



K O N I N K L I J K E N E D E R L A N D S E
A K A D E M I E V A N W E T E N S C H A P P E N



ROYAL NETHERLANDS ACADEMY
OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Secretariat ALLEA | Jägerstr. 22/23 | 10117 Berlin | Germany

Prime Minister of the Netherlands,
Mr M. Rutte,
P.O. Box 20001
2500 EA Den Haag

Amsterdam, 21 June 2019
Reference: FAO/CVW/1915

KNAW-Committee for the Freedom of Scientific Pursuit
contact: KNAW-FAO@knaw.nl

Ref: Threat to the academic freedom of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Excellency,

We, the undersigned, are writing to you concerning an ongoing conflict between the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian government, which severely threatens the academic freedom of one of the most prominent research institutions in Hungary.

During the past year, the Hungarian government, by means of unlawful pressure and claims about the need for reorganization, has been attempting to remove the academy's autonomy to run its research network free of any political influence. ALLEA, the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities, jointly with its Member Academies, have highlighted on multiple occasions the need to secure the institutional autonomy of the academy as well as the academic freedom of the researchers within the academy's research institutes.

Academic freedom is one of the most fundamental tenets of European values as article 13 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights clearly states. The latest ALLEA statement on the matter is available [here](#). Yet, on 4 June 2019, the government submitted a bill to the parliament that would fundamentally change the Hungarian research and development system and the structure of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The bill would separate the 15 research institutes and 150 university research groups of the Academy including properties, research grants and part of its central administration and put them under the control of a new government dominated board undermining the freedom and eliminating the self-governance of the largest research network in the country.


To this day the Hungarian government has shown no willingness to provide any meaningful evidence on why the separation would be necessary and has disregarded the willingness of the academy to find a mutually

satisfactory solution. The new structure and in particular the new governance of the research institutes is being introduced in opposition to the professional opinion of the Hungarian scientific community.

We are calling on you as the Prime Minister of the Netherlands to make you aware of this regrettable development undermining European values in one of the EU member states and to call on you to take appropriate action towards the Hungarian government.

We believe that the erosion of scientific freedom in one member state is the erosion of scientific freedom in the entire EU and can therefore not be tolerated.

With our kind regards,



Prof. Wim van Saarloos
President Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie
van Wetenschappen



Prof. Antonio Loprieno
President of ALLEA

Copy to

- Embassy of Hungarian
His Excellency Mr. Dr. Z.E. Andras Kocsis
- Netherlands Embassy
His Excellency Mr. F.P.R. van Nouhuys
- Human Rights Ambassador to the Netherlands
Mrs. M.H. Schuurmans