

# Research, Development and Innovation Council Nominates Laureates for the Government Award for Gifted Students

On 28 March 2025, another regular session of the Research, Development and Innovation Council (the Council), chaired by Minister for Science, Research and Innovation Marek Ženíšek, took place at the Straka Academy. Among other items, Council members discussed the position on the IMPAKT 2 security research development programme and approved the draft state budget expenditure for science and research for 2026+, which is intended for interdepartmental consultation. As a result of a secret ballot, three laureates were nominated for the Government Award for Gifted Students. The Council also proposed the appointment of a new member to its International Scientific Advisory Board.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Council approved its position on the draft programme **Strategic Support for the Development of Security Research in the Czech Republic** (IMPAKT 2). The primary goal of the programme is to support security research with an emphasis on internationalisation, the development of human resources and capacity building through Centres of Cooperation.

The Council then approved the Draft State Budget Expenditure of the Czech Republic for Research, Experimental Development and Innovation for 2026, with a medium-term outlook for 2027–2028 and a long-term outlook up to 2032. This draft will now be submitted for inter-ministerial comment procedure. The total proposed funding for 2026 amounts to CZK 46.67 billion, which is CZK 3.36 billion more than the expenditure approved for 2025.

A key item on the agenda was the selection of candidates for the **Government Award for Gifted Students for 2024**. Once again, the open call yielded a large number of high-quality nominations. From a total of 57 applications, the Council members proposed the following laureates: **Zuzana Zelenková** in the category secondary school and tertiary vocational school student; **Bc. Tereza Patlejchová** in the category bachelor's or master's degree programme student; and **Mgr. Daniel Pluskal** in the category doctoral degree programme student. The proposal will now be submitted to the government for discussion.

*“The Government Award for Gifted Students is not only a recognition of the exceptional achievements of early-career researchers, but also a strong source of motivation for young people considering a career in science. The nearly 60 nominations this year reflect the high calibre, talent and determination of the emerging generation of scientists. I believe the award will support the laureates in their professional development and at the same time inspire other students to have the courage to bring forward new ideas and push the boundaries of knowledge,”* said Minister Ženíšek on the significance of the award.

Following a secret ballot, the Council members then proposed to the Chair the appointment of **Prof. Jannette Carey** of Princeton University (USA) as a new member of the Council's International Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB). The ISAB, composed of internationally recognised experts, has provided independent expert opinions to the Council since 2017 on selected strategic documents and key topics under discussion.

In the next part of the meeting, the Council approved the text of the Call for Proposals for Candidates for Three Members of the Presidium of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic. The call will be published as usual on the website [vyzkum.gov.cz](https://vyzkum.gov.cz).

The Council members were also acquainted with the document Principles for the Preparation and Evaluation of Targeted Support Programmes for Research, Development and Innovation, and Groups of Grant Projects and Their Impacts. In addition, they were presented with the outcomes of the **Policy Support Facility** project, which serves as a basis for discussion on supporting the transfer of knowledge into practice. The recommendations were presented on 18 March 2025 at the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS) with the participation of representatives from the European Commission, independent European experts, and members of the Czech research community.

The project, carried out in cooperation with the European Commission, focused on more effective knowledge transfer and the utilisation of research results. The set of specific measures includes the introduction of a systemic approach, clearer definition of roles and responsibilities of individual stakeholders, the development of a national strategy or a register of technology transfer offices, and the integration of this agenda into the institutional funding of research organisations. Further recommendations address adjustments to evaluation mechanisms, support for regional innovation structures, and strengthening the legislative framework with the aim of linking research with practice and enhancing the innovation ecosystem in the Czech Republic.

#### **Prof. Jannette Carey (ISAB)**

Jannette Carey is a Professor of Chemistry and Molecular Biology at Princeton University in New Jersey, USA. She serves as a scientific advisor to American and global science and technology initiatives, is a member of several advisory and grant review panels, and is an editor of the scientific journal *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta*. Professor Carey also has a broad understanding of the functioning of science and research institutions in the Czech Republic. She regularly lectures and organises summer schools for international students at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, in cooperation with the Institute of Microbiology of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

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