

Government Council highly appreciated the results related to investments in research and accepted recommendations of the International Council

The Government Council for Research, Development and Innovation (the Council) together with members of its International Advisory Panel (the International Council) held a regular meeting on Friday, 25 October, in Straka's Academy. The main items on the agenda included discussion of the recommendations from experts of the International Council, and the gradual steps in introducing the Innovation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2019–2030. The Council highly appreciated the amount of expenditure on science and research, published in the CZSO report for 2018.

First, the Council members welcomed the experts from the International Council, they heard and accepted the recommendations of that advisory body that held a working meeting in the Office of the Government with leaders of the Grant Agency and the Technology Agency, MEYS and the Council already on Thursday, 24 October.

The Chairman, Prof. Josef Michl, presented the wish of the International Council members that the provided advice foster the growth and improvement of Czech science in its various forms. He appreciated the fact that many of the recommendations to date were beginning to be implemented. They include an emphasis on quality, improving the quality of Czech research and development in general in contrast to the hitherto quantitative approach, and the efforts to reduce the burdening administration, which have made the life of Czech scientists so much easier.



*At the press conference on the occasion of the 350th meeting of the Council, the recently appointed members of the International Council, Dr. Orna Berry and Prof. Kian Lee Tan, were introduced.
Photo: Office of the Government of the Czech Republic
(from left J. Michl, K. Lee Tan, O. Berry, K. Havlíček)*

The meeting was attended for the first time by the two most recently appointed members of the International Council. Dr. Orna Berry, the emeritus Chief Scientist of the State of Israel, and Prof. Kian Lee Tan, a top informatics expert from Singapore, emphasised that the competitiveness of the Czech Republic, a small country same as Israel and Singapore, is strictly based on human capital. They jointly highlighted the interests of the Czech Government to invest more intensively in science, to streamline the system of research and development management and to accept the ambitious challenges based on economic considerations.

In the main part of the meeting, the Council again discussed the implementation of the Innovation Strategy objectives. According to Deputy Prime Minister Havlíček, who is also Vice Chairman of the Council, the CZSO report on the total expenditure on R&D&I, published in the previous week, is good news.

"The Council adopted the report and highly appreciated our results related to investment in science. For the first time in history, the threshold of CZK 100 billion of total expenditure on research and development from State, European and private corporate sources has been exceeded. We have reached the total aggregate coefficient (GERD) at 1.93% of GDP. It is the only meaningful indicator of the amount of investment in research, which reflects the ability of support from the Government, the ability of spending Structural Funds, as well as the ability of the Czech business environment that is supported by the Government through direct and indirect instruments. This year, we have in fact caught up with the EU where the average is just under 2%. We have reached an absolute high and our target is to achieve 2% next year and 2.5% in 2025," said Karel Havlíček.

Out of the outputs of a regular working meeting of the Innovation Strategy pillar supervisors, Deputy Prime Minister Havlíček informed the Council members in more detail about the specifically addressed objectives that are related e.g. to building the 5G network, artificial intelligence and mainly to the currently discussed new setting of the system of start-ups, spin-offs and business hubs where starting technological and innovative firms are incubated. Havlíček also informed about adopting the intent to create a comprehensive conceptual system that would map and evaluate the functioning of existing incubators, hubs and accelerators that are established by the Czech Republic abroad through the CzechInvest agency. Next year, internationally used models will be used to draw up a system of evaluation and then a ranking to compare their performance, activities and deployment in each region including their support for development of smaller firms. *"We are making another step from quantity to clear quality,"* Deputy Prime Minister Havlíček emphasised.

Source: press statement of the RD&I Council | 29.10.2019