

The Czech Republic's Future Lies In Innovation: The Country For The Future

The Czech Republic aims to become a European innovation leader. On Monday 18 February 2019, Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, who also chairs the Czech Government's Research, Development and Innovation Council ("the Council"), and Karel Havlíček, Vice-Chair of the Council, unveiled the Czech Innovation Strategy 2019-2030. The conference, where the framework plan of the Strategy was published, was organised by the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic and the Council with the participation of prominent figures of Czech academic and commercial research, as well as public administration officials.

"I am glad we finally have a clear innovation strategy with the aim of catching up with countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland and Finland, who chose to promote innovation fifteen years ago and are now among the most prosperous countries in the world," said Prime Minister Andrej Babiš about the importance of the newly introduced Czech Innovation Strategy.



*Opening conference address by Prime Minister Babiš, Liechtenstein Palace, Prague.
Photo: Office of the Government archives.*

The Government adopted the Innovation Strategy two weeks ago as a key government policy paper. The Strategy was prepared by the Council, which will also be responsible for its implementation under direct purview of the Prime Minister and Chair the Council. Simultaneously with this decision, the Czech Republic is introducing its new branding – *The Czech Republic: The Country for the Future*.



“Consistent implementation of the strategy is not just about reaching the top league of European innovators. If we manage to get there, it will boost production of final goods and create added value here in the Czech Republic, so the entire country will profit. This will bring higher salaries, bigger company profits and, consequently, additional income to the national budget. It will also strengthen our independence as a country,” added the Prime Minister, referring to the document’s importance.

A framework strategic plan has been prepared, including a **complete innovation value chain, from the support for basic research to applied research to industrial applications**, and support for commercial innovation. For the first time, all the main actors of the innovation ecosystem have come together to agree on a single strategic document, including: the Academy of Sciences, main universities, representatives of major companies and small businesses, research institutions, and the Government’s ministries.

The Czech Innovation Strategy 2019-2030 conference opened with the Prime Minister’s address. The morning panel discussion included guarantors of all nine strategic pillars, namely Silvana Jirotková (CzechInvest), Petr Očko (Ministry of Industry and Trade), Pavel Doleček (Ministry of Education), Vladimír Dzurilla (Chief Digital Officer), Pavlína Adam (Ministry of Agriculture), Václav Kobera (Ministry of Transport), Josef Kratochvíl (Industrial Property Office), David Koppitz (Ministry of Regional Development), and Petr Dvořák (RDI Council). The individual pillars include the following areas: **Funding and Evaluation of Research& Development; Innovation & Research Centres; National Start-up & Spin-off Environment; Polytechnic Education; Digitalisation; Mobility & Construction Environment; Protection of Intellectual Property; Smart Investments; and Smart Marketing.**



The afternoon segment highlighted successful research and innovation projects. Prominent Czech researchers presented their projects, including the creation of a national artificial intelligence super-hub, nano-coatings that improve air quality, a system for efficient production of water from desert air, a catalyst for space technologies, or the possibilities offered by the most powerful laser in the world.

The entire programme was hosted by Karel Havlíček, Vice-Chair of the RDI Council, who is also the main author of the Czech Innovation Strategy.

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