TECHNOLOGY CENTRE PRAGUE

SUPPORT TO ERC APPLICANTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Petra Fedorová, ERC and WIDERA (Widening) NCP
Building ERC-Competitive Research: Lessons from Croatia
Unlocking ERC Success - Smart Preparation & Winning Strategies
7-8 September 2026, MEDILS, Split

1

Participation of Czechia in ERC Calls

2

Context: Initial Challenges and What Changed

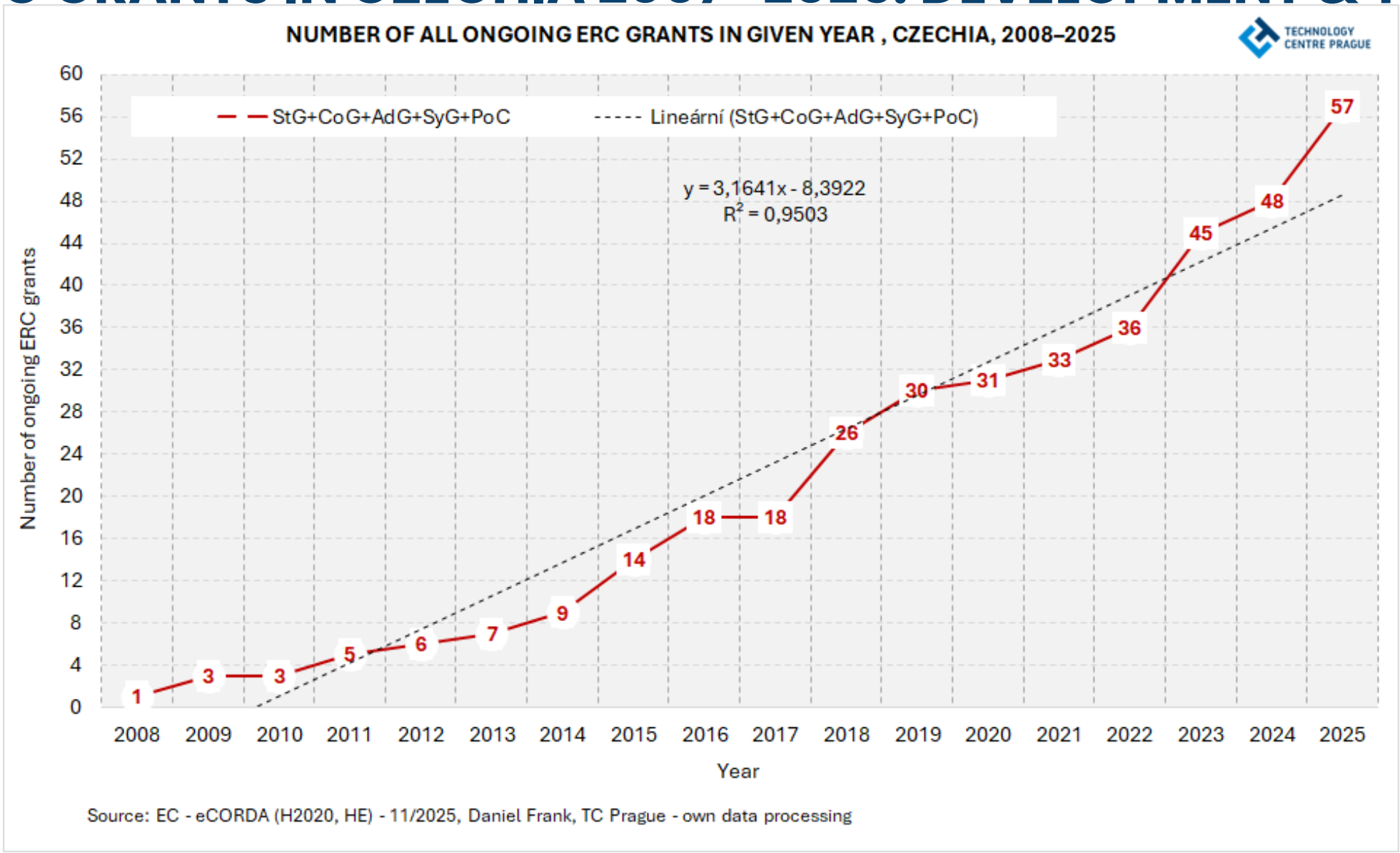
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National Support System

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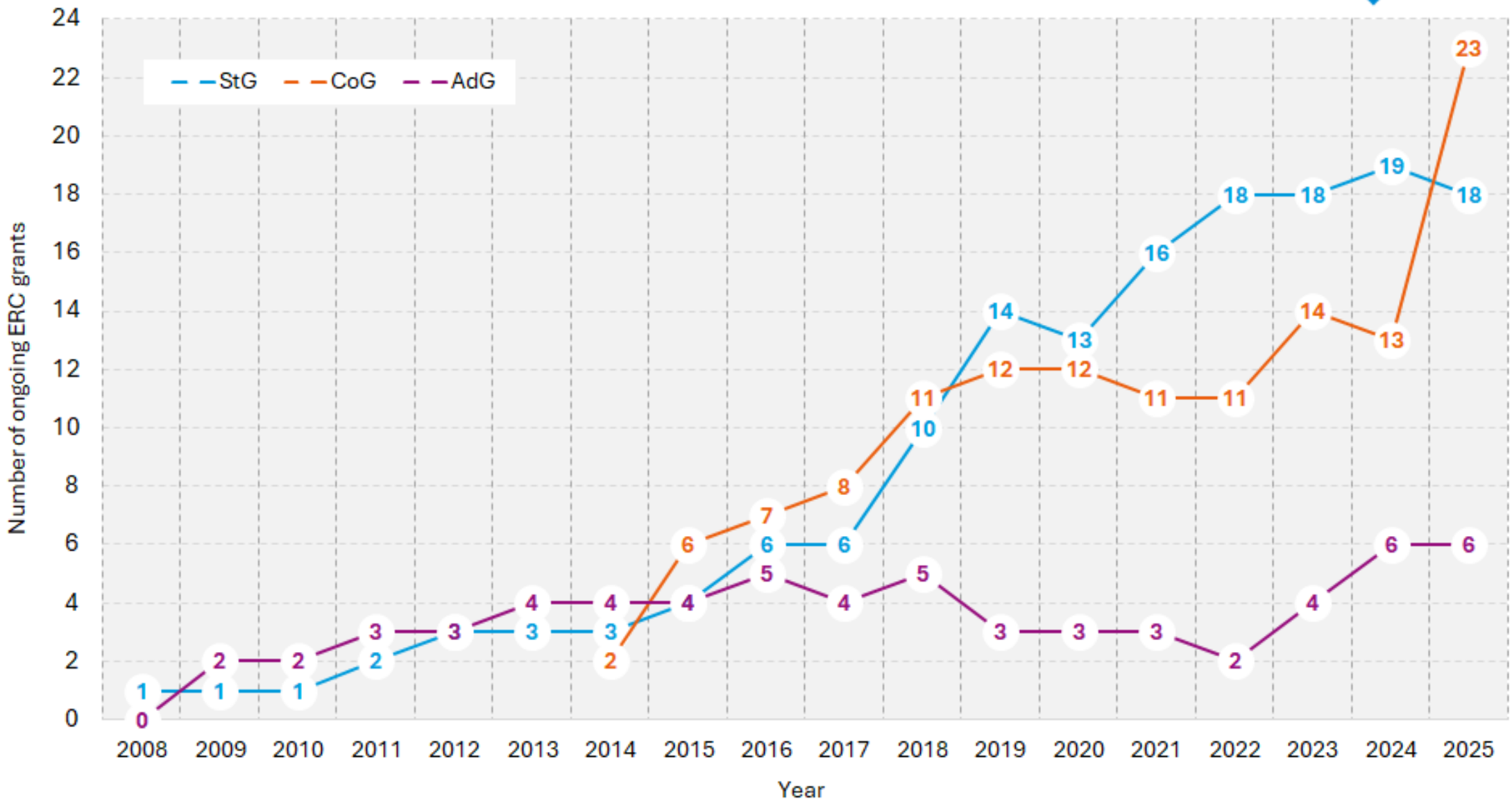
The Way Ahead: Persistent Challenges

ERC GRANTS IN CZECHIA 2007–2025: DEVELOPMENT & TRENDS



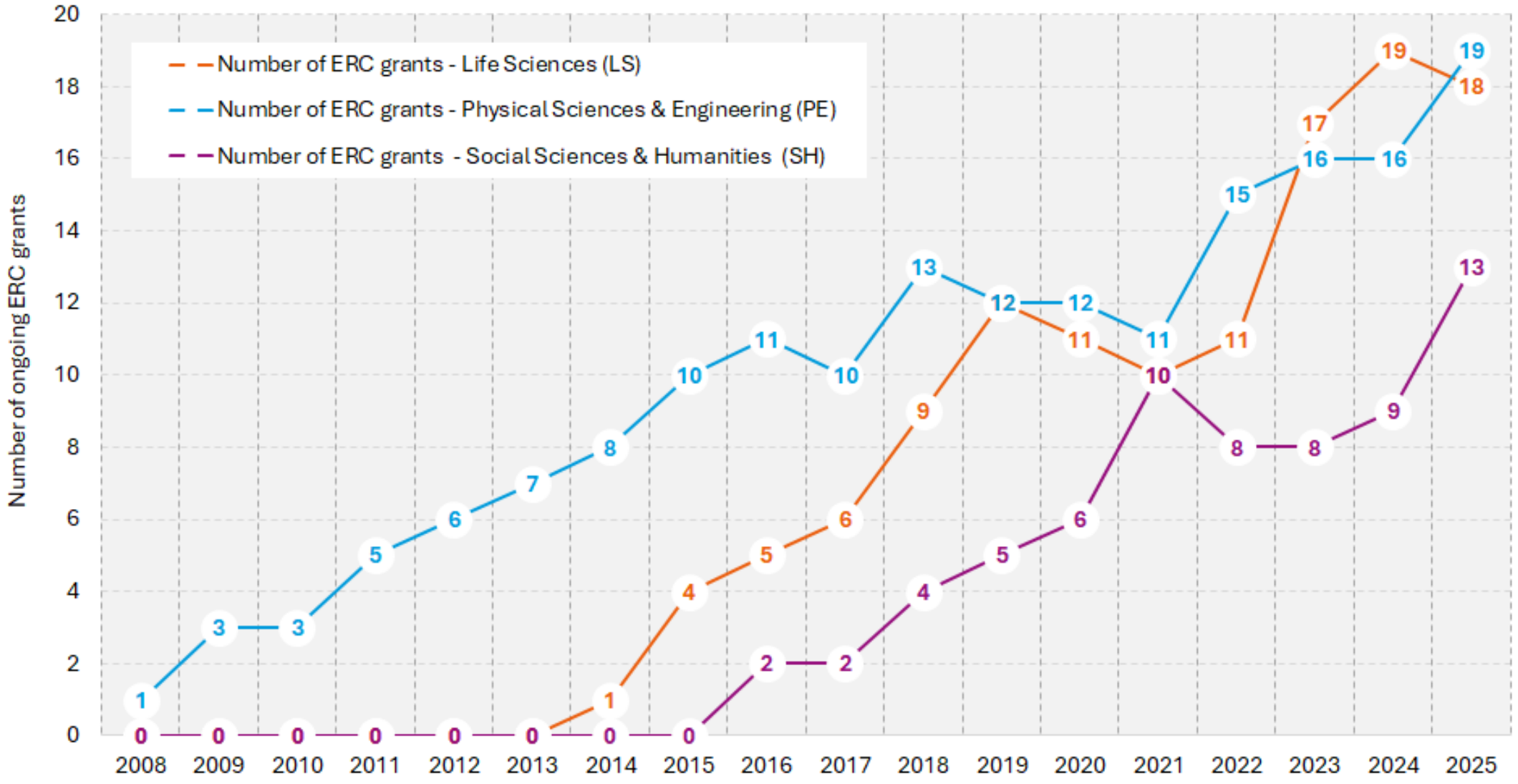
ERC grants in Czechia 2007–2025: development and trends, Author: Daniel Frank, frank@tc.cz, TC Prague, 22/12/2025

NUMBER OF ONGOING ERC GRANTS IN GIVEN YEAR BY GRANT TYPE, CZECHIA 2008–2025



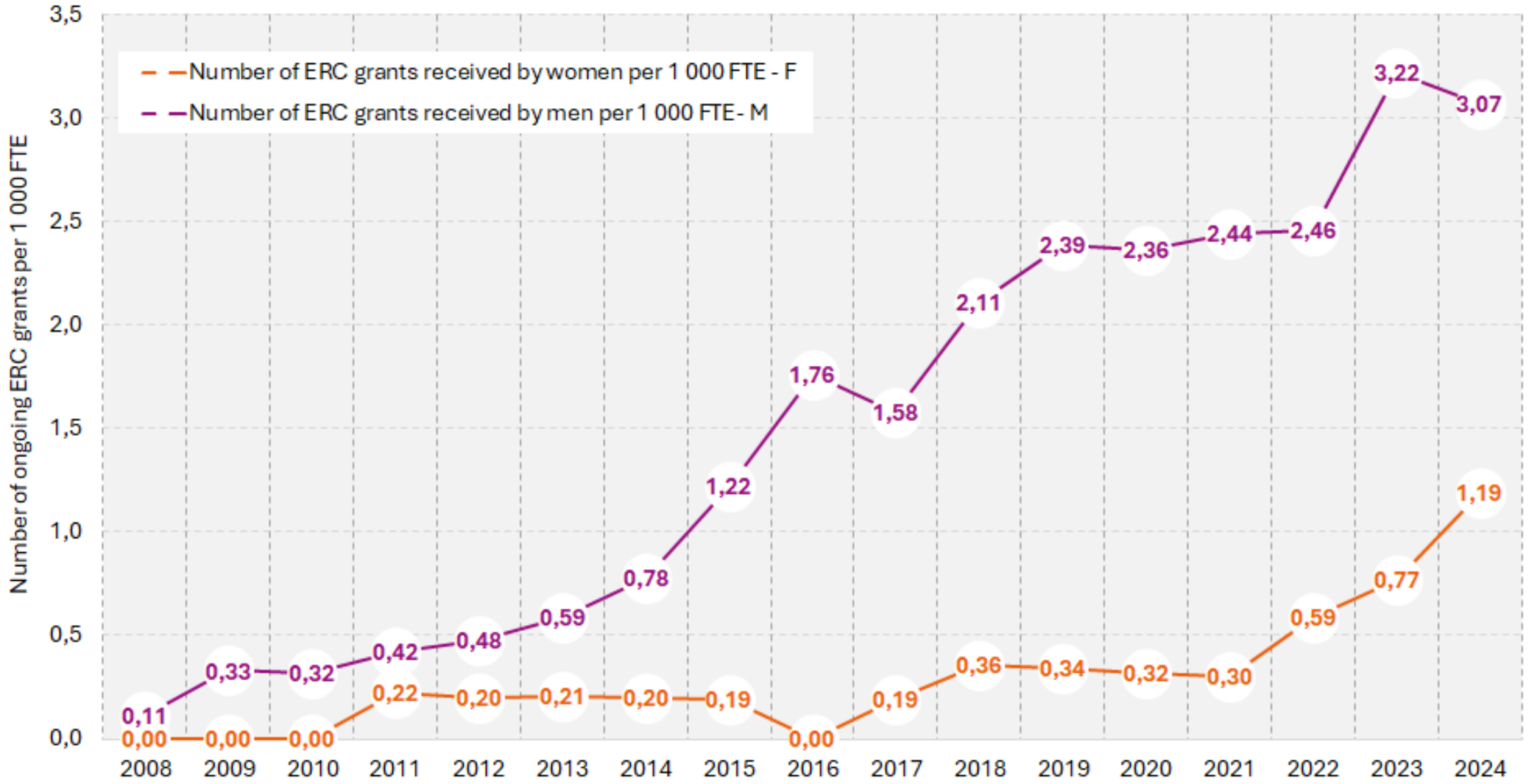
Source: EC - eCORDA (H2020, HE) - 11/2025, Daniel Frank, TC Prague - own data processing

ONGOING ERC GRANTS IN GIVEN YEAR BY ERC DOMAIN (LS, PE, SH), CZECHIA 2008–2025



Source: EC - eCORDA (H2020, HE) - 11/2025, Daniel Frank, TC Prague - own data processing

NUMBER OF ONGOING ERC GRANTS IN GIVEN YEAR BY GENDER OF PI PER 1 000 FTE, CZECHIA 2008–2025

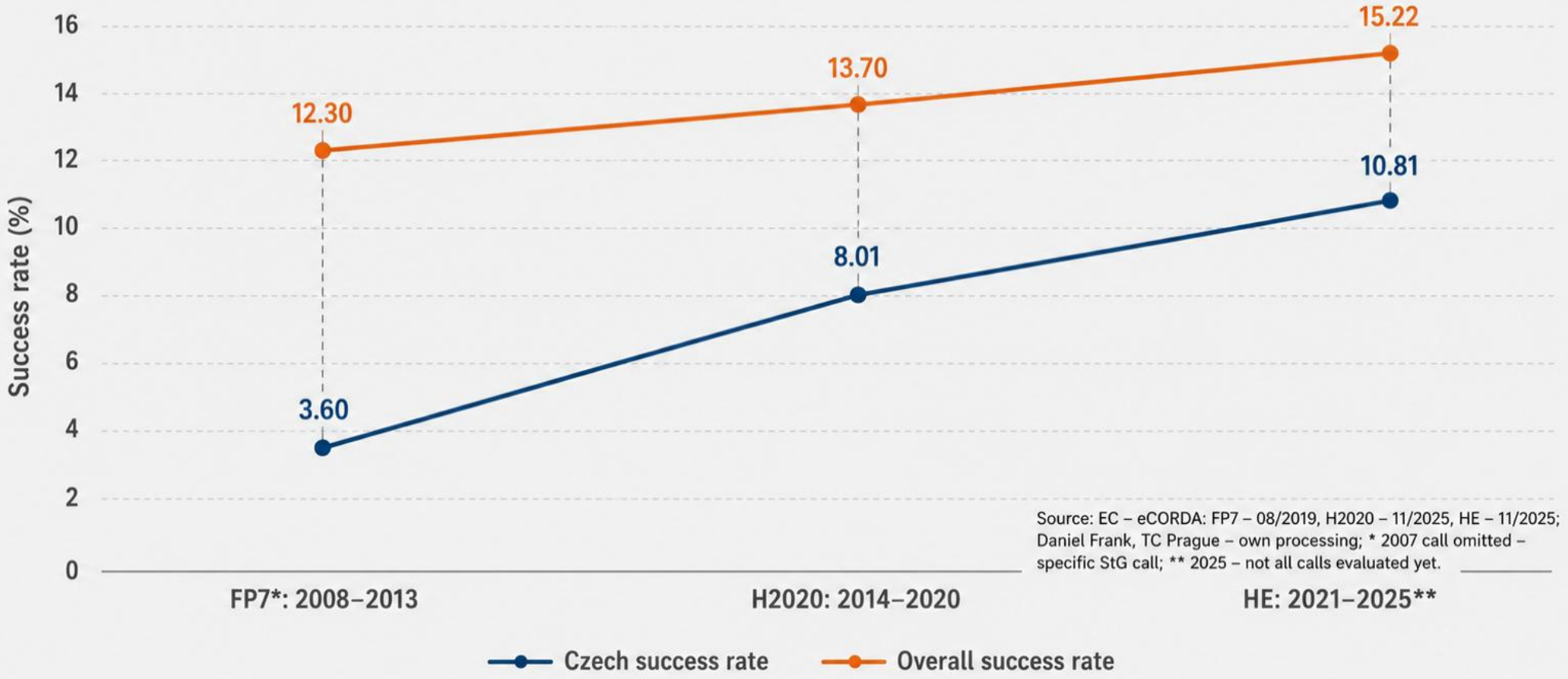


Source: EC - eCORDA (H2020, HE) - 11/2025, Daniel Frank, TC Prague - own data processing

Czech Statistical Office - Research and Development Indicators for the CR data: 2008 - 2024, table 3.3, 3.4

ERC: COMPARISON OF CZECH SUCCESS RATE AND OVERALL SUCCESS RATE BY FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

AGGREGATED BY FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME



INITIAL CHALLENGES BACK IN 2010

01 **Quantity over quality**
Research assessment system: extreme pressure to produce vast quantities of publications.

02 **Safe rather than risky projects**
Czech mindset not used to the ERC thinking

03 **Academic inbreeding**
Limited international mobility and independence from Ph.D. supervisors

04 **Institutions not supportive of early-stage researchers**
Programmes to support early independence missing

05 **ERC not a benchmark of quality**

WHAT CHANGED

01 **Methodology 2017+/2025+ for Evaluating Research Organisations**

02 **New funding instruments aligned with ERC principles**
Czech Science Foundation: EXPRO (2018), Junior Star (2020)

03 **Schemes to support international mobility (ESIF)**

04 **Support schemes & ERC pipelines at some institutions**
CU (PRIMUS), CAS (ERC Incubator), MU (MASH) …

05 **ERC CZ Programme - MEYS**
to fund high-quality proposals passing to Step 2 (5 years for „A”s, 2 years for „B”s)
…

CZECH NATIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM
HOW DID IT ALL START?



2010	2011	2014	2021
ERC Awareness Raising Event	First interactive workshop	Workshops divided into domains	**EG established,** Strategic Recommendations for Host Institutions

CZECH NATIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM

Expert Group for Supporting ERC Applicants

- **January 2021** - Joint Declaration of Charles University (CU) and Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS).
- **16 members** from all three ERC scientific domains, coordinated by **prof. Zdeněk Strakoš**.
- Support to **Czechia-based applicants** regardless of their institutional affiliation.
- Coordinates the **scientific & discipline-specific aspects** of ERC support activities.
- Provides **expert feedback** on the scientific quality of ERC proposals, **individual consultations** to the applicants and **facilitates contacts with relevant experts**.
- Other experts involved, incl. via the **ERC Mentoring Initiative**.
- Activities financed by TC Prague (project **CZERA** supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports), **CU & CAS.**

Technology Centre Prague

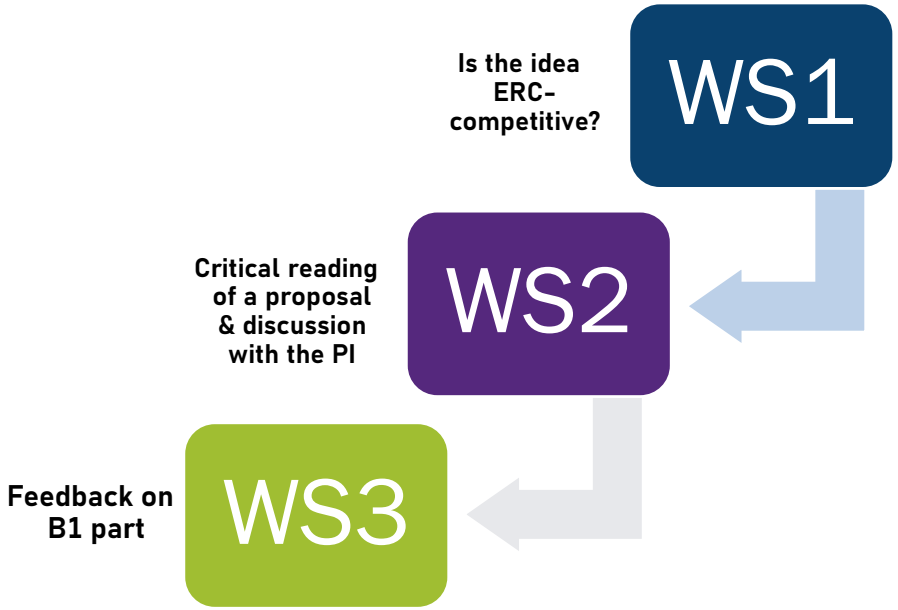
- TC Prague - **Czech National Information Centre for European Research** - the main contact point for ERC.
- **Organizes key support activities for applicants**, incl. information days, workshops, and mock interviews.
- **Cooperates closely with the Expert Group**, maintains links with the international **NCP network, ERC(EA)** & **ERC Programme Commitee (EC)**.
- Provides **consulting services** and **ensures continuity of ERC applicant support**.



Out of 35 Czech ERC StG and CoG PIs in HE (2021-2025 calls), **32 went through the national support system.**

ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT ERC APPLICANTS IN CZECHIA

1. **NATIONAL INFORMATION DAY:** held annually; recommended to attend two years prior proposal submission (online, see last year's edition).
2. **WORKSHOPS FOR ERC APPLICANTS:** 3-part interactive online training for StG and CoG applicants (until 2026 based on the submission of CV/TR/abstract; in 2026: 180 applicants, 50 admitted, 40 - 50 experts involved).





3. **MOCK INTERVIEWS**: for ERC StG, CoG & AdG applicants invited to Step 2 of evaluation (regardless of their previous participation in the workshops).
4. **OTHER ACTIVITIES**: methodological workshops/webinars for institutions, individual mentoring/ consultations for applicants.

FROM AD-HOC SUPPORT TO INSTITUTIONAL ERC PIPELINES & A SUPPORTIVE ECOSYSTEM

01 **PRIORITY**	ERC is not yet consistently recognized as a strategic priority at the highest institutional and governmental levels.
02 **INCENTIVES & RECOGNITION**	ERC success is not always sufficiently recognised through workload, career or financial incentives. Uneven institutional support for the independence of early-career researchers.
03 **AMBITION**	A 'mentality of averageness' can favour local-grant comfort over frontier ambition.
04 **TIMING**	Preparation often starts too late. Too many applications remain immature.
05 **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES**	Institutional capacities to provide ERC support remain uneven.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR VALUABLE TIME AND GOOD LUCK!

Our special thanks and recognition to the members of the Expert Group and to all ERC grantees and experts who work with us!

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