

Government Council elects chairs of Bioethics and Climate Committees. Discussions on the National Recovery Plan continue

The last regular meeting in 2020 of the Council for Research, Development and Innovation (the Council) took place on 18 December, once more by remote videoconferencing. The main points on the agenda included support for science and research under the National Recovery Plan, Implementation of the 2017+ Methodology, and Analysis of the Existing State of RD&I in the CR and a Comparison with the Situation Abroad. The Council also elected from among its members the Chairs of the Bioethics and Climate Committees.



From a videoconference meeting on 18 December 2020 of the government RDI Council.
Photo: Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

By way of introduction, the members of the Council expressed their deep gratitude to Prof. Petr Dvořák for his work on the Council, in particular as a member of the Council Board, First Vice-President of the Council and Chair of the Results Evaluation Committee. Petr Dvořák is giving up these positions at his own request at the end of 2020, for both family and work reasons. *"I have enjoyed working in the Council, especially as we tried to devise and implement measures to strengthen research. For example, the new methodology for evaluating research organisations, and now the grant programmes focussed on top-level science. I am sure that at least some of this has been a success. Over time, the make-up of the Council has changed and the creative debate has faded somewhat into the background. I will now devote myself to my family and to our small organic farm"*, says Professor Dvořák.

The Council will consider nominations for the vacant posts in January 2021.

The Council again discussed the current **procedure for preparing the National Recovery Plan (NRP)** and the outputs of the working groups for medical research and applied industrial research, which were established in connection with two components of the plan. *"Support from the NRP should be directed towards research into virology, cardiovascular diseases and metabolic disorders, oncology and the socio-economic impacts of diseases. On the application side, research and development in companies and the implementation of innovations in practice will be supported,"* commented Silvana Jirotková, Deputy Minister of Industry and Transport, in charge of leading the negotiating team at the European Commission, on the state of preparations and negotiation of the national plan.

Eva Zažímalová, Chair of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (AS CR), also took part in a debate devoted to the planned project for founding an institute for infectious diseases. It is indeed the

AS CR that is actively promoting the establishment of an independent virological institute under its management with the necessary institutional background, and with the involvement of clinical and scientific facilities at universities. The costs of its establishment would be partly covered by NRP resources, and would in part be from other funds. However, the members of the Council have yet to agree on the concept and organisation of the project, although this form is supported by industry-relevant members of the International Council at the RDI Council. Pavel Doleček, Deputy at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which is currently the "owner" of the relevant component of the NRP Starting Points in its entirety, also actively participated in the discussions.

The Council also considered the election of the chairs of two of its advisory bodies. From the results of the secret ballot, its members proposed appointing **doc. Marián Hajdúch** as **Chair of the Bioethics Committee** and **Ing. Jiří Holoubek** as **Chair of the Climate Committee**.

The Council approved the document entitled Analysis of the Existing State of RD&I in the Czech Republic and a Comparison with the Situation Abroad in 2019. The analysis, which the Council prepares annually in accordance with Act 130/2002, has become one of the starting points for the Government-approved National RD&I Policy 2021+. The 2019 analysis is divided into 9 chapters, which deal with key topics of the RD&I system, including the main indicators. The topic of International Cooperation in Research, Development and Innovation is now included in the document.

The Council has suspended discussion on the draft shared activities project entitled Strategic Intelligence for Research and Innovation Policy (STRATIN+), submitted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

In other main points of the meeting, the Council adopted inter alia information on the course of negotiations of the departmental tripartites within the framework of Implementation of the 2017+ Evaluation Methodology and adopted an opinion on the proposal for the INTER-EXCELLENCE II International Cooperation in Research and Development Support Programme, which is now going to the inter-ministerial commentary procedure.

Source: RDI Council press release 21 December 2020