

The Government Council insists on its draft science budget for 2022

The June meeting of the Research, Development and Innovation Council (the Council) took place on 25 June 2021 at the Straka Academy. The main agenda of the meeting included a proposal for State budget expenditures on science for 2022, the Innovation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2019–2030 and support for research and development from the National Recovery Plan, and the election of board members of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic.

At the beginning of the meeting, Council members called on research organisations and their colleagues in research to consider offering their support and joining the expressions of solidarity and charity collections announced to help the affected areas of South Moravia, which were hit by a devastating storm and a tornado on 24 June 2021.



From the 369th meeting of the RDI Council Photo: Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

In the first item, the members of the Council took note of the Government Resolution of 7 June 2021 on the preparation of the State budget of the Czech Republic for 2022 with a view (draft State budget expenditures as a whole) together with Government Resolution No 524 on the draft state budget expenditures on research, experimental development and innovation (R&D&I) for 2022 with a medium-term perspective for 2023 and 2024.

The Council continues to insist on the draft State budget expenditures on R&D&I submitted to the government, which was approved at the 368th Council meeting on 28 May 2021 (in the amount of CZK 39.4 billion for 2022), and in this connection addresses its chairman and Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, and Deputy Prime Minister and Rapporteur for

State Budget Expenditure on R&D&I Karel Havlíček, with a request to discuss the draft State budget expenditures on science and research submitted by the Council with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Alena Schillerová – in order to increase funding for science to an adequate level within the meaning of the Council’s proposal, i.e. to match the justified requirements of the R&D&I system.

The Council repeatedly emphasises the key importance of research, development and innovation for the development of the Czech Republic, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ministry of Finance has now incorporated into the draft State budget its proposal for R&D&I expenditures in 2022–2024 in the annual amount of only CZK 36.1 billion, which is CZK 3.25 billion less in 2022 than in the final Council-approved proposal; in 2024, it is CZK 5.06 billion less.

In the standard item regarding **support for science and research within the National Recovery Plan**, the R&D&I Council approved an opinion on the EXCELES implementation programme, supplemented by the programme priority of neurodegenerative diseases, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which is responsible for component 5.1 of the plan “Excellent research and development in priority areas of public interest in healthcare”. The EXCELES programme will be funded by the European Union under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) for the National Recovery Plan. The final form of financing from the National Recovery Plan will be known only after the approval of the Government’s draft State budget in September 2021.

Based on a secret ballot vote, the Council recommended to the government to appoint three board members of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic from 12 candidates. These were **RNDr. Jiří Očadlík, doc. PhDr. Matúš Šucha, Ph.D.** and **Ing. Jiří Plešek, CSc.**, who was nominated for a second term.

The Council also approved the text of the Call for submission of selected results to the evaluation in Module 1 according to the Evaluation Methodology 2017+, which will subsequently be posted on the www.vyzkum.cz website.

The Council approved opinions on the materials “Concept of the Czech Science Foundation 2021+” and “Draft group of grant projects Grant projects of oriented basic research”. It also approved the settlement of comments on the Jan Amos Komenský operational programme (OP JAK).

The members of the RDI Council were also informed about the current tasks and priorities of the scientific diplomacy of the Czech Republic. Currently, specialised scientific diplomats work on missions in Israel, the USA and at the Czech Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei. The Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union also has a Scientific Secretary for Research and Space in Brussels.

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