

The Research, Development and Innovation Council has a new 1st vice-chair, the biophysicist Tomáš Polívka

On 22 November 2024, Science, Research and Innovation Minister Marek Ženíšek chaired a regular meeting of the Research, Development and Innovation Council at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. The Council approved the Methodology 2017+ Update and the call for nominations for the Government Award for Gifted Students. The expert and advisory body of the Government selected new members of its presidium by secret ballot.

At the beginning of the meeting, Minister Ženíšek handed over the appointment letters. In its resolution of 13 November 2024, the Government appointed the current members of the Research, Development and Innovation Council (the Council) Dr Marián Hajdúch, Ph.D., and Jiří Holoubek, FEng., for their second term in office. According to the same government resolution, the new members of the Council are Prof. Martin Fusek, Prof. František Vácha, and Prof. Jan Váně, starting their term on 16 November.

“I am pleased that the Government appointed three new members to the Council on my proposal. Professor Fusek is an acknowledged scientist of the Czech Academy of Sciences and its Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry, and is a leading expert in the transfer of research results into practice. Professor Vácha brings the experience of his 30-year work in the Academy of Sciences and Professor Váně ties his scientific experience with experience in academic management. All three new members understand very well what the system of science and research needs and what challenges it faces,” said Minister Ženíšek upon appointing the new members.

“I would like to express my acknowledgment for the work done to Prof. Jiří Homola, Dr Ilona Müllerová and Josef Švejda who are leaving the Council, I appreciated their contribution in a personal meeting with them. At the same time, I am looking forward to continuing the cooperation with Mr Švejda in his new role of ministerial advisor on semiconductors,” added the minister.

Following the government resolution of 13 November 2024, **Dr Adéla Gjuričová** was elected by secret ballot as a new vice-chair of the Council. Next, **Prof. Tomáš Polívka**, acting as a member of the presidium so far, was elected as the 1st vice-chair of the Council.

“I welcome the Council’s approval of appointing Professor Polívka as the first vice-chair of the Council upon my proposal. Professor Polívka has long-term experience in research and has long been engaged in the evaluation system, which I consider a priority. I appreciate his ability to see things in perspective and his effort to develop the system as a whole. I look forward to cooperating with Dr Gjuričová from the Czech Academy of Sciences, who has replaced him in the post of a vice-chair,” said Minister Marek Ženíšek.

The secret ballot was also used to elect a new chair of the Bioethical Commission. The new chair is Dr Marián Hajdúch.

The Council discussed and approved the Programme Supporting the Establishment and Cultivation of Systemic Conditions for the Development of Excellence, submitted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Its goal is to develop the institutional background of public higher education institutions in order to strengthen and further cultivate the excellence

of scientific teams successful in EU framework programmes and similar international programmes supporting research, development and innovation.

One of the key outputs of the meeting was the approval of the updated **Methodology for Evaluating Research Organisations (Methodology 2025+)**, replacing the current Methodology 2017+. The aim of the document is to anchor the progress to date, to describe the processes in more detail and more clearly in the relevant sections, and to implement new elements of evaluation.

"I believe that Methodology 2025+ will better motivate research organisations to deliver excellent results and will encourage knowledge transfer that it explicitly mentions. In this regard, it is very important that the evaluation methodology takes better account of the specificities of applied research. Moreover, the newly set methodology enhances transparency at all levels of evaluation and reduces administrative burden. I am convinced that the approved version of the methodology meets the main requirements of the system and I appreciate the suggestions of all stakeholders who took part in its shaping. I want to submit it to the Government at the beginning of next year," added Ministr Ženíšek.

The Council approved the Call for Nominations for the 2024 Government Award for Gifted Students, to be published on the Council website <https://vyzkum.gov.cz>.

At the end of the meeting, the councillors were informed by Minister Ženíšek about the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) that enables employees to have a share in their company's profit and growth. The option programmes (ESOPs) are a popular tool mainly in technological start-ups and, in general, they help to increase international competitiveness of young innovative Czech firms or to attract experienced workers from abroad.

Minister Marek Ženíšek wants to actively promote the anchoring of the Employee Stock Ownership Plan in the Czech legal system. The support of knowledge transfer, start-ups and the innovation environment belongs to the core agenda of the science, research and innovation minister and of the Council.

Professor Tomáš Polívka, Ph.D.

1st Vice-Chair of the Research, Development and Innovation Council

Tomáš Polívka is a biophysics professor at the Faculty of Science of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice. He heads the laboratories of ultrafast spectroscopy where he leads research studying primary photochemical reactions in photosynthesis. After completing his doctoral degree at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University, he worked at the Lund University, Sweden, in the period 1997-2005. Since 2005, Tomáš Polívka has been employed at the University of South Bohemia where he served as vice president for science and research in the years 2011-2020. Almost from the start of his career in the Czech Republic, he has been engaged in evaluating science and research. He was a member of expert panels and commissions in the national projects Methodology, Methodology 2013-2016 and Methodology 2017+.

From 2018, Tomáš Polívka served as a member of the Commission for Evaluating Research Organisations and Completed Programmes, and he has chaired the Commission since 2022. In 2021, he was appointed the lead coordinator of evaluation according to Methodology 2017+.

Dr Adéla Gjuričová, Ph.D.

Vice-chair of the Research, Development and Innovation Council

Adéla Gjuričová graduated from the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. Since 2023, she has been the director of the Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences, where she led many projects on political and social history of late state socialism and post-communist transformation. She lectures externally in the Institute of International Studies under the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University.

Adéla Gjuričová is a member of the executive committee and coordinator of the European Information and Research Network on Parliamentary History (EuParl.net), a member of the board of trustees in Collegium Carolinum in Munich, of editorial boards of journals, and of other professional societies.

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