



Ing. Jan Fischer, CSc.
Předseda vlády České republiky
Úřad vlády ČR náměstí
Edvarda Beneše 128/4
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Vienna 24.08.2009

Dear Mr. President of the Czech Republic

My colleagues, researchers at the Institute of Byzantine Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, and I absolutely agree with the petition below, written by our colleagues in your country, and we all firmly support it.

Position of the Academic Community on the Future of Research and Development in the Czech Republic

We are seriously concerned about the imminent liquidation of the Academy of Sciences of the CR and majority of the basic research in the Czech Republic. The unprofessional, confused and unjustified setting of the system of financing research, development and innovation in the CR if implemented will have fatal consequences not only for the ASCR itself but also for the entire Czech society.

As a result of the proposal of the Research and Development Council, the institutional budget of the Academy of Sciences of the CR is to be cut by one half over three years, which would lead to the redundancy of many highly qualified experts, to the destruction of the scientific infrastructure and to the liquidation of the current network of academic institutes.

The destruction of the Academy of Sciences of the CR would affect also higher education institutions, with which the ASCR closely cooperates in a number of areas from the guidance of graduate students to instruction in a number of unique and irreplaceable fields. The main victims of the budget thus proposed would be both basic and applied research on the one hand and tertiary education on the other. These immense damages would be unequivocally held against the current Research and Development Council with all of the political, cultural and moral implications.

We, therefore, consider the action of the members of the Council for Research and Development as unsystematic, unqualified and irresponsible. We urge that the Prime Minister of the Government of the CR Jan Fischer alter the composition of the Research and Development Council forthwith in order for it to comprise a truly qualified and responsible body capable of ensuring the needs of research and development in the Czech Republic and the long-term interests of Czech society in this area.

At the same time, we appeal to the government to consider again the overall strengthening of investment in research and development as the best way to face the current economic crisis and to lay the foundations for future advancement and prosperity.

Without quality and universally developed basic research, not even successful applied research can exist and economically effective innovation evolve. Budget cuts precisely in this area would be manifestly counterproductive and would directly contradict the anti-crisis measures of the governments in the developed states of the world.

In Prague, 30 June 2009

We trust in your support.

With the greatest respect
Yours faithfully

Dr. Peter Soustal, Director of Institute of Byzantine Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences