

# Government Council Approves Opinions on Defence Research Programmes

On 15 December 2023, the last regular session of the Research, Development, and Innovation Council (the Council) of this calendar year was held at the Government's seat. The main agenda items included two applied research programmes of the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic: "Enhancement – Support for the Development of NATO and EU Defence Pillars" and the programme to support the defence industry "PRODEF".

Following the "Initial Proposal for State Budget Expenditure on Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) for the Next Period," the December session approved the Schedule of Meetings with Providers on the Expenditure Proposals for RDI for 2025–2027.

The Council approved opinions on two applied research programmes under the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic. The proposal for the Defence Research, Development, and Innovation Programme "*Enhancement – Support for the Development of Areas Strengthening the Armed Forces as a Defence Pillar of NATO and the EU*" expands the conditions for fully fulfilling the role of the Czech Republic's armed forces in NATO and the EU, while effectively stimulating the scientific research base and the defence industry to participate in projects aimed at securing modern combat activities. The programme is allocated CZK 1.7 billion from the state budget. The proposal for the applied research and innovation support programme in the defence industry, PRODEF, focuses on achieving synergistic and complementary effects with the European Defence Fund (and any subsequent programmes). The programme will also support standalone projects of national significance in the defence industry. Of the total planned expenditure of CZK 6.12 billion, CZK 3.6 billion will be provided from the state budget.

*"I consider both of the Ministry of Defence's proposed programmes to support applied defence research to be extremely important. The development of defence and security research is one of our priorities for the Czech Republic in the context of ongoing conflicts and new security challenges. I appreciate the cooperation with colleagues from the Ministry of Defence and believe that both programmes will support quality and internationally competitive applied research results and thus our defence capability,"* commented Mgr. Helena Langšádlová, the Minister for Science, Research, and Innovation and the Council Chair.

The Council members discussed the intention to update the Methodology for Evaluating Research Organisations and Targeted Support Programmes for Research, Development, and Innovation (Methodology 2017+). They were also informed about the ongoing tripartite meetings with representatives of providers and members of evaluation panels, focusing on the evaluation of research organisations according to the Methodology 2017+. The Council also reviewed the material **Evaluating the Implementation of Measures of the RDI Information System Concept 2021–2025 for 2023**.