



## ESA BIC space incubator opens a branch in Brno

### Czech Space Year 2018 begins, marking significant Czech space anniversaries

- **nine start-ups** working with space technologies will be incubated in Brno over the course of **three years**
- the European Space Agency and the South Moravia region will each provide financing in the amount of **EUR 300,000**
- CzechInvest is the operator of the ESA BIC programme in the Czech Republic

Prague, 7 March 2018:

Two years after the establishment of the first Czech space incubator, ESA BIC Prague, firms outside of Prague are getting the opportunity to use technologies and systems of the European Space Agency (ESA). A branch of the space incubator had its grand opening in Brno today on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first spaceflight of Czechoslovak astronaut Vladimír Remek. The new branch will be housed in the South Moravian Innovation Centre (JIC) and over the next three years it will support up to nine progressive start-ups that are seeking uses for space technologies in everyday life.

The Brno branch was opened by ESA representative Frank Szalgeber, outgoing Minister of Transportation Dan Ťok, deputy governor of the South Moravia region Jan Vitula and Jan Urban, acting CEO of CzechInvest. The first Czechoslovak astronaut, Vladimír Remek, appeared at the grand opening as an honoured guest.

Based on a contract concluded with CzechInvest, the South Moravia region will provide EUR 300,000 for the operation of the branch in Brno. The European Space Agency, which operates a network of space incubators around Europe, will contribute the same amount to the project. Today CzechInvest and the South Moravian Innovation Centre signed a contract on cooperation ensuring provision of the centre's facilities for innovative firms to the incubated start-ups.

"Soon after the Prague space incubator began operation, we knew that firms throughout the Czech Republic and not only in Prague had the potential to develop space technologies for practical use in everyday life. The projects that Czech firms have brought to ESA BIC Prague helped us to convince ESA that opening another branch is clearly a step in the right direction," says *Tereza Kubicová, head of CzechInvest's Department of Internal Projects and Support for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises.*

"The ESA BIC concept has proven successful in the Czech Republic and we are therefore pleased that CzechInvest can open a branch of the Czech ESA BIC in Brno with our support and with support from the South Moravia region. Thanks to this branch, CzechInvest will be able to not only increase the number of incubated firms from five to eight per year, but also to expand the scope of its services thanks to its cooperation with the South Moravian Innovation Centre. We will thus be able to stimulate development of the Czech Republic's business environment in the area of space technologies and satellite applications and better use the opportunities and potential that the area of space activities offers for the development of the country's economy," says *Václav Kobera, Head of the Department of Space Activities at the Ministry of Transportation,* which is in charge of dealing with the European Space Agency in the Czech Republic and financing thereof.

The first start-ups could enter the Brno space incubator in June this year. In addition to financial support in the amount of up to EUR 50,000, facilities in the South Moravian Innovation Centre, consulting and advisory services in the technical and business areas, marketing support and assistance with finding partners and potential investors, the start-ups can mainly expect to receive a valuable opportunity to access the extraordinary know-how of the European Space Agency.

"South Moravia is an environment where the aerospace technology sector is successful and it is one of our priorities. New start-ups that become involved in the project can use the proximity of science and research centres and specialised institutes at universities in Brno and engage in cooperation with established firms and multinational corporations operating in the region," says *Jan Vitula, deputy governor of the South Moravia region.*





## Press Release

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The South Moravia Innovation Centre, which has been working with newly established firms in the region for 15 years, will assist the start-ups with acquiring new contacts. “More than 200 start-ups have passed through the South Moravian Innovation Centre in the past 15 years. Some of them have become internationally successful technology firms that are major employers and investors. We are prepared to provide outstanding support for those that get involved in the new incubator. At the same time, we will address potential interested parties, mainly students, innovators, new start-ups and spin-off firms from research organisations,” adds *Petr Chládek, director of the South Moravian Innovation Centre*.

The European Space Agency operates a network of eighteen Business Incubation Centres around Europe. Since 2004, these centres have incubated nearly 600 start-ups, which have helped bring space technologies into everyday life. [ESA BIC Prague](#) is currently incubating ten firms: [Festka](#), [NG Aviation](#), [Triphood](#), [TuddyTuddy](#), [Big Terra](#), [InsightART](#), [Let's Earth](#), [NaviRider](#), [FoxWorks Aerospace](#) and [SMUP – UQ](#).

The ESA BIC branch in Brno is a joint project of CzechInvest, the South Moravia region, the Ministry of Transportation and the European Space Agency. The branch will be housed in the South Moravian Innovation Centre.

In addition to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first spaceflight of Czechoslovak – and first non-American and non-Soviet – astronaut Vladimír Remek, the anniversaries of several other significant events of the “space age” in which Czechs were involved will be observed in 2018. In October, 40 years will have passed since the launch of the first Czech satellite, Magion 1. In November, the Czech Republic will celebrate its tenth year in the European Space Agency. The Ministry of Transportation and CzechInvest have thus declared this year to be **Czech Space Year 2018**. A number of space-themed events for the general and expert public will take place throughout the year, culminating in autumn with a celebration of the anniversary of the Czech Republic's entry into the European Space Agency. An overview of the events and all related information are available at [czechspaceyear.com](http://czechspaceyear.com).

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