

# Helena Langšádlová: 100 days in the office of the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation

---

The Government of the Czech Republic ranks support for science, research and innovation among its top priorities. In December 2021, Helena Langšádlová took up the office of Minister for Science, Research and Innovation and was appointed the Chair of the Research, Development and Innovation Council. Her steps in the first three months focused on three basic areas: ensuring the financing of science, research and innovation, fulfilling the Policy Statement of the Government and addressing the impacts of the war in Ukraine.

The main success of the first hundred days is the **result of the negotiations on the 2022 budget**. *“Despite the necessary budget cuts we have managed to increase the budget for science and research by CZK 1.61 bil. against last year. A particularly important increase was made in the budget item of institutional financing of research organisation development in the segment of higher education institutions and the Academy of Sciences. This will help them to respond to inflation and growth of energy prices and it will ensure support of excellence in Czech science and research,”* said the Minister on the negotiation results. Thanks to coordination with the Ministry of Finance, we have managed to ensure that even at the time of the provisional budget, as many beneficiaries as possible could receive the maximum possible amount of aid for research projects according to the budget rules.

Within the policy priorities of the government, attention focused on **implementing Methodology 2017+** for evaluating research organisations and programmes. The efficiency of financing science and research in the Czech Republic will be enhanced by collecting data on research field capacities of research organisations and by setting up communication with the support providers on how to use the Methodology for distributing institutional support in order to achieve an appropriate relationship between the evaluation and subsequent financing.

Based on an agreement with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS), the Science Ministry co-supervises the preparation of an amendment to the Higher Education Act, which will **regulate post-graduate education**. Minister Langšádlová initiated a number of meetings dedicated to the possibilities of support for early-career scientists, to reconciling their family and working life and to the general development of entrepreneurship in the academic environment. Currently, the Council distributes recommendations on how to improve the conditions of mainly women in science. Among these is the option to include childcare costs in eligible expenditure related to research work.

Another established item on the agenda is the setting of a better environment for **technology and knowledge transfer** and for **commercialisation of research results**. To that end, the Minister met with a number of stakeholders from technology transfer centres at universities and from relevant public administration institutions, as well as with representatives of the private sector, e.g. successful start-ups. The mapping of the current situation in the Czech Republic and of good practice abroad, including in cooperation with ambassadors of the relevant countries and our science diplomats, will serve as a source material for preparing suitable legislative and non-legislative tools of aid.

Work has also been commenced on the **Strategy for Developing Publicity and Communication of Science, Research and Innovation**. The document, focusing among other things on the needs of actors in the system of science, research and innovation, intends to interlink the world of science with the world of the media and the public and to motivate students to pursue a science career.

In the first days of the Russian invasion, the Research, Development and Innovation Council, led by the Minister, issued a **statement on the situation in Ukraine**. In it, the Council called upon research support providers to take practical steps to enable the development of cooperation with Ukrainian research entities and to prepare joint projects with Ukrainian scientists. Based on that call, the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic released nearly CZK 4 million from the EEA and Norway Grants for expanding research teams with Ukrainian scientists.

Following that statement, the Minister's office in cooperation with MEYS launched a **website to support Ukrainian researchers** fleeing the war. The website [RESEARCHIN.CZ](https://researchin.cz), operated jointly with the Czech National Agency for International Education and Research and the Researchjobs.cz project and linked to the European platform Science for Ukraine, provides a simple coordinated overview of job offers in science and research in Ukrainian and English. In addition, the website provides a broader information support. The incoming researchers find there what to do directly after arriving in the country, how to obtain recognition of equivalence of their higher education degrees or what social services they can use.

Prague, 31 March 2022