

**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON****SCHOOL OF SLAVONIC AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES**

As an international group of scholars with a particular interest in Czech research, we have been disquieted by the way that budget cuts to the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (AVČR) rather than informed academic planning are altering fundamentally the academic landscape in the country. While recognizing that financial constraints are real (as academic institutions across the world are currently experiencing) and that institutional re-structuring of some sort might be necessary and even potentially constructive, we are concerned that the proposed changes to the AVČR have neither emerged from open discussion with the parties involved nor reflect any broader vision for maintaining or raising the standards of academic research. We strongly believe that without a comprehensive plan either to support AVČR activities or to draw on AVČR scholars and resources to create conditions for increasing the research capacity of relevant departments at major Czech universities, the planned changes are likely to diminish Czech research and reduce its international impact.

We are particularly concerned that wise, informed decisions be taken regarding humanities research and especially research relating to Czech language, literature, history, and culture, where clearly Czech researchers should provide an international focal point for researchers across the world. In our view they can only do so if sustained by an excellent, broad-based humanities research environment. We would encourage and be happy to contribute to a widespread, open consultation process examining the current and future shape of Czech humanities teaching and research. We greatly regret that no such process has preceded or informed the current proposals, and that consequently no strategy for the protection and improvement of Czech humanities teaching and research is in place.

5 August 2009

Jonathan Bolton, Harvard University (U.S.A.)
Peter Bugge, Aarhus University (Denmark)
Rajendra Chitnis, University of Bristol (U.K.)
Mark Cornwall, University of Southampton (U.K.)
Robert Evans, University of Oxford (U.K.)
Marek Nekula, University of Regensburg (Germany)
Robert Pynsent, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London (U.K.)
David Short, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London (U.K.)
Jindřich Toman, University of Michigan (U.S.A.)
Peter Zusi, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London (U.K.)

