

Government council elects member of Technology Agency Presidium and chair of Commission for Climate Action

The Research, Development and Innovation Council ("the Council") met at Straka Academy on Friday 28 February for its regular meeting. Among the main items of the meeting were elections to the Presidium of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TACR) as well as choosing a chair for the advisory body of the Council - the Commission for Climate Action. A traditional key item of these meetings is Implementation of the 2017+ Evaluation Methodology.

At the start of the meeting the councillors proposed a secret ballot and recommended that the government name a new member of the TACR Presidium, **Ing. Bc. Kamila Vávrová, Ph.D.**, who works at the Silva Tarouca Research Institute for Landscape and Ornamental Gardening. Kamila Vávrová will fill the spot opened up by Ing. Pavel Komárek, CSc., whose mandated term is ending. "Of the seven candidates for this important conceptual position, a scientist was chosen who investigates and coordinates a number of applied research projects in the Czech Republic and abroad. As a long-term member of the TACR Research Council she will certainly be a significant reinforcement," said First Vice-Chairman of the Council Petr Dvořák on the result.

In the following election for the position of chair of the Commission for Climate Action, **prof. MUDr. Jan Lata, CSc.** was nominated from among the Council members after the end of prof. Tomáš Jungwirth's term. Jan Lata is a professor of internal medicine, holding the post of rector at the University of Ostrava since 2015. The Climate Commission was established in September 2019 and as one of the Council's advisory bodies it provides professional expertise on climate change issues. The impact of climate change on human health is evident and for this reason a physician was nominated and chosen.



From the 354th session of the Council. Professor Lata in the left photograph, on the right Deputy PM Havlíček with other Council members. Photo: Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

A substantial item of the meeting was the agenda of **Implementation of the 2017+ Methodology**. In accordance with the adopted amendment to Act No. 130/2002 Coll., a fundamental change is taking place to the Statute and Rules of Procedure of the Commission for Evaluation of Results, including renaming it the Commission for Evaluating Research Organisations and RD&I Purpose-tied Aid Programmes.

A thorough discussion was held in an effort to give greater priority to the evaluation of applied research – following up on the launch of a comprehensive robust evaluation of universities. A discussion seminar on evaluating top applied research will take place in cooperation between the Ministry of Education and the Council.

Council members were also informed about the results of talks with representatives of the budget headings on the proposed **Czech state budget expenditure for research, experimental development and innovation for the years 2020–2023** with an outlook to 2027. The Council ordered the Presidium to call a working meeting of its members in order to discuss the draft budget in detail.

In connection with the implementation of the 2017+ Methodology, the Council received information on the entry into force of what is called **the technical amendment to the Act on Research Support** as of 12 March 2020. Implementation into practice of Act No. 50/2020 Coll., which amends Act No. 130/2002 Coll., **factually fulfils the implementation plan of the Innovation Strategy of the Czech Republic through 2030** as one of the key documents in the field of public policy in the segment of science and research. After more than 10 years of negotiations, legislative work and proposals, legislative cover is finally being put in place for a fundamental change in the manner by which research, development and innovation is evaluated.

The objective of the amendment is to carry out partial changes to the act and harmonise terminology. Emphasis is now being placed on truly **comprehensive evaluation of research organisations in accordance with international best practice, including the quality** of research results, while also preserving bibliometric analysis thereof. *"I am of the opinion that starting on 12 March, long years of the struggle to change the method of evaluation, consultation and motivation in research will have been completed and that the positive results of these changes will be seen in the coming years and decades. We believe that this path represents the right direction for science and research,"* emphasised Council Vice-Chairman Pavel Baran following the talks.

The amendment also **guarantees the necessary flexibility of evaluation parameters**, with this change opening sufficient space for advancing the methodology. At the same time a stable legal framework is created for respecting a regular and high quality process for evaluating science and research.

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