

The Government Research, Development and Innovation Council is composed of respected personalities. Today it discussed its future plans and elected its vice-chairs

On Friday, 30 January 2026, the Research, Development and Innovation Council, chaired by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and Trade Karel Havlíček, met for its first session this year. The Council welcomed the newly appointed members and elected its Board. At their session at the Straka Academy, the Council members also nominated a new chairman of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic and members of the Board of the Czech Science Foundation. The nominations will be submitted to the Government for consideration.

Following the Government resolution of 26 January 2026, the new members of the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Council are the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports **Robert Plaga**, the President of the Czech Academy of Sciences **Radomír Pánek**, the President of the Association of Research Organisations **Libor Kraus** and the President of the Scientific Council of the CAS **Pavel Baran**. Plaga, Pánek and Kraus were also elected, by secret ballot, vice-chairs of the RDI Council today. The First Vice-Chair position has not yet been filled.

"I want the R&D&I Council to hold a strong position, to have momentum, and to be truly influential. It has what it takes, as it is composed of respected figures from the Academy of Sciences, academia, and the business community," stated **Karel Havlíček**, Chairman of the Research, Development and Innovation Council, adding: *"We have a massive opportunity to make a difference. We can deliver on things that have long been discussed, and I will not hesitate to push forward with whatever the Council agrees upon."*

At the beginning of the session, the RDI Council members observed a minute of silence in memory of the late **Jiří Witzany**, rector emeritus of CTU, who served on the RDI Council in 2016-2020. Karel Havlíček then briefed the participants on the priorities and opportunities for Czech science, research, and innovation as outlined in the Government's Policy Statement.

*"The Prime Minister will certainly attend some of our sessions; he places great emphasis on new technologies, including artificial intelligence. The Government Commissioner for AI, **Lukáš Kačena**, is present at today's session; these fields are well-known to us—we also have a Government Commissioner for Digitisation,"* Vice-Prime Minister Karel Havlíček informed the Council.

Today, the RDI Council unanimously agreed to nominate **Petr Sklenička** to the Government as the new Chairman of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TA CR). He is a highly regarded expert who, among other roles, served two terms as the Rector of the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague.

"At the moment, the Czech research environment may be viewed as being characterised by certain timidity; there is a prevailing sense that the research being conducted lacks boldness. It might be a matter of mindset, or perhaps the agency is more focused on ticking off deliverables rather than on monitoring the actual impact of the projects. We want to motivate the promoters and authors to leverage the results effectively," said Petr Sklenička adding: *"It is important to use the multiplier effect so that the invested funds yield the highest possible returns. I also regard as crucial the issues of cooperation with top countries and linking research with the transformation and modernisation of Czech industry."*

The members of the RDI Council agreed to propose to the Government that it appoint **Martin Hartl**, who is currently the Vice-Chairman of the Czech Science Foundation (GA CR) for technical sciences, as a member of the Board of the GA CR for a second term. In addition, the Council members proposed to the Council Chair Havlíček that he appoint new members for the 11 FORD expert panels that are replenished annually.

They also approved, among other things, minutes from the meetings that discussed the results of the evaluation of research organisations with the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which will be published on <https://hodnoceni.rvvi.cz>. Further, the Council approved a report on its activities in 2025, which it will submit to the government.

Karel Havlíček also thanked **Vladimír Mařík**, who had completed his mandate after 8 years, for his work on the RDI Council. He said that the Council is aware of his importance for Czech research and will be happy to cooperate with him in the future.

Source: RDI Council - Office of the Government of the Czech Republic | 30. 1. 2026