

Statement of the Director of the Institute on the Final Report of the Research Assessment Phase I and Phase II

Recent research and popularization achievements of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes would not have been possible without the emphasis on the increasing quality of scholarly work. An essential part of this effort was the decision to undergo international assessment. I am very glad that the Institute undertook this type of evaluation despite the process being quite demanding in terms of time and organization. It was a difficult task to find a suitable type of evaluation since there are various forms in the Czech Republic as well as abroad. We chose the evaluation form carried out by the Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS), which turned out to be the right decision. In the CAS, we have found a very forthcoming partner, supporting us throughout the implementation of evaluation rules. It also turned out that this type of evaluation is being implemented in various forms in the number of Czech research institutions: at the Research, Development and Innovation Council and universities. Having selected this type of evaluation, we not only carried out the first independent evaluation of the Institute's research. Institute also adopted the standards of research evaluation common in the Czech Republic. This was eventually confirmed also by the resolution of the Research, Development and Innovation Council dated 2 June 2020, which accepted the Institute into the quality evaluation scheme following the M17+ methodology. For the Institute, whose quality of research work was openly put into question for several years, it stands as a confirmation of the Institute's achievements in increasing its research quality in recent years. It would not have been possible without independent critical evaluation and an open comparison with other institutions.

In its final report, the Evaluation Committee appreciated the Institute's decision to undertake this evaluation. It is not common to meet the highest scientific standards for an institution founded out of a public, and therefore political, interest. The Committee agrees with an institution's decision with an important public mission to support top-quality and fully competitive research work.

I am pleased to see that the Evaluation Panel for the Phase I Evaluation stated that most of the outputs are of internationally recognized quality and that almost every output is at least

on the nationally accepted level. I am pleased that the overall average rating in the Phase I Evaluation is comparable with other history institutes in the Czech Republic, with the Education Section being the best in the evaluation. Phase II results imply that the Evaluation Committee appreciates our historians' scholarly work and perceives a great potential in addressing the broader international public. Both reports also emphasize the increasing quality of the outputs throughout the monitored decade. Besides this, the Evaluation Committee appreciated the advantage of organizational links between the Institute and the Security Services archive. It provides researchers easy access to primary sources to use them not only in their work but also to make them accessible to the public through their documentary work. The Committee also recommended to the Institute's management to pay more considerable attention to the diversity of research staff. I am delighted that the final report confirmed the Institute's position within the Czech historical science context. I also appreciate the Committee's recognition of the Institute's focus on the period of Nazi occupation and communist dictatorship, distinguishing it from other historical institutions, which makes it attractive for historians. At the same time, it confirms that the Institute was able to establish its specific position. Last but not least, the Phase I and Phase II evaluation reports also reveal the vital role which the Education Section has been able to achieve, thanks to its popularization activities in schools, libraries, and museums.

However, besides appreciating many aspects of our work, there are also many critical points in the report. I want to comment briefly on some of them.

1. Essential critical comments are describing a low level of internal cooperation in the Institute's research work. It is divided into several research projects usually run in parallel with just a little space for researchers to collaborate. The Committee also stated that the sections addressing the era of communist dictatorship are not divided thematically. The Committee recommends to make our research more compact and find such organization of the sections able to provide more significant support for collaboration between researchers according to their professional focus. However, it has already been implemented to a certain degree. Researchers can collaborate on joint projects. The discussion is also evolving in a scientific seminar open for the whole Institute, or separate seminars held in sections. Nevertheless, we take these comments seriously, and we are also considering ways to provide better support for the research staff and to develop collaboration between its members. Besides the restructuring of research sections, we are also considering the

implementation of working groups and teams. They will transcend the limits of sections and encourage the development of the most diverse forms of collaboration, from a discussion over texts to the preparation of joint projects. In the same way, we will encourage researchers to join various joint projects outside the Institute, including international ones. Only some of our researchers have this kind of experience now. Their numbers should undoubtedly increase.

2. There is also substantial criticism concerning the number of research outputs failing to meet the international criteria. I am fully aware that high quality must be achieved with the maximum possible number of results. With time, we would like to reach a state in which all researchers can join international discussions. Therefore we would like to support the spreading of our research results abroad. The Committee appreciated the English volumes of our scientific journal, *Securitas Imperii*. Institute will also undertake steps for the journal to be involved in international databases, especially the prestigious Scopus database. We are also going to support publication abroad.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all our colleagues who contributed to the research assessment process, whether as evaluators, panelists, or members of the Evaluation Committee. Thanks to the evaluation, we were not only given precious feedback for the researchers as well as for the Institute's management, but we were also able to establish professional links with a group of historians worldwide. The evaluation also led to important yet unexpected finding that there are many foreign authors interested in 20th century Czech and Czechoslovak history. Therefore, Czech history must not be perceived only within the boundaries of one state, and its research results should be focused not only on the Czech but also on the global scientific public.

The independent international assessment results brought an essential stimulus for our internal debate on how to improve the Institute's research activities. I am sure the next assessment in five years will reflect positively measures we are about to adopt.

Mgr. Zdeněk Hazdra, Ph.D., director of the Institute

9 July 2020