

Government Council Discusses Implementation of the Goals of Czech Republic Innovation Strategy and Budget for Science for 2020

On 29 March, the Research, Development and Innovation Council (**the Council**) held a regular meeting presided by Prime Minister Andrej Babiš. The main items on the agenda were action plans for the new **Czech Republic Innovation Strategy 2019–2030** and the **Research, Development and Innovation Budget Expenditure Proposal 2020** with the outlook for 2021 and 2022.



Press conference following the meeting of the Council for Research, Development and Innovation, 29 March 2019.

In the early morning hours, before the Council meeting itself, a meeting took place between Prime Minister Babiš and the Vice-Chairman of the Council, Havlíček, and the guarantors of each pillar of the Innovation Strategy of the Czech Republic. *“Amongst other things, we are putting together a revolutionary solution for motivating and financing spin-offs and start-ups. We will get the State involved. The aim is to prevent young people’s ideas ending up in the hands of foreign investors alone,”* Andrej Babiš commented on one of the key tasks of the government approved Innovation Strategy after the meeting.

“We work on the Strategy daily and on the basis of created action plans we have already begun to discuss concrete activities for 2019 and 2020,” said Babiš with regard to implementation of the strategic document penned mainly by Karel Havlíček and added that meetings with guarantors, attended by the Prime Minister, will take place regularly every month to ensure rigorous accomplishment of the targets set.

At the beginning of the meeting, Council members were informed of discussions with guarantors of the **Czech Republic Innovation Strategy 2019-2030**.

The Council also approved the **State Budget of the Czech Republic Expenditure Proposal for Research, Experimental Development and Innovation for 2020 with the medium-term outlook for 2021 and 2022 and the long-term outlook up to 2026**. The total volumes of expenditure are planned as follows:

- **for 2020** a total of **CZK 37 bn**
- **for 2021** a total of **CZK 37.5 bn**
- **for 2022** a total of **CZK 38.2 bn**

Year-on-year, **the total volume of financing for 2020 is an increase of more than CZK 1 bn** as compared to the plan for 2019 (CZK 35.9 bn). This means a **record increase of CZK 10 bn** to the budget, from CZK 27 billion in 2015 to CZK 37 billion for 2020.

The materials were concurrently prepared and discussed with all providers, ensuring that the providers' requirements could be met. In the course of negotiations with individual chapters, unspent expenditure was linked in to cover excess demands. *"We have stopped increasing the dramatic growth in so-called unspent expenditure in all governmental departments. Expenditure on science now involves resources that are really and also, I stress, expediently spent,"* Karel Havlíček commented with respect to the current budget proposal and the strategy for financing science as a whole. The budget proposal will now be passed on for the inter-departmental remarks procedure before being presented at to the government.

According to the results of a secret ballot, the Council also proposed the appointment of **Ing. Jiří Reiss, CSc., MBA**, nominated for the function by the Industry and Transport Union of the Czech Republic, as member of the research committee of the Technological Agency of the Czech Republic.

Other items on the agenda at the Council discussion meeting included:

- Implementation of the Methodology for Evaluating Research Organisations and RD&I Purpose-tied Aid Programmes (Methodology 2017+)
- Draft Council opinion on the BETA 2 Proposal for change of programme of public procurement in applied research and innovations for the needs of state administration
- Large research infrastructure – working group results
- Action plan for implementation of the National Open Access to Scientific Information Strategy for 2017-2020

Source: Office of the Government of the Czech Republic and RD&I Council press release | 29. 3. 2019