

Press Report of the ASCR on big projects proposed as “Centers of Excellence” to the Operational Programme of *Research and Development for Innovations*.

With regard to the proliferating rumours about preparation of projects proposed to priority axis 1 - “European Centers of Excellence” - within the Operational Programme of *Research and Development for Innovations* the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic declares that it has always supported and is ready and willing, despite anticipated budget restrictions, to provide further support for projects, the aim of which is construction of high quality research infrastructures in the Czech Republic.

Although project of the Central European Synchrotron Laboratory (CESLAB) had to be suspended for financial reasons, the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in co-operation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, in particular with respect to all-society significance of projects proposed, will focus its attention in the next time period on further key projects:

ELI (Extreme Light Infrastructure) – is a project of exawatt-class laser delivering extremely bright pulses at high repetition rate, 100 times more powerful than the state-of-the-art. This laser will become a core of the application center for development of new materials, hadron therapy, compact ultra-intensive sources of radiation and particles and will serve, as well, for basic research in quantum and relativistic physics. Application for hosting ELI in the Czech Republic has been submitted by Institute of Physics of the ASCR in September 2008. This initiative is supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and broad range of principal national universities, research institutes and national private enterprises.

BIOCEV – in this project the Academy of Sciences together with the Charles University, as two leading research institutions of the Czech Republic, have combined their research and human potential in order to build-up and operate international Center of Excellence at the cutting-edge Biotechnology and Biomedicine Research. This Center is supposed to reach all-European significance by its top level research activities. Once being constructed, it will be fully integrated into the European Research Area and will enable highly desirable development of superior biotechnological industry in the Czech Republic.

The above mentioned projects are in perfect accord with all main objectives of priority axis 1 - “European Centers of Excellence”. Their realization will enable not only further development of effective collaboration between universities and research institutes, but simultaneously will offer also the possibility for establishment of small and medium enterprises already in context with the construction phase of infrastructures and subsequently in relation to the solved research projects. No less important is the fact that programmes of basic and applied research in these centers will contribute to the training of new generation of researchers and technology specialists. New infrastructures will be automatically integrated into the European Research Area and will provide platform for the cutting-edge basic research and for co-operation with application sphere in the field of the most up-to-date technologies.