

February 11, 2019

Lászlo Lovász, President
Hungarian Academy of Sciences
lnokseg@titkarsag.mta.hu

Dear Dr. Lovász,

The American Historical Association registers deep concern over ongoing developments in the academic sphere in Hungary, particularly with respect to the internationally renowned Hungarian Academy of Sciences and its Institute of History. We affirm our support for the principle of the independence of academic inquiry from political pressures of any sort.

The American Historical Association includes approximately 12,000 members around the world and promotes historical thinking, the work of historians, and respect for the integrity of historical scholarship.

The structural reforms launched by the Hungarian Ministry for Innovation and Technology on January 31, 2019, endanger the very existence of the academy's research institutes and the publications they support. The requirement that researchers and research institutes within the academy must apply for funding from ministerial authorities threatens to create a situation in which proposals and publications may become subject to political approval. These reforms, therefore, imperil the international standing and distinction of the academy.

The freedom of academic inquiry from political influence is an essential pillar of democracy and the integrity of intellectual life in any nation. Historians, like our colleagues in other disciplines, require this freedom of inquiry to contribute rigorously to scholarly and civic life. The American Historical Association expresses our support for the autonomy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the preservation of its research institutes, its traditions of distinguished science and scholarship, and its standing in the international community of academic research.

Sincerely,



John R. McNeill
President, American Historical Association

CC

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