 sticks of gum a year. In the United States, total retail sales of chewing gum (including bubble gum) is over \$2.0 billion USD!

Sources:
www.ideafinder.com
Words and Their Stories, VOA Special English

STORY: The Useless Tree

A great grove of trees once stood on the hill where just one gnarled tree now stands. Long ago, the woodcutters had passed it by, saying, "We will never cut a good straight board from that twisted tree." So they let it be and cut another and another.

Then the loggers came after logs to sell and said, "The twisted tree will burn with a foul smell." So they let it be and cut another and another.

Then the carvers came after soft-grained wood and said, "This twisted tree won't do us good. It is a knotty

old tree." So they, too, let it be and cut another and another.

In time, the large, gnarled tree stood alone on the hill. Now during the day, the children come and play in its shade. In the evening, the old men gather about its huge trunk. They sigh and talk about their lives.

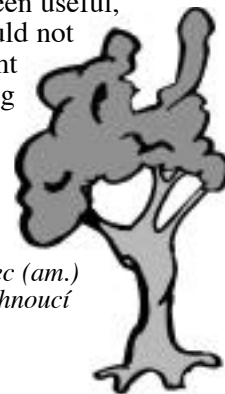
"Oh, what is the use of being useless?" one elderly man said.

Another pointed up and replied, "Just look above your head! An entire grove of trees once stood on this hill. Now only one crooked tree still

stands, thick with greenery. Had this useless old tree been useful, my friends, it would not have grown ancient with fine spreading limbs!"

Vocabulary:

grove – hájek, lesík
gnarled – sukovit ,
větrem zkroucen
logger – dřevorubec (am.)
foul – odporn , páchnoucí
carver – řezbář
knotty – sukovit



HEALTH: Healthy Eating

Think about some of the things you have eaten today. Maybe bread, milk, juice, cheese, potatoes, pork, or an apple? Or did you eat fast food, sweets and chips? Which foods do you think makes you feel better? Do you know what your body needs to function at it's best?

Young people live very active lives. You do many different and physically demanding things. On top of all those energy needs your body is also growing. It's difficult for the body to grow to it's fullest potential if you're not giving it the tools and supplies it needs. The best way to grow and live in a healthy way is to have a healthy diet.

The key to a healthy diet is to eat a variety of foods that give your body the it's fuel. Almost of the foods you can think of contain seven basic components: Carbohydrates (simple and complex), proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals, fiber and water.

Carbohydrates give your body its basic fuel, the most common of which is glucose (also known as sugar). This is considered a simple carbohydrate. A complex carbohydrate is something like starch (found in things like bread and potatoes). You may have heard that eating complex carbohydrates is good and eating sugar is bad. In a way this is true as a complex carbohydrate will provide your body with energy for a long period of time, whereas sugar will be totally used up by your body in a matter of hours.

Proteins are a chain of amino acids. An amino acid is a small molecule that acts as the building block of a cell, which you need to create new cells and grow. Protein comes from things like meat, milk and eggs. You can get some protein from vegetables, but the amino acids from vegetables

aren't complete, so you have to supplement them with other foods. This may be why vegetables have been traditionally considered a side dish. Your body cannot survive on carbohydrates alone. You need .8 grams of protein per kilogram of your body weight every day.

Fat is fuel your body stores for later. Carbohydrates burn off quickly, while fats are broken down and stored in your cells. Fat in excess is a bad thing, but the body does need a certain amount of it. Fat is also a good source of energy.

Vitamins are what your body needs to run properly. A diet of fresh, natural food usually provides all of the vitamins that you need, but processing tends to destroy them.

Your body needs minerals to create specific cells in your body. For example, you need; calcium for strong teeth and bones; chlorine, chromium and fluorine for teeth; and iodine and iron to transport oxygen in red blood cells.

Humans are over 60 percent water. It is important to keep replenishing the system with water as you are always losing it. Many foods contain a lot of water, but it is generally recommended to drink at least 8 glasses of water a day. Drinking water will give you energy, healthy and soft skin and help you keep you from fainting.

The last thing your body needs is fiber. This is the term that we give to things we cannot digest. Fiber comes from things like wheat, bran and fruit and helps us complete the digestive cycle.

You couldn't live on just one of the components, so you need to mix and match them to make sure your body is getting exactly what it needs. Eat the right things and it will show. Not only

will you look the picture of health, but you'll have the energy you need to live your busy life.

Activities

1. Write down everything you eat in a week then analyze what components of a healthy diet you have and lack. What could you add or take away from you diet to make it more balanced?
2. Within you class, take a poll and find out who eats the healthiest and who eats the worst. Which person has more energy?
3. Get two of your friends to do an experiment with you. Have one friend eat only healthy food for 3 days (no cheating) and have one friend eat only fast food or junk food. Which one felt best after the 3 days? Who had the most energy? Why do you think this is?

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