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August 17th, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

We have recently learned of the dramatic changes in research funding policy proposed by the Research and Development Council of the Czech Republic, reducing the institutional budget of the Academy by an unprecedented 50% over three years. As the Declaration of the Academic Assembly of the Academy of Sciences of Czech Republic (June 30th, 2009) emphasizes, this proposal threatens the very core of high-quality, independent academic research in the Czech Republic. Great harm would be done not only to the future of Czech academic research; a serious loss would be incurred by the international community of scientists collaborating with the first-rate researchers at the ASCR.

At the *Centre for the Study of Mind in Nature* (a Centre of Excellence funded by the Research Council of Norway and the University of Oslo), several of our core members have longstanding connections with the Institute of Philosophy at the ASCR. The Institute of Philosophy has for more than two decades played a critical part in the extremely productive encounter between Continental European, Scandinavian, and Anglo-American philosophical communities that has been pivotal for recent developments in contemporary philosophy across Europe. The independence of the ASCR, in conjunction with the entrepreneurship and the academic excellence of its members, has been a key factor in this development. Among the fruits of this sustained work is a large international network that has, among other things, proved to be a major asset in the recruitment of top quality young researchers in philosophy both in the CR and other countries.

While we appreciate that current economic difficulties are serious, neither prudence nor exigency can justify the de facto dismantling of the ASCR. We urge to the RDC to reconsider its proposal, and to maintain basic funding of the ASCR, in service to academic life in the CR as well as to the European research community.

On behalf of the core group of CSMN,

Yours sincerely,

Christel Fricke
Professor / Director

Jan Halvor Undlien
Administrative Leader