

Resolution of the 161st Czech Rectors Conference Plenum Meeting

Brno, 3 June 2021

Czech Rectors Conference (CRC) Plenum adopted at its 161st Meeting the following resolution:

1. CRC is convinced that investment in science is an effective tool for eliminating the impacts of a pandemic crisis and a necessary precondition for stimulating economic growth. CRC therefore fundamentally disagrees with the proposal of the Ministry of Finance applied in the interdepartmental comment procedure in the preparation of the state budget, which would consequently lead to a reduction in funding for science, research and innovation by 3.6% compared to 2021. CRC considers the proposal of the Ministry of Finance unconceptual, short-sighted and endangering the future development of the Czech Republic. CRC emphasizes that the proposal of the Ministry of Finance is in conflict with the Memorandum on R&D&I Support in the Czech Republic from 19 December 2019 signed by the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic. CRC supports the proposal of the Research, Development and Innovation Council to increase the expenditures of the state budget of the Czech Republic on research, experimental development and innovation for 2022 with a view to the years 2023 and 2024 by CZK 1.4 billion.
2. CRC states that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were not among the priorities of the current government during the covid-19 pandemic. HEIs have been closed for students since March 2020, and the length and severity of the measures have been unprecedented compared to other EU Member States. CRC is aware of the need to comply with hygiene measures and emphasizes that HEIs have been, and still are, able to ensure their proper functioning. As an example, teaching at all medical faculties in the Czech Republic has not been interrupted and yet the epidemic situation has not worsened. If all HEIs are closed again in the autumn 2021, it will have far-reaching consequences for the competitiveness of the Czech Republic.
3. CRC calls the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the National Accreditation Bureau for Higher Education (NAB) for a debate on the use of certain forms of online/distance learning in study programs that are accredited in full-time form. HEIs gained a number of positive experiences during the covid-19 pandemic and invested considerable resources in the purchase of modern information technology. This discussion should take place at the level of the CRC expert group with the leadership of the NAB.
4. CRC draws attention to the increase in cyber security obligations that HEIs incur in connection with their status as public authorities. HEIs will have to finance the high costs associated with the implementation of this new obligation.
5. CRC elected a new CRC Presidium in a secret ballot, whose term of office begins on 1 August 2021 and ends on 31 July 2023:

President

Prof. MUDr. Martin Bareš, Ph.D., Rector of Masaryk University

Vice-Presidents

Prof. Ing. Jiří Málek, DrSc., Rector of the University of Pardubice

Doc. PhDr. Jitka Němcová, Ph.D., Rector of the Medical College

Prof. Ing. Vladimír Sedlařík, Ph.D., Rector of Tomas Bata University in Zlín

Doc. Ing. Pavel Tuleja, Ph.D., Rector of Silesian University in Opava

Prof. PhDr. PaedDr. Jindřich Vybíral, DSc., Rector of the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague

Brno, 3 June 2021

On behalf of the Czech Rectors Conference

Prof. Petr Sklenička
President