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Prof. László Lovász  
Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Dear Professor László Lovász,

It has come to our knowledge that our colleagues in Hungary are facing a very difficult situation concerning their future academic work, as 70 % of the funding for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has recently been moved to the new Ministry for Innovation and Technology. The staff of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences can now apply only for short-term funding, subject to an evaluation system which is unclear.

This system will seriously damage the work of our colleagues and make it impossible for them to plan their work on a long-time basis. The opaque evaluation system of the project-based tenders constitutes a break from standard practice and a violation of fundamental principles of academic freedom in the European Union. Basic research must not be placed under direct political control.

For the future of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary's oldest and most prominent scholarly and scientific institution, it is essential that it be able to continue to pursue its work as an independent body, partly financed by state funds on a regular, non-partisan basis.

We ask you to act against this new system and ensure that internationally established forms of academic freedom are guaranteed for our Hungarian colleagues. The freedom of academic life from political interest is fundamental and one of the pillars of a functioning democracy and vigorous intellectual inquiry.