

The government council has approved the 2017+ Methodology for evaluating universities and supported the development of a national incubator network

Under the leadership of prime minister Andrej Babiš, the government's Council for Research, Development and Innovation (the Council) met at the Straka Academy on Friday 28 June 2019 for its latest regular session. The key items on the agenda included a debate on the implementation procedure of the Innovation Strategy of the CR 2019–2030 and the approval of the Research Evaluation Methodology 2017+ in the universities segment. The prime minister and deputy prime minister Havlíček informed the Council members about the successes achieved at the European Forum for Research, Development and Innovation held in Dresden in the last week of June.

“We are rolling out the Innovation Strategy on a truly broad front. By September, a concept will be drawn up for the development of a national network of incubators to support and develop the start-up environment in specific regions and districts. Here we will present how the incubators will be built and developed on three levels: incubators targeting the general incubation and development of entrepreneurship; specialist, often sector-specific incubators; and, thirdly, incubators focusing on R&D excellence at universities and research organisations,” deputy prime minister Havlíček commented on one of the key themes being addressed by guarantors of the Innovation Strategy pillars at a regular meeting before the Council session proper.



On 28 June 2019, deputy prime minister Karel Havlíček and 1st deputy president of the Council Petr Dvořák informed about the results of the meeting.

Other primary tasks of the team of guarantors mentioned by the deputy prime minister included the preparation of an action plan for development of the 5G network for the years 2020–

2030. 5G brings the potential for entirely new applications, e.g. in the fields of Industry 4.0, autonomous driving, artificial intelligence, public safety, virtual reality and more. For that reason, supporting investments in 5G technologies R&D in all these areas will be part of the plan. The plan will also envisage that at least one Czech city will have 5G coverage in 2020, making it possible to test and demonstrate a wide range of 5G applications there.

By 2025, the 5G network should cover all urban areas and the main roads and railway lines. Many specific steps are already being taken towards this: for example, talks with the finance minister of Bavaria have led to plans for 5G coverage for the Prague – Munich motorway corridor.

Following the negotiations by prime minister Babiš and deputy prime minister Havlíček at the European Forum for Science, Research and Innovation in Dresden, one of the biggest research gatherings in Europe, the deputy prime minister stressed the launch of the **first branch of the pre-eminent Europea Fraunhofer Institute in the Czech Republic**. In collaboration with the Academy of Sciences, a Fraunhofer Centre focusing on the application of artificial intelligence for materials engineering will be trialled at VSB – Technical University of Ostrava.

Another successful step in collaboration with Germany is the preparation of a Czech-Saxony innovation platform focusing on smart agriculture, which should facilitate the practical application of state-of-the-art agricultural technologies. *“We want to offer Czech farmers the latest trends and a whole series of interesting solutions they know how to put to good use in Saxony, including agri-bots, drones and so on,”* Karel Havlíček explained. The innovation platform should be presented at the end of August by the minister president of Saxony Michael Kretschmer together with the Czech agriculture minister and deputy prime minister for the economy.

After dealing with some relevant comments, the Council approved a material entitled **Methodology for Evaluating Research Organisations in the Universities Segment**. According to Petr Dvořák, 1st Vice-Chairman of the Council, this marks the start of an extensive process with a clear timetable that will culminate in the first round of complete evaluation using the 2017+ Methodology in autumn next year.

The ongoing process of approving two new instruments, specifically **programmes to support young and promising scientists** (POSTDOC, JUNIOR STAR), is another important milestone, according to Dvořák. These programmes will be launched next year via the Czech Science Foundation. At the prime minister’s instigation, the Council decided at its Friday meeting to set up its **new advisory body, the Commission on Climate Issues**. The Commission will be composed of leading experts and should provide the highest-quality independent analysis.

Source: press release of the RD&I Council and of the Office of the Government | 1. 7. 2019