

**To Professor László Lovász
President
Hungarian Academy of Sciences**

**Letter of solidarity with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
from participants of the Budapest conference of the European Society for the History of
the Human Sciences**

Dear Professor Lovász,

During the last week the annual meeting of ESHHS was held, which was hosted by our Hungarian colleagues in Budapest for the fourth time. Delegates attending the conference, including psychologists and historians from many countries, are deeply concerned about the apparent desperation of our Hungarian colleagues regarding the state of scientific research in their country. All the more so as we greatly value the contribution of Hungarian members to our collective scholarship in the history of the human sciences.

From recent information, we have the impression that the new measures of the Hungarian government concerning the Academy of Sciences could be disadvantageous for this scientific research area, among others, by impinging on the crucial matter of academic freedom. Our Hungarian colleagues are concerned that the measures have been taken without considering the effectiveness or productivity of research institutes, supported by data. They were shocked to have been left out of the negotiations preceding the decisions. They feel that their work and expertise is not respected and they are worried about their future. Of most concern to us and them is that in the field of social sciences, professional recognition would increasingly depend on extra-scientific factors, not on standards of performance, judged by scientific peers, which should be the only elements to determine the evaluation of academic endeavours.

We as historians want to point out that inappropriate state interventions may cause irremediable harm to scientific research. Scientific laboratories that are broken up may then disappear forever, as has happened several times in history, among others with the Budapest school of psychoanalysis. Ill-measured intervention by the state into the way science works may deprive a country of a crucial intellectual element of its culture, and may also obstruct economic development.

On the basis of the above concerns, we would like to express our deep concern about the law which terminates control of the Hungarian Academy of Science over its research institutes, and our sincere hope is that such measures may be reversed. It is necessary that *scientists* retain decisive control over both the management of scientific work and the evaluation of scientific achievements.

Budapest, 13 July 2019

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