**Závěry z jednání Mezinárodního poradního orgánu a Rady dne 9. října 2023**

V návaznosti na proběhlé jednání Rady pro výzkum, vývoj a inovace (dále jen “Rada”) a mezinárodního poradníoho orgánu Rady (dále jen “ISAB”), které se uskutečnilo dne 9. října 2023 v Hrzánském paláci, je Radě předloženo shrnutí jednání zpracované předsedou ISAB prof. Michlem (odsouhlaseno členy ISAB, Radě předkládá zpravodaj prof. Homola).

**“The following is a brief summary of the ISAB meeting held on October 9, 2023 at Hrzansky palace.**

1. In a brief private session attended only by ISAB members and our reporter, Dr. Homola, we discussed matters related to the activities of the Panel.
2. Dr. Homola welcomed the ISAB members and excused the minister, Ms. Langsadlova, who had to attend governmental duties, and could make herself available only for a limited time in the afternoon. Therefore, a report on the current situation in Czech science policy was presented by Dr. Homola. It covered several issues: (i) the budget, (ii) the new act on Research, Development, and Transfer of Knowledge that is under development, (iii) the Amednment to the law dealing with Public Research Organizations, (iv) the Working Group People in Science, (v) the Working Group Transfer of Technology and Knowledge, (vi) the Methodology for Evaluating Research Organizations, and (vii) National Priorities in Oriented Research. The presentation was followed by a lively discussion. The report was more optimistic than many of us had feared, because it now appears likely that the budget for science will be the same as last year. Because of inflation, this is still far from ideal, but previous proposals to reduce the budget would have had disastrous consequences. Substantial reduction now appears unlikely. Even so, in terms of actual purchasing power or ratio to GDPR, the budget for research continues to decrease. For example, The Czech Science Foundation (hereinafter „GACR“) will have lost about 1/4 of its budget over the last five years, and others are in a similar situation.
3. An open and very useful discussion with Dr. Baldrian, who now leads GACR after the passing of Dr. Koca, dealt with the fate of the recommendations that the ISAB has made for the operation of GACR over the years. It was satisfactory to see that most of them have been implemented and that this agency, which always was the best among the Czech support providers, is now operating much better than a decade ago. One of the remaining problems is the relation between the Scientific Board and the Presidium, which is not clearly defined in the present law but hopefully will be in the act that is currently under development. The ISAB was told that it will have an opportunity to provide comments on the newly proposed act. It was noted that all international members of the Scientific Board of GACR have now left, which is highly undesirable. Many other matters were discussed, such as (i) choice of nominees for the Scientific Board, which are then approved or rejected by the RVVI, where the ISAB recommended that the leadership of GACR be allowed to propose nominees, (ii) the current need for approval by both the current and the future institution for transfer of a grant in cases where the Principal Investigator is moving (the latter should be enough), (iii) providing information to Principal Investigators whose proposals have been rejected in the first round as soon as it is available, and others. Dr. Baldrian has promised to provide ISAB with a description of the current operating procedures, which will allow ISAB to provide further suggestions based on the current practices instead of those that prevailed a decade ago.
4. A similar discussion of the effect of recommendations that the ISAB provided on the activities of Agency for Medical Research of the Czech Republic (hereinafter „AZV“) suffered from the absence of the AZV director Dr. Slaby, the person who replaced Dr. Ryska after the latter passed away. A detailed report on the situation was instead provided by ISAB member Dr. Jiricny, who had met with Dr. Slaby in person. He presented a very optimistic picture of advances that have already been made in the implementation of the recommendations made by the ISAB. If the process proceeds as planned, most if not all of ISAB recommendations will be accepted. Dr. Slaby will be asked to provide the ISAB with a similar description of the current operating procedures in AZV as Dr. Baldrian will do for GACR.
5. Several additional matters were discussed, e.g., internationalization. ISAB members were quite critical of the requirement by some support providers that research proposals have to be written in Czech, which runs counter the efforts to bring scientists from abroad to the country, and prevents the use of international reviewers. The ISAB members also expressed a desire to obtain more specific guidance from the RVVI concerning the panel’s tasks. For instance, should ISAB take a look at the activities of additional funding agencies (TACR? MSMT?) after what promises to be a considerable success with GACR and AZV?

1. Matters internal to the ISAB were also brought up. It was agreed that the present hybrid mode of meetings is much less effective than in-person meetings that we used to have before the pandemic. In future meetings, we shall return to in-person meetings. It was proposed that ISAB should meet twice a year. We also considered whether it might be possible to adopt the ERC practice of reimbursing the cost of business class travel for those participants whose flights take longer that four hours.
2. Overall, the mood of the meeting was upbeat and the ISAB members felt that their years-long efforts are bringing fruits.“