



Prague, June 3, 2021  
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**Statement from the Director  
on the Final report of the Institute of Geophysics, CAS**

I, the Director of the Institute of Geophysics, CAS, hereby declare that the course of the Evaluation was consistent with the Methodology of the Evaluation of the research and professional activity of research-oriented institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences for the period 2015-2019.

RNDr. Aleš Špičák, CSc.,  
director

## **Comments on the Final Report of Commission No. 4, Evaluation of research and professional activity of research-oriented institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences for the period 2015-2019, Institute of Geophysics**

We appreciate the effort of the Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS) to finalize the evaluation process despite complications brought about by the the Covid-19 pandemic. The online format of the discussion of the Commission 4 with the Institute's leadership was necessary due to the Covid restrictions, but it probably also brought some limitations to the exchange of information and the resulting depth of understanding on the Commission's side.

Following a discussion among the Institute's director, deputy directors, chairman of the Board of the IG, and Team heads, we have decided to point out only some inconsistencies which in our opinion reduce the Report's potential for positive motivation. Overall the Final Report reads less well and many statements appear disjointed, out of context and more difficult to understand than in the case of the 2015 report; this may, to some extent, be due to a different structure of the questionnaire that, for instance, lacks the item of general recommendations. There is an impression that different parts of the Final Report were written by different people without sufficient coordination.

In our opinion the progress made by the Institute of Geophysics since 2015, particularly in addressing the 2015 Commission's Recommendations, has not been recognized in the Final Report, although the Institute had documented in detail how the prior recommendations were addressed, and some Commission members explicitly noted marked progress during the online discussion.

The report contains inconsistencies on several levels – between evaluating statements for individual teams, even within one Team's section, and, to a large extent, between the criteria applied by the previous Commission in 2015. The statements of "Quality of results (H1.1-H1.5)" are confusing if one team is evaluated as "good" with the same justification as another that ends up as "average", etc.

The Institute's report informed the Commission about the establishment of a new structure of research units and explained its purpose because it is the most important structural development, decided in 2020 in agreement with our International Advisory Board's (IAB) recommendations and implemented in January 2021. The Commission has covered this aspect extensively, mainly in a critical manner, citing unspecified threats and problems in teams' size, alleged lack of communication among teams etc., although none of these aspects of the new teams were discussed in the online meeting and in fact cannot yet be assessed. For the Geomagnetism Team the new team structure was evaluated as a positive thing whereas in other parts of the report to the contrary, which we consider a sign of inconsistency. Overall, however, we perceive the criticisms of the new teams that were not even the subject of evaluation of 2015-19 as unfounded. The notion of "*possible departure of leading researchers*" is baseless because the institute has been, in fact, experiencing the exact opposite: a number of incoming respected early and mid-career researchers in 2019-21, with interest significantly higher than the number of positions we can financially afford.

Similar to the 2015 report, but in a more critical manner, the Commission has mentioned a rather vaguely described issue of alleged overlaps and "duplicities" in research directions with "*members of other institutes*" (Part A, SWOT analysis of the institute). We note that a degree of overlap in research focus, or in methodologies applied, have existed for decades among all CAS institutes dealing with Earth Sciences (just as among various university departments, for example). This is partly due to the growing multidisciplinary of the field which has gradually been overcoming the historical separation of sub-disciplines into individual institutions. It is only natural that in a relatively small field such as the Earth Science a number of teams from different institutions study similar or related principal questions; as long as there is no proven copying of results or approaches, it is not appropriate to speak of „duplicities“ as the Final Report does.

Regarding the criticized overlaps, we maintain that at the Institute of Geophysics the inclusion of “geological” aspects is closely tied to multidisciplinary research goals with a strong geophysical and modelling side, to the benefit of both branches of research. Instead of avoiding topics significant for science and society, out of fear of a hypothetical “duplicity” with other institutes, we find it fruitful to collaborate with teams from many institutions in CZ and worldwide, with the leading criterion being the relevance of the topic and excellence of the partners. For our new international colleagues the integration of disciplines has been a factor in attractiveness of the Institute.

We believe that growing multidisciplinary will continue to advance our science, and with that in mind the existing separation of CAS institutes devoted to Earth Sciences should be overcome in the future. Successful research institutions in our field, such as the GFZ Helmholtz Centre in Potsdam, have been built on integration of disciplines, not on separation.

RNDr. Aleš Špičák, CSc.,  
director