

Open Letter to the President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, László Lovász

We would like to express support for you in defence of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and of academic freedom in Hungary.

We share with you and your colleagues a grave concern over decisions made by the National Office for Research, Development, and Innovation, and in particular the launching of the so-called “program of excellence” by the Hungarian government on January 31, 2019. This program radically changes the funding structure of the academy and as a result endangers the existence of many research units, and with them the work of thousands of scholars and scientists working in these institutes whose high-calibre work has made Hungary an internationally recognized centre of critical research in many disciplines.

Threats to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences violate the fundamental principles of academic freedom, placing research in the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences under increased and direct political control. Inquiry that is free of political interference is essential for scholarship to thrive. The prospects for critical inquiry free of government influence have diminished significantly in Hungary in a very short period of time.

We support the calls for concerted discussion and open consultation with all interested parties within Hungary with a view to maintaining the independence and research integrity of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. We call upon the Hungarian government to withdraw the proposed changes and instead to strengthen the role of the Hungarian Academy of Science as an invaluable international partner.

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