

Government council resolves quality of applied research evaluation

The regular session of the government's Research, Development and Innovation Council (the Council), which is chaired by Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, took place on Friday, 26 June in the Straka Academy, the seat of the government. The main points of the meeting included the methodology for evaluating research, the National RD&I Policy and the identification of economic and non-economic research activities. The Council will meet again in July of this year for an extraordinary meeting on the budget.

In light of the complicated situation with the coronavirus infection, the Council decided to hold the extraordinary meeting on 24 July. "This meeting will be important; the approval of the budget for science, research and innovation should be approved here for the government session. The state budget preparation schedule was moved back and, following long deliberations and a search for alternatives, the theme of the Council budget will subsequently be discussed in an extraordinary meeting," explained the First Vice-Chairman, Petr Dvořák.

An intense debate is underway on how to improve the quality of the evaluation as part of the regular point on the **Implementation of Methodology 2017+**. Several working meetings were held in recent weeks and regulations were proposed, primarily from the perspective of applied research. In an effort to improve the quality of the entire evaluation process as part of the long-term development of the system and the experience gained, the Council will now verify how the introduction of these formulated measures is being carried out. A new workgroup of experts in applied research will be established at the Commission for the Evaluation of Research Organisations to recommend further possible improvements.



From the 358th meeting of the RD&I Council Photo: Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

The Council members also approved the draft methodological recommendation for the Identification of economic and non-economic activities of research organisations and the research infrastructure in research, development and innovation, which will be submitted for inter-departmental consultation during the current harmonisation of the material with the binding EU document (State aid compendium), which is prepared and expected to be issued by the end of July 2020. It is an important issue, particularly from the perspective of subsequent inspections by the European Commission and local authorities.

The Council also approved the publishing of calls to members of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic and to three members of the presidium of the Czech Science Foundation. The calls will be published on the www.vyzkum.cz website.

Now the **National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the Czech Republic 2021+** will be submitted to the government following completion of the inter-departmental consultation and, it must be emphasised, after several years of effort. *"The strategic document is prepared such that it also reflects the new suggestions that ensue for research and its infrastructure, not only from the experience of the last pandemic and related social and economic challenges with a society-wide impact. It is primarily the creation of conceptual conditions for research to contribute more significantly to the formulation of a "resilient" society,"* emphasised Vice-Chairman Pavel Baran.

In other points of the meeting, the Council dealt with possibilities of increasing the financing of science and research in favour of the chapter of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, regular up-to-date information on the development of establishment of the legal entity ELI ERIC or the final evaluation of the OMEGA and BETA programmes managed by the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic.

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