

The Country For The Future brand, polytechnical tuition, internationalisation of Czech science. The Government Council has reviewed the implementation of key Innovation Strategy tasks

On Friday 6 September 2019, the Council for Research, Development and Innovation (the Council), under the leadership of prime minister Andrej Babiš, met at the Straka Academy for its regular session. The key points on the agenda included the regular review of the new Innovation Strategy of the CR 2019–2030, cooperation with MIT, the world famous US research institution, and the choice of a candidate for Czech Mind 2019 National Government Prize. The prime minister also informed Council members about the award of the Council Chairperson's Award to botanist Václav Větvíčka.



*Press conference after the session of the Council on 6 September 2019.
Photo: Office of the Government of the CR.*

At the start of the session, deputy prime minister Havlíček, who is also vice chair of the Council, commented on selected key topics that were currently being resolved by the guarantors of the pillars of the Innovation Strategy of the CR up to 2030 at their regular meeting before the Council session.

“The Innovation Strategy is taking on clear outlines. It will become the basis for the emerging National Economic Strategy that will be prepared and presented by the end of the year and will be entirely built on foundations of science, research, innovation and value added. That means that future industry and energy forecasting, as well as issues in transport, agriculture or local development, will be founded in smart infrastructure, in innovation and investment in science and research,” the deputy prime minister informed.

He went on to highlight the importance of the **economic migration programme** that has just been approved by the government, **deals with incoming flows of key research workers** and is another of the important parts of the Innovation Strategy. Third-country researchers will continue to benefit from a fast-track administrative system when coming to the Czech Republic. The programme seeks to create a truly attractive and comfortable environment for these capacities and talents, PhD students and their family members. The government thus took an important step towards **facilitating the internationalisation and openness of Czech science and research**.

Now that the academic year has begun, one Strategy task being carried out is the introduction of the **Technology (Polytechnical Tuition)** subject in primary schools.

The Council members stated that there has been further progress in the communication of the Innovation Strategy. After the national communication strategy was approved by the government, **The Country For The Future** brand has shifted from the technological and innovation level to the level of an economic strategy (national brand).

Moving on to another point on the agenda, the Council approved the concept of cooperation with the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**. During their upcoming working visit to the USA, prime minister Babiš and deputy prime minister Havlíček will visit this institution, evidently the most successful research and educational institution in the world, with the specific mandate of negotiating a 4-year project trialling cooperation in the form of placements for Czech doctorate and post-doctorate students.

During the summer the government also approved an equally important **Czech-Saxony cross-border cooperation project** between the eminent Fraunhofer Society and the Technical University of Liberec, businesses and other research institutes on the Czech side.

Information on the state of evaluation under the Methodology 2017+ is a regular item on the agenda. In July the government approved a material entitled Methodology for Evaluating Research Organisations in the Universities Segment. *“There is now nothing stopping the evaluation being launched in full in 2020. Among other things, it will show how research organisations are doing in terms of nurturing young talents, how they compare with organisations abroad etc., which will doubtlessly change the Czech system,”* first deputy chair of the Council Petr Dvořák added.

The start of the academic year has traditionally been the time of important government awards. The Council today chose its candidate for the **Czech Mind 2019 Government National Prize** in a secret ballot. The elected candidate was the globally renowned Egyptologist and archaeologist, **Professor Mgr. Miroslav Bárta, Dr.** The proposal for awarding the honour will be submitted to the government for discussion.

Prime minister Andrej Babiš informed the Council members of his decision to again award the **Council Chairperson’s Award for Popularization of Research, Development and Innovation**. This year, the prestigious honour will go to the renowned botanist and commentator **Václav Větvička**.

Václav Větvička spent many years working as director of the Botanical Gardens of the Charles University Science Faculty at Na Slupi in Prague. He has also taught at his alma mater, the Science Faculty of Charles University. He is the author of numerous expert works and popularising publications. His most successful book, *Stromy a keře* (Trees and Shrubs), has been published in 37 international editions. Mr Větvička is well-known from his frequent appearances on radio and on television gardening programmes.