

The Research, Development and Innovation Council proposed Professor Tomáš Jungwirth for Czech Head 2024, the National Award of the Government

On 6 September 2024, Marek Ženíšek, minister for science, research and innovation, chaired a regular meeting of the Research, Development and Innovation Council at the Straka Academy. The councillors decided on the nomination for the National Award of the Government, the Czech Head. They received current information on the budget preparation and discussed the Economic Strategy of the Czech Republic.

In a secret ballot on the proposed nominations for the scientific award Czech Head 2024, the National Award of the Government, the Research, Development and Innovation Council (the Council) chose **Prof. Tomáš Jungwirth, Ph.D.** for his extraordinary contribution to the research of spintronics.

“The National Award of the Government is the highest accolade granted to Czech scientists and researchers for their lifelong successful and exceptional expert work with international reach. The nominations regularly represent the best experts in a broad range of disciplines, who are recognised on a worldwide scale,” said Minister Ženíšek on the resulting proposal for the award. The proposal will be submitted to the government for approval.

The minister informed the Council members about the current proposal for the Czech state budget act for 2025 with an outlook for 2026 and 2027. The next year’s allocation for science, research and innovation should be CZK 43.3 bil., i.e. a year-on-year increase by 8%. *“The negotiated amount represents the highest increase since 2017. I am satisfied that I managed to push through what I had planned,”* Minister Ženíšek commented on the current proposal for the science, research and innovation budget.

Then the Council agreed to **publishing selected results of evaluation at the national level** in Modules 1 and 2. The results will be available in a user-friendly form on the website <https://hodnoceni.rvvi.cz/>. Research organisations may respond to the published outputs within 30 days of the publication date.

In the second part of the meeting, the councillors were presented with the **Economic Strategy of the Czech Republic**, tabled by the Ministry of Industry and Trade. The strategy is a comprehensive and key document setting the direction of the economic policy of the government for the next 10 to 15 years and responds to challenges such as geopolitical changes, demographic development, climate crisis or technological transformation. The core ambitions of the Economic Strategy include a synergy of research, development and innovation mainly with the industry and energy sectors. The document replaces the current Innovation Strategy of the Czech Republic.

At the end of the meeting, the Council members were informed about the launch of **an updated version of the R&D&I Information System**, newly containing e.g. an interactive analyses section.

Professor Tomáš Jungwirth, Ph.D.

Professor Jungwirth is an important personality of the Czech and world science and is known for his exceptional abilities to interconnect experimental and theoretical physics research with detailed knowledge of information technologies. With his colleagues from the Institute of Physics of the Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS) and Charles University, he created one of the most important world centres for the research of **spintronics**.

Thanks to his contribution, the research of spintronics based on **antiferromagnets** has been included in international roadmaps of research and development in future information technologies, and he received the prestigious ERC Advanced Grant in this area. The scientific efforts of Prof. Jungwirth's team led to the discovery of **altermagnetism** (enabling him to obtain his second ERC Advanced Grant).

He has published many scientific works on this topic internationally with his co-researchers and he confirmed the existence of altermagnetism experimentally. The discovery drew extraordinary attention not only in the scientific community, articles on the discovery were published in the Science, Nature, Science News or The Economist.

As part of a national expert group, Tomáš Jungwirth helps young scientists from Czech research organisations with preparing applications to competitions for ERC grants. He left a distinct mark also in the science policy when he worked in the Research, Development and Innovation Council (2011-2018), in the Research Board of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic and in the Scientific Council of the European Research Council. As a sought-after science popularizer, he is invited regularly to public lectures, to podcasts on science, many domestic and foreign media have published his interviews and science-popularizing articles. During his career, Tomáš Jungwirth published 260 articles in scientific journals, of that 40 within the family of the Science/Nature journals (40,000 citations).

Since 2007, Tomáš Jungwirth has headed the Spintronics and Nanoelectronics Unit of the Institute of Physics of the CAS. He serves as professor at the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Nottingham in the UK.

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