



RUSSIAN AND EAST EUROPEAN INSTITUTE

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
School of Global and International Studies
College of Arts and Sciences

February 11, 2019

Prof. László Lovász
President, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Dear Prof. Lovász,

We, the leadership of the Russian and East European Institute (REEI) at Indiana University's Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, are writing to express both deep concern for the future of academic freedom in Hungary, and support for colleagues in Hungary who resist attempts to place basic research under governmental funding and direct political control. In the face of recent developments that endanger academic freedom and open intellectual inquiry, we believe that it is essential that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary's oldest and most prominent scholarly and scientific institution, be able to continue to pursue its work as an independent body partly financed by state funds on a regular, non-partisan basis. We join the international community of scholars who are committed to genuine, open intellectual endeavour, to voice our support for our colleagues in the Hungarian Academy Staff Forum, and for the future of academic freedom in Hungary.

The Hungarian government's new "program of excellence" model, which compels research centers to apply for their entire budget from the new Ministry for Innovation and Technology under unclear evaluation procedures, threatens to deprive the Hungarian Academy of Sciences of its position as custodian of the largest network of research institutions in Hungary, allowing for arbitrary, politically motivated decisions. Under the project-based system of tenders, basic research in Hungary is being placed under governmental funding and direct political control. Therefore, we urge the Presidium of the Academy to carefully weigh the decision of whether to participate in the tender under the given conditions. Doing so would compromise the independence of the Academy and the integrity of its research network.

Academic freedom is under attack in many parts of the world. That it has been undermined in Hungary, at the heart of Europe, is particularly disturbing to those of us who have welcomed the spread of democracy in the region after the fall of the Berlin Wall. We are gravely concerned that the government of Hungary continues to erode its people's freedoms, rights, and access to information. We voice our strong support of our colleagues in the Hungarian Academy Staff Forum, and we support their efforts to protect academic freedom in Hungary.

Sincerely,

Sarah D. Phillips, Director, REEI

Mark Trotter, Assoc. Director, REEI

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