

Government Council to Expand its International Advisory Body

On 22 March 2024, a regular session of the Research, Development, and Innovation Council (the Council), chaired by Minister Helena Langšádlová, was held at the Government's seat. Among other things, the Council members were briefed on the preparation of the state budget for science and research for 2025 and approved opinions on targeted support programmes from the MoH and the MIT, the MoA's concept, and the update of the Methodological Framework for the International Evaluation of Large Research Infrastructures. The Council recommended appointing Professor W. J. Ansorge as a new member of the International Advisory Body (International Board).

In the opening of the session, the Council Vice-Chair prof. Homola informed the others about the preparation of the state budget proposal for research, experimental development, and innovation for 2025, with a medium-term outlook for 2026 and 2027. An extraordinary Council meeting will be called to finalise the material.

During the session, reports from the evaluation results of research organisations by the Czech Academy of Sciences, MIT, MoI, MEYS, and higher education institutions were approved. The handling of objections by research organisations to the evaluation of selected results in Module 1 was also accepted. The Council also adopted opinions on the proposal to amend the Programme for Supporting Medical Applied Research and the Research, Development, and Innovation Programme "The Country for the Future" (under the MIT) and the final report on the implementation of the MoA's Research, Development, and Innovation Concept for 2016–2022. The Council members also agreed on the opinion to update the Methodological Framework for the International Evaluation of Large Research Infrastructures, submitted by the MEYS.

The Council recommended appointing **prof. RNDr. Wilhelm Jan Ansorge, Ph.D., dr.h.c.**, who recently served as a visiting scientist at EPFL-ETH in Lausanne, as a new member of the International Board.

"I am delighted that Professor Ansorge will join our International Advisory Body and complement the ranks of the existing distinguished international members. Professor Ansorge is an internationally recognised expert in the study of human genome organisation and has extensive experience from leading academic institutions and the corporate sector," highlighted Minister Langšádlová.

At the end of the session, the Council members received an interim report from the Czech Science Foundation on the groups of grant projects called "Standard Projects" and "Excellence in Basic Research EXPRO," while emphasising the need to adhere to the basic principles of preparing and evaluating research, development, and innovation programmes and groups of grant projects, and the Council's procedures in evaluating proposals for targeted support programmes and groups of grant projects.

Professor Wilhelm Jan Ansorge is a German-Czech scientist born in Czechoslovakia. He has developed new scientific instruments and software that have significantly advanced the analysis of genomes, genes, and proteins in cellular and molecular biology, as well as in medical fields. His laboratory pioneered the multidisciplinary development of automated technologies and

techniques, including genome sequencing and analysis. Professor Ansorge has also researched the magnetic properties of materials and worked on the development of semiconductor technologies and superconducting magnets.

After his tenure at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics at Charles University in Prague, Professor Ansorge worked at Texas Instruments in Dallas and at CERN in the Particle Physics Research Centre in Geneva. He then joined the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) in Heidelberg, where he served as the head of the Genomic Technologies Department for 25 years. At EMBL, he developed the fluorescent DNA sequencer in 1986, the first fully functional automated system capable of reliably sequencing extensive genomic DNA. This ground-breaking invention was of top international scientific calibre. He later designed a system whose principles are used to this day. In 1996, Professor Ansorge co-founded the biotechnology company Lion Biosciences.

Until recently, Professor Ansorge was a visiting scientist at EPFL-ETH in Lausanne and was a member of several European scientific advisory boards, where he evaluated scientific projects and institutions. He continues to engage in research and the development of innovative analytical technologies in genomics and medicine. He collaborates with the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) and Heidelberg University. Professor Ansorge is also a foreign member of the Academic Assembly of the Czech Academy of Science and an honorary doctor and visiting professor at Charles University.

Wilhelm Ansorge has co-authored over 250 publications, some of which are part of university curricula worldwide. He has obtained more than 30 patents in genomics and technologies, entered into licensing agreements, and developed commercial products with leading European companies.

The high professional level of Professor Ansorge's scientific work is characterised by his widely acclaimed publications within the international research community, as well as the broad application and commercial success of his methods for automated DNA sequencing and the analysis of cellular processes.

Source: R&D&I Council – Office of the Government of the Czech Republic | 22 March 2024