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Ing. Jan Fischer, CSc
Prime Minister of the Czech Republic
Government of the Czech Republic
Nabrezi Edvarda Benese 128/4
118 01 Praha 1—Mala Strana
THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Dear Prime Minister:

I write to convey my grave concern about the plans to cut the funding of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic by more than half over the next three years. Such severe cuts would seriously endanger the vitality, indeed the very existence, of one of the major elements in Czech science and research.

I have been a longtime supporter and admirer of the institutes of the Czech Academy. In 1971, I spent two months at the Geofyzikalni Ustav [GFU] in Spořilov as the invitation of V. Kárník and J. Vaněk. This visit was under the auspices of the scientific exchange program between the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences [ČSAV] and the U. S. National Academy of Sciences [NAS].

I worked primarily with Z. Pros and V. Babuška on experiments to determine the mechanical properties of rocks, as applied to mining and natural hazard problems. During this visit, I also had the opportunity to visit major seismological and astronomical observatories in southern Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia; including the well-known observatory at Lomnica Štít on Skalneto Pleso, as well as the Geophysical Institute of the SAV in Bratislava and the Institute of Applied Geophysics in Brno.

On the basis of this exchange visit, I wrote a major article in EOS, Transactions of the American Geophysical Union [Vol. 54, no. 1, January 1973] entitled: "Geophysical Research in Czechoslovakia." In this article, I cited the many significant contributions to international geophysics made by the scientific staff of the institutes of the ČSAV.

During my academy exchange visit to Spořilov in 1971, I began a strong collaboration with V. Babuška and J. Plomerová of the GFU. This collaboration has continued over the past 38 years. During this period, we have organized three international workshops in the Czech Republic: 1976 in the Castle of Liblice, 1986 in the Castle of Bechyně, and 1996 in the Castle of Třešť. An average of 75 persons from all countries attended these workshops, which resulted in published volumes of original research papers. In all three of these workshops, the stellar quality of the research reported by the scientists from the Czech Republic was evident to all, even in the days prior to the Velvet Revolution.

My most recent visit to GFU was in May 2005, during which I had the opportunity to see the changes in the institute as a consequence of the new regime since 1991. Although I was unable to attend the 4th workshop in Třešť in 2006, I have heard from my U. S. colleagues that it was an outstanding meeting, once again highlighting the research done in the Czech Academy of Sciences.

In summary, I continue to regard the Geofyzikalni Ustav in Spořilov as one of the world leaders in observational geophysics, as well as experimental/theoretical geophysics in Europe. Important results have been obtained by this institution and further achievements can be expected as there are many world-class scientists in the Academy. Most of these will be published in peer-reviewed journals and reach interested scientists throughout the world.

Any government action to restrict 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. I 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.

Sincerely yours,



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and
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