

# NATIONAL BIOECONOMY CONGRESS

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## 2ND NATIONAL BIOECONOMY CONGRESS

### European Partnerships as Financial Tools and Tasks for the Czech Republic

**The Second Annual National Bioeconomy Congress**, organized by BIOEAST HUB CR and the Technology Center under the auspices of the Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, **focused on exploring funding opportunities through European Partnerships and grant programs to enhance the involvement of Czech organisations into international cooperation as a yet another opportunity to finance bioeconomy projects** among others.. The 2024 congress also highlighted exemplary best practices, showcasing successful initiatives that underline the transformative potential of the bioeconomy. Bringing together BIOEAST HUB CR members, policymakers, and professionals, the event served as a platform to promote positive environmental impacts and sustainable practices, demonstrating the critical role the bioeconomy plays in advancing sustainable development.. The **event aimed to enhance the involvement of Czech organizations in international cooperation**, presenting it as a valuable avenue to finance bioeconomy projects.

The Congress began with introductory remarks by Jan Nedělník and Marie Kubáňková from BIOEAST HUB CR, joined by Naďa Koničková from the Technology Center. This opening session set the stage for the day by emphasizing the significance of the bioeconomy and the importance of international cooperation in addressing sustainability and fostering innovation. Esteemed speakers provided diverse perspectives and practical insights into these opportunities. **Sárka Štejnarová from the Ministry of Agriculture highlighted the critical role of European Partnerships** in advancing bioeconomic innovations and addressing pressing challenges in Europe. She emphasized the Ministry's success in involving the Czech Republic in EU partnerships and discussed the strategic role of these partnerships in fostering cross-sector collaboration and funding alignment with EU priorities. Ms Štejnarová added: *"The Ministry of Agriculture is involved in ... partnership, unfortunately the Ministry does not dispose of sufficient funding to get involved in more."*

**Rastislav Raši, Leader of the BIOEAST Forestry Thematic Working Group** presented activities in the preparation of the EUFORE Partnership. His presentation outlined the development of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) for the forestry sector within the EUFORE project, emphasizing its role in strengthening transdisciplinary collaboration across Europe. Mr Raši described the biggest challenge: *"The involvement of the Partnership on Forests and Forestry for Sustainable Future in the second Horizon Europe strategic plan 2025-2027 is a result*



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*of EU member states representatives and European Commission collaborative process, mainly within the SCAR FOREST arrangement. It reflects understanding that there are common forestry issues, which require international research collaboration. On the other side, financing of forestry research through this partnership may reduce other types of calls for forestry projects within the Horizon Europe programme. This underlines importance to participate in the partnership.*

**Lucie Nunez** from the **Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports** provided updates on the national position towards the new framework program FP10 that the Ministry of Education is in charge of. The Czech Republic emphasizes the importance of fostering Czech involvement in EU partnerships initiatives, **recognizing them as key tools for advancing bioeconomic innovation and securing funding opportunities**. However, there are challenges, such as insufficient financial support and administrative hurdles, which require stronger commitments from Czech stakeholders and ministries.

**Táňa Halová Perglová** from the **Technology Agency of the Czech Republic (TAČR)** detailed the Agency's innovative programs aimed at advancing the bioeconomy sector. She highlighted specific international calls for proposals and funding mechanisms tailored to Czech research organizations while acknowledging the challenges associated with securing sufficient investment from the respective ministry to support participation in EU partnerships. **She shared her regrets that, despite being asked to coordinate a partnership, the Agency had to decline due to a lack of resources.** Ms. Hálová Perglová urged **participants to actively express their interest in partnerships, emphasizing that such advocacy could persuade the respective ministries to commit resources.**

**Monika Kocmanova** from the **Czech Health Research Council (AZV CR)** followed with a presentation on health-related EU partnerships in which the Czech Republic, represented by the Ministry of Health and the Czech Health Research Council, is actively involved. **While health research does not fall directly under the bioeconomy umbrella, the experience gained in this field is highly valuable and inspirational for other sectors.** Ms. Kocmanova shared the Ministry of Health / AZV's approach, which involves using resources from the Applied Health Research Support Program for the period 2024-2030, specifically Subprogram 3: European Partnership in Health. She echoed the administrative challenges of managing partnerships and called for greater involvement and support from relevant stakeholders to ensure success at the national level.

Finally, Jan Nedělník presented on behalf of Mr. Lehejček from the Technology University



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Tomáš Baťa, the only Czech organization currently participating in an EU partnership through "in-kind" contributions. The presentation **underscored the pressing need for "in-cash" contributions to unlock significant funding opportunities** for Czech institutions, highlighting the transformative potential of such investments for advancing bioeconomic research and innovation.

**The discussion underscored the pivotal role of European Partnerships in fostering collaboration, addressing challenges, and unlocking funding opportunities for the bioeconomy.** These partnerships serve as a vital mechanism for securing financial resources for bioeconomy projects, offering organizations a strategic platform to advance innovation and sustainability goals. European Partnerships are not only a gateway to international cooperation for Czech organisations but also a powerful catalyst for expanding the scope of engagement in global initiatives. By facilitating the development of extensive networks and fostering connections with international stakeholders, they act as boosters, paving the way for participation in additional international programs and enhancing the global reach of Czech institutions.

**In alignment with its core mission, BIOEAST HUB CR dedicated the thematic focus of the 2nd National Congress to emphasizing the urgency of proactive participation, strategic advocacy, and the establishment of robust funding mechanisms to fully harness the transformative potential of European partnerships.** Marie Kubáňková, BIOEAST HUB CR Coordinator, remarked: *"Since the establishment of the national bioeconomy BIOEAST HUB CR, our goal has been to encourage Czech institutions to actively explore opportunities for international cooperation. This focus was set as early as February when the Ministry of Agriculture engaged with us to highlight the need to promote EU partnerships."* Jan Nedělník, BIOEAST HUB CR Coordinator, added: *"We are delighted that this year's congress attracted such a strong turnout. We believe we have established a valuable tradition and are already looking forward to building on this momentum as we prepare for the 3rd annual event in 2025."*

The Congress reaffirmed BIOEAST HUB CR's commitment to fostering collaboration, supporting institutions in leveraging EU opportunities, and advancing the bioeconomy on both national and international levels.

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