

The Research, Development and Innovation Council will propose to the Government to appoint Prof. Jirsa as the new president of the Grant Agency

On 25 October 2024, Science, Research and Innovation Minister Marek Ženíšek chaired a regular meeting of the Research, Development and Innovation Council at the Straka Academy. High on the agenda were approval of the opinion on the proposed change in the SIGMA programme or elections to the bodies of the Technology Agency and the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic.

Members of the Research, Development and Innovation Council (the Council) discussed and approved the Council's opinion on the proposal of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TA CR) on a **change in the SIGMA programme supporting applied research and innovation**. The programme will be prolonged by 6 years up to 2035 and it will newly support projects of centres of competence. The SIGMA programme follows the ZETA, ETA, GAMA 2 and DELTA 2 programmes and also includes the implementation of Union instruments. The themes of contests in the area of support of long-term technological projects will be approved by the Council.

The Council elected members of the bodies of TA CR and the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (GA CR) by secret ballot. That way, they chose new members of the TA CR research board and the GA CR scientific advisory board and the presidium, but also a new president of GA CR. As Prof. Petr Baldrian is ending his second term in office, the Council will **propose to the Government to appoint Prof. Milan Jirsa as the new president of GA CR**.

“The appointment of Prof. Jirsa to lead the Grant Agency is great news. Given his deep knowledge and experience in biomedicine, his long-term engagement in managing scientific projects and his international achievements I have no doubt that GA CR will continue successfully in its mission to support top research and innovations that take Czech science to the global level. I believe that his leadership will give a new impetus to the grant system and will enable further talented scientists to develop their ideas,” said Minister Ženíšek on the result of the election.

The Council members also discussed an activity report of the TA CR research board and an activity report of the GA CR scientific advisory board, and approved three new members for the International Supervisory and Advisory Board (ISAB, International Board).

“In the meeting, we also approved expanding the International Board with three new members, Dr David Kolman, Prof. Hynek Wichterle and Dr Klára Jelínková, vice-president of the Harvard University. This advisory board is a great asset for us as it includes experts from various fields of research, working abroad. It gives us a unique view on how Czechia can better innovate and develop its scientific capacities, and I plan to deepen the cooperation with those experts further,” added Minister Marek Ženíšek.

Professor Milan Jirsa

Professor Jirsa is a distinguished expert in biomedicine research, specialising in genetics of liver diseases, with extensive scientific experience as well as experience with the management of projects and grants. Prof. Jirsa leads the Laboratory of Experimental Hepatology and serves as deputy director of the Experimental Medicine Centre under the Institute for Clinical and Experimental Medicine (IKEM), which he significantly helped to build. Since November 2021, Prof. Jirsa has been a member of the GA CR presidium, covering medical and biological sciences. His work explaining the cause of several genetic diseases has been rewarded by the Czech Hepatological Society under the Czech Medical Association, by an honorary membership in the Czech Clinical Biochemistry Society and by the international Bares Award.

His international activities include membership in the scientific board of the Dutch foundation De Crigler-Najjar Stichting that finances the research of hereditary jaundices. In Charles University, Prof. Jirsa works as a teacher, trainer and member of the medical field commission for biochemistry and pathobiochemistry.

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