

The RDI Council has a new member, the biophysicist Tomáš Polívka, while Vladimír Mařík was re-elected a Vice-Chairman

On Friday, 28 January, the Research, Development and Innovation Council (the Council) met for the first time in this calendar year at the Straka Academy. The meeting was led by the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation who was appointed the Chairperson of the Council by the government on 5 January. The main items on the agenda included information on the Policy Statement of the Government, the R&D&I priorities of the Czech presidency in the Council of the European Union, the Evaluation Methodology 2017+, or the budget and financing of R&D&I at the time of the provisional budget.



From the press conference after the 375th meeting of the RDI Council. Photo: Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

To start the meeting, Chairperson Helena Langšádlová, the Science Minister, informed the Council members of the main points and background to the **Policy Statement of the Government**. As opposed to previous periods, the area of **science and research** ranks among clear priorities of this government and has a **separate chapter** in the Policy Statement. Within the competency of Minister Langšádlová, the topic will be the responsibility of the **Science, Research and Innovation Section** of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

"Science, research, development and innovation are one of the key investments in our country's future, prosperity and competitiveness, the quality of life of all its inhabitants and a cohesive and resilient society," the Minister emphasised in line with the Policy Statement.

[The Policy Statement of the Government for the area of science and research stands on 5 pillars](#), focusing on Modern, coordinated and transparent system of management, Human resources, Financing of research, development and innovation, Technology transfer, and Science and research publicity.

A regular item on the agenda of the Council meetings is in this period the state budget **expenditure on research, development and innovation**. Minister Langšádlová informed the Council members of the preparation of the government bill on the 2022 state budget. In the discussion on the provisional budget in the R&D&I system, the minister confirmed that the **government's core priorities include education, defence and science and research**.

The Council appointed its first Vice-Chairman, Dr Pavel Baran, the rapporteur for the budget, and approved the modified schedule for budget negotiations. Negotiations on the R&D&I expenditure proposal for 2023 with outlooks will continue at the level of ministries and the Council members on 1 February 2022.

Based on the result of the Council's secret ballot, **Prof. Vladimír Mařík was re-elected a Vice-Chairman of the Council** with effect from 1 February 2022. According to the Statute of the Council, the Council vice-chairpersons are elected from among the members, the candidates are proposed by the Council members.

The third Vice-Chairman of the Council, Karel Havlíček, was removed by the cabinet of Prime Minister Petr Fiala on Wednesday, 26 January 2022, upon Havlíček's own request.

By a resolution of the government, the Council will welcome a new member, Prof. Tomáš Polívka, a biophysicist at the Faculty of Science, University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice. Almost from the start of his career, Tomáš Polívka has been dedicated to the issue of evaluating science and research. He is a member of the Commission for Evaluating Research Organisations and Completed Programmes (KHV in Czech) and in 2021 he was appointed the main coordinator of evaluation of research organisations.

The proposals for the above personnel changes were submitted to the government by the Council Chairperson and Minister Helena Langšádlová.

In the regular item on **Methodology 2017+**, the Council members received information on the Methodology for Evaluating Research Organisations of the Ministry of Agriculture and, in line with the KHV opinion, they stated its compliance with Methodology 2017+. The Council approved the initiative of the KHV Chairman Prof. Štěpán Jurajda to gather information on the capacities of the fields of research.

An important topic of the meeting was the preparation of the Czech presidency of the Council of the EU. The Council members were informed about the **proposed priorities of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union in the R&D&I** area under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS). The Czech Republic will preside over the Council of the EU from 1 July until the end of 2022. Czechia is already part of the presidency trio together with Slovenia and France, the next trio will be France, Czechia and Sweden. *"The current trio aims to continue the discussions on the development of the European Research Area and to contribute to defining and implementing the research*

and innovation policy in an effort to address the existing social and economic challenges for the benefit of the Union citizens," Minister Langšádlová adds.

The main priorities of the Czech presidency in the research agenda are **research infrastructures and synergies in research, development and innovation financing**. Both themes are cross-cutting, with the potential to contribute to some objectives of the ERA development.

In this connection, the Council will ask the providers, mainly the Ministry of Industry and Trade (for the area of innovation) and the Ministry of Transport (for the area of space activities), a question about their involvement in the Czech presidency in the area of science and research.

In the next items of the agenda, the Council members received information on organisational changes in the Office of the Government in connection with **establishing the Science, Research and Innovation Section**. The Council discussed the **state of play of the Programme Johannes Amos Comenius (P JAC)**.¹ A Council member Prof. Jurajda was asked to coordinate the preparation of the proposal for the Council priorities in the planned P JAC calls.

In the second part of its meeting, the Council noted **updated information on the ELI ERIC consortium** and it will ask MEYS and the Czech Academy of Sciences to prepare a document on the long-term financial sustainability of the ELI project, including the involvement of foreign partners.

The Council received the document **Total support of research and success rates in the programmes of ministries** and recommended taking it into account in the preparation of the proposal for state budget expenditure on R&D&I for 2023. It also approved the opinion on the **National plan of research and development in cybersecurity and information security until 2025**.

In the items without debate, the Council members read the document Cooperation with the Federal Republic of Germany in R&D&I, and the document Analysis of the benefits and impacts of large research infrastructures of the Czech Republic under the responsibility of MEYS.

Source: press release of the RDI Council | 28. 1. 2022

¹ Johannes Amos Comenius Programme