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Berlin, August 12th, 2009

Ref. Our concerns about the fate of the fundamental research in the Czech Republic

Dear Sir or Madam

We have had a very fruitful and important collaboration with the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic for a long time. Some examples are the common recently finalized European Union project "IMAGES" and a series of projects in the frame of the large scale International Continental Drilling Program (ICDP) which we are applying for and are planning further for the next future (all with the Institute of Geophysics of the Academy of Sciences in Prague). This common research provides interesting and internationally recognized results. In addition, one should not forget world-class workshops and conferences organized by the Academy of Science. For example, the regular workshop on seismic waves in laterally inhomogeneous media organized by the Institute of Geophysics attracts best experts on the field around the world. This workshop is a must for many seismologists.

Recently we have learned that there are plans to cut the funding of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic by more than a half over the next three years. We are gravely concerned about such plans. If realized, such severe cuts may endanger the very existence of one of the pillars of the Czech science and research.

Important results have been obtained by this institution and further achievements can be expected as there is a number of world-class scientists in the Academy. In addition, the success of the Academy provides motivation for young people to choose careers in science and research.

The severe restriction of the activities of the Academy of Sciences would run

against the acknowledged fact that sustained long-term expansion of the economy is impossible without strong science and research.

We are firmly convinced that further development of the Academy of Sciences is in the best interests of the Czech Republic. We urge the government to reconsider the planned cuts and keep the funding of the Academy of Sciences at the level that will make this development possible.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Shapiro". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Prof. Dr. Serge A. Shapiro
Department of Geophysics