



INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC  
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### **Statement from the director of the institute on the final report of the Commission No. 11**

We recognize and accept the final report, as well as the work of the evaluation committee, with appreciation. The report, its conclusions and recommendations are realistic, sober and acceptable. We do not see any reason to dispute the report. We would only like to briefly comment on certain recommendations concerning the Institute as a whole, but also on the situation of all evaluated teams. A resolution of all these problems is, however, beyond the possibilities and competences of the Institute, more precisely its management.

1. Undoubtedly, the committee is right to point out the none too favourable financial situation of the Institute, in particular the inappropriate proportion of institutional and project funding. Such a situation, on the one hand, leads to uncertainty for some researchers, whose salaries and hence also positions in the Institute are closely linked to the duration of individual directly funded projects, and, on the other hand, makes a long-term human resources strategy (hiring young researchers, the required reinforcement of some teams) impossible. But it is clear that the resolution of this problematic situation is beyond the scope of the Institute. The Institute can only endeavour (and does so with certain and permanent success) to obtain project funding – with all the positive, but also negative side effects identified in the report by the committee.
2. The fact that the Institute is not able to work with its own PhD students is also a certain weakness. This is however given by the legal rules governing the conditions of postgraduate study. The Institute, however, can and in the future intends to strengthen its role in supervising PhD students in cooperation first and foremost with university departments with which it collaborates on the joint accreditation of doctoral study (The Institute of Political Science at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, The Institute of International Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University). The Institute also intends to formalize, through joint accreditations, cooperation with other university departments in the future. The success of such efforts, however, depends on the accommodating attitude of university partners (for instance, in the evaluated period, due to a



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change in the attitude of the management of the Faculty of the Humanities of Charles University, a well-prepared project for the joint accreditation of the doctoral study in contemporary history and oral history was called off at the last minute).

3. The recommendation to resolve the provisional status of the Centre for the History of Sciences and Humanities has appeared in the evaluation committee's report for the third time and is undoubtedly justified. However, this matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved without the cooperation of the leadership of the Academy of Sciences. The management of the Institute has drawn attention to this several times (e.g. in the overview of the organizational measures carried out in response to the evaluation for 2005–2009 from September 2013). From our point of view, there are two possible solutions and the management of the Institute has already proposed such solutions in the past. Either the Centre can be transformed into a joint department of several institutes (Institute for Contemporary History, Masaryk Institute and Archives, Institute of Philosophy), which would reflect the interdisciplinary nature of research into the history of the sciences and humanities, as well as the fact that such research is already being carried out in the above-mentioned institutes. Or – and this proposal is closely linked to the repeated suggestion to strengthen the human resources of the Centre within the Institute – increase institutional resources within the Academy of Science's budget. During the past delimitation of the Centre for the History of Sciences and Humanities from the Archive of the Academy of Sciences to ÚSD, salary resources for only four employees were transferred as part of institutional financing in 2002.
4. The committee has pointed out a somewhat unclear demarcation of the research activities of the Institute from the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Academy of Sciences (this in fact also concerns other institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences, e.g. the Historical Institute) and the resulting overlap of research projects and a certain loosening of 'research competencies' (which should primarily be governed by the founding deeds) between individual historical institutes. It is impossible not to agree with the committee's statements on this matter. But they do not primarily concern the Institute for Contemporary History, which adheres fairly strictly in the formulation of its research intentions to the definition of contemporary history that was given at the time of the Institute's founding: after 1938, or 1945. However the definition of contemporary history





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may have shifted (i.e. from 1989 to the recent past), for a long time it will not be possible to remove from the remit of contemporary history the era of undemocratic regimes before 1989 and leave them, so to say, to standard historiography. Those five decades represent, from a research point of view, a unified whole, which cannot be meaningfully divided. Designating 1989 as the beginning of a chronologically conceived starting point for contemporary history is for now, understandably, still a matter of the very distant future.

Prague, January 22, 2016

