

Friday, July 31, 2009

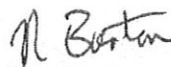
To the Czech Government

I am gravely concerned about the plans to cut the funding of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic by more than a half over the next three years, and to introduce an inappropriate funding formula for basic research. If realized, such severe cuts and crude assessment will endanger the very existence of basic research in the Czech Republic.

There are many world-class scientists in the Academy, as I know from my collaborations with them. This 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. Moreover, this research must be guided by the scientists themselves, rather than by a crude arithmetical formula that is based on arbitrary metrics such as 'impact factors'. Of course, it is essential to assess the performance of scientists, and to fund the most productive researchers. However, this must be done intelligently, rather than by a formula that is applied blindly to diverse fields.

I urge the government to reconsider the planned changes to the administration of basic research in the Czech Republic.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. N.H. Barton