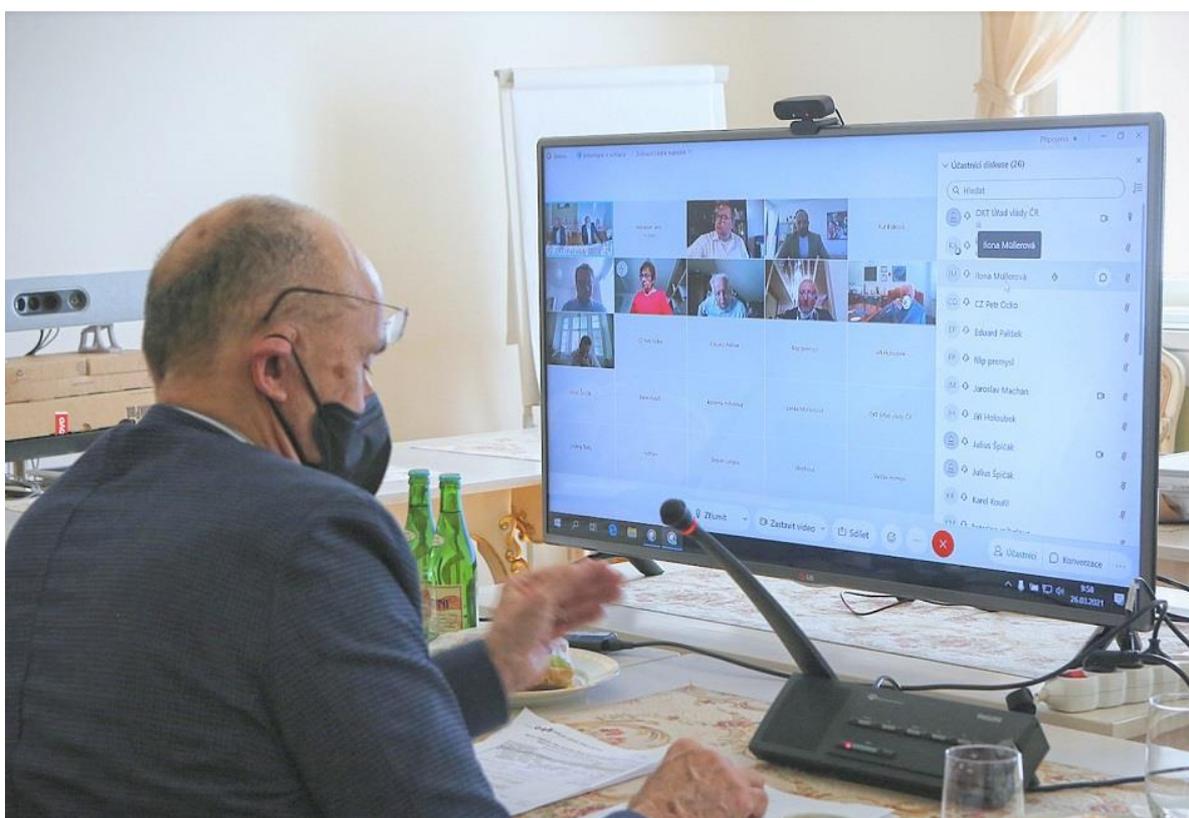


Government Council wants to increase science budget for 2022

The second March session of the Research, Develop and Innovation Council (the Council) took place 26 March 2021 in the form of a video conference. The Council members discussed support for research and development under the National Recovery Plan, preparing the draft state budget expenditure for science for next year, preparations for the OP JAK operational programme and the "junior grants" to support excellent young scientists.



*From a videoconference meeting on 26 March 2021 of the RD&I Council.
Photo: Office of the Government of the Czech Republic*

The first item of the session was current information on **support for science and research under the National Recovery Plan**, which is in the final stages of preparations. The plan is to submit it to the European Commission in April of this year. Council members were acquainted in detail with the initial version of the new draft Programme for Supporting Excellent Research in Priority Areas of Public Interest in Healthcare on the part of the Ministry of Education (MEYS).

The Council continued with talks on preparing the **draft state budget expenditure for research, development and innovation for 2022** with an outlook to 2023 and 2024. The Council Presidium is now launching consultations with the Ministry of Finance on increasing the research and development expenditure above and beyond the already approved medium-term outlooks for the given period.

"The draft medium-term budget outlook for 2022 of CZK 38 billion is not sufficient. The amount is a year-on-year increase of 500 million, but does not cover the basic needs in this area. The

justified additional demands are to ensure for example stable financing of development of research institutions, co-financing of the prepared Jan Amos Komenský operational programme, including targeted support provided by the Technological and Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, the Czech Health Research Council and under the Ministry of Culture budget heading. We also can't forget ministerial support of applied industrial research," said Council First Vice Chair Pavel Baran on the conditions for budget talks.

At the same time, the Council turned to the government with a request for as wide as possible activation and involvement of all available public resources for supporting science and research with regard to their importance and strategic impact on the situation of the current pandemic. Without robust support for high quality research, the risks and threats of the contemporary world cannot be successfully faced.

The Council was acquainted with the state of **preparations for the Jan Amos Komenský operational programme (OP JAK)** and its basic parameters and asked the MEYS to provide detailed information on the thematic focus and structure of the programme for the April session.

Under the regular item on **Implementation of the 2017+ Evaluation Methodology**, the Council recommended, after a secret ballot, that its chair add members to the expert panels (Natural Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Medical and Health Sciences and Social Sciences) so that new evaluation could continue at the national level for the fourth year according to the timeline.

At the same time, the results of the "ranking" of all research organisations after three years of evaluation were approved. The Council members also took up the draft of a User's Guide for research organisations, and in connection with this approved the output of the working group for the evaluation of applied research.

The Council also approved its opinion on the materials Perspectives for development of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic within the Czech research, development and innovation system 2021-2025 and the Draft amendments to the group of grant projects for the support of excellent young scientists (the "junior grants"). Both materials were recommended for inter-ministerial comments proceedings.

The draft changes in the group of junior grants from the Grant Agency deal with the possibility of suspending projects due to a researcher going on maternity or parental leave, or extending a project's duration for 6 months in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main objective of the submitted Technology Agency's Development Perspectives is for the agency to help implement the policies defined at the national and European level. The Council particularly assesses the compliance between the Perspectives and the National RDI Policy 2021+ and Act on Support for Research, Experimental Development and Innovation. The concept also takes into account potential responses to unexpected events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced both the public and private sector to previously unforeseeable changes and innovations.

At its March session, the Council elected from among its ranks rapporteurs for specific agendas.

Doc. Marián Hajdúch was named rapporteur for open data/open science and also chair of the newly formed Working Group for Formulating the Needs of Research in the Publishing and Use of Research Data. **Prof. Štěpán Jurajda** was named Council rapporteur for conceptual and analytic support of RDI.

In closing, the Council members proposed that their chair name eleven of the 14 current members of the Council's International Advisory Panel for another term. These are **prof. Dr. Josef Jiříčný, prof. Jakub Kastl, Ph.D., doc. Dr. Vladislav Kolařík, Dr. Ing. Reinhard Mauermann, prof. Josef Michl, Ph.D., M.D., Karel Pacák, Ph.D., D.Sc., Dr. Bohdan Pomahač, M.D. associate professor, prof. JUDr. Jiří Přibáň, DrSc., prof. Pier Luigi Sacco,**

prof. Dalibor Sameš a **prof. Ding-Ming Wang**. Aside from Jan Konvalinka, **prof. Václav Hořejší** was also named rapporteur for the activities of the International Council

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