

RDI Council discussed help to Ukrainian researchers, budget and operational programmes

On Friday, 25 March, the Research, Development and Innovation Council (the Council) had a meeting in the Straka Academy, chaired by Helena Langšádlová, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation. The participants spoke about current help to Ukrainian researchers, they discussed the budget for science, research and innovation, the methodology for evaluating research organisations and the planned operational programmes supporting research and innovation.

First, Václav Velčovský, a Deputy Minister of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS), presented a wide support for Ukrainian students and teachers, provided by MEYS, as well as tools to support Ukrainian scientists, organised in cooperation with the office of the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation. These include **launching the information website [RESEARCHIN.CZ](https://www.researchin.cz)**. *“We must not isolate the Ukrainian war refugees here. On the contrary, we must offer them a helping hand and give them an opportunity to get involved. After all, it can be a benefit for us too,”* said the Minister on the newly introduced support tool.

Another item on the agenda was a proposal for expenditure on research, development and innovation (R&D&I) for the next calendar year. The Council said it would prepare the **R&D&I budget proposal for 2023** based on the approved mid-term outlook at **CZK 39.32 bil.** The Council will return to this item in mid-April 2022.

The Council members also talked about the **experience to date with evaluation of science and research according to Methodology 2017+** and the still not sufficient **level of utilising its conclusions for effective development of the system**. After Methodology 2013 was terminated, the project support funding from EU sources was transferred to institutional support paid from the state budget. According to the Council Vice-Chair and Chair of the Research Result Evaluation Commission (KHV), Štěpán Jurajda, one of the important goals of the evaluation is obtaining background information for effective allocation of institutional support.

The Council Board will subsequently discuss a **proposal for recommendations and principles of allocating institutional support** for the development of research organisations, which will be presented at the April meeting.

The next items on the agenda concerned operational programmes. As regards the **Johannes Amos Comenius programme (OP JAC)**, the Council discussed the options of linking it to the **current societal challenges**, defined earlier by the RDI Council, such as research of disinformation processes, adaptation to climate change, energy crisis, public health research etc.

The Council members were acquainted with the state of preparations of the programme **Technologies and Applications for Competitiveness 2021-2027 (OP TAC)**. The European Commission is expected to approve OP TAC in April to May, the Ministry of Industry and Trade has already presented the schedule of calls for 2022.

After discussing the draft **SIGMA Programme of Support for Applied Research and Innovation**, the Council asks the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic to finance the programme to a maximum degree from unspent expenditure and other available sources.

The Programme's objectives will contribute to the priorities of the National RIS3 2021+ and their achievement should be evaluated in line with the applicable methodology.

In the next part of the meeting, the Council approved its position on the Analysis of Benefits and Impacts of Large Research Infrastructures of the Czech Republic and agreed to **extend the missions of science diplomats** in Israel, USA and for Southeast Asia until 2027.

Source: press release of the RDI Council - Office of the Government of the Czech Republic | 25.03.2022