

Responsible research and innovation for great transitions in a small CE country

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Framework of the problem

Czech republic is a small country in the middle of Europe with

- local economic and social development strongly influenced by the external (EU-wide and international) factors,
- limited financial resources even more tightened by the impact of global economic crisis,
- social mind set of the population following from the welfare-state expectations reflected by the large portion of the political elite.

Challenges of Great Transitions

Czech republic is no exception with respect to challenges brought by

- trends of demographical development,
- global climatic changes,
- globalization and rise of new economic powers,
- financial and economical crisis of EU,
- global crisis of our western civilization.

To innovate out of the problem?

There is general (EU-wide) consensus, that solution of these problems lies in building the knowledge based society in order to increase competitiveness of the economy.....

In practical terms the problem concentrates on the question how manage effectively research, development and implementation of innovations.

In the Czech republic this is hampered by inappropriate structure of decision making process in the field of innovation and competitiveness support, reflecting rather historical factors than rational reasoning.

The situation is ripe for „radical change“ – or „crisis management“?

R&D&I management is a multidimensional problem

From many aspects of this problem four turn out to be of greatest importance:

1. Formulation of the R&D&I and competitiveness strategy.
2. Collaboration in R&D&I within EU.
3. Responsibility for financing of research, development and innovations.
4. Role of public and private subjects in implementing and promoting innovations.

Formulation of the R&D&I and competitiveness strategy

There is abundance of documents entitled „Strategy....“, but nobody takes them too seriously, because:

- they are too vague (not to offend anybody)
- many vested interests are projected here (on the contrary)
- there are missing effective means for their implementation

What is needed: long term R&D&I and competitiveness strategy based on

- foresight of scientific trends and assessment of future technologies,
- R&D&I priorities approved by the Parliament.

Collaboration in R&D&I within EU

In difference to industry, Czech R&D&I is poorly integrated to ERA

Still the „local limitmindedness“ prevails in many PROs

What should be done – participation in EU wide projects and activities should be made strong condition for

- allocation of institutional financial support for PROs (ROs)
- promotion of researchers, professors etc.,
- allocation of R&D&I grants from local resources.

Responsibility for financing of R&D&I

Public administration responsible for financing of R&D&I – AS CR, RDIC, MIT, MEYS, some other ministries – has unclear division of competencies and is sub-optimally coordinated.

Radical change is long overdue here, as optimal variant appears:

- to restructure RDIC and elevate it to the ministry level,
- entrust it with implementation of the R&D&I part of national R&D&I and competitiveness strategy,
- all existing financial facilities for support of R&D&I (GA CR, TA CR, etc.) transfer under its control.

Role of public and private subjects

During early nineties the whole layer of applied research institutes – so called „ministerial research institutes“ - practically disappeared.

Now we suffer from a gap between basic research (AS CR, Universities) and industrial research (enterprises).

Moreover in the CR there is very few large corporations located that invest into long term applied research.

Comparison with Germany: we have Max Planck Institutes, but we do not have Fraunhofer Institutes.

What could/should be done:

To support creation of this type of institutes, even on a private basis.

Thank you for your attention!

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