

Minister László Palkovics
Ministry of Innovation and Technology
Fő utca 44-50
1011 Budapest
Hungary



25th June 2018

Proposed amendment of the Law on the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Law on the 2019 State Budget of Hungary

Dear Minister Palkovics,

We have been informed about the proposed amendment of the Law on the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA) and the Law on the 2019 state budget of Hungary and its implications for MTA. Academia Europaea (AE) has strong links with MTA and no less than 114 Hungarian scientists and scholars are Members of our Academy. Members of MTA have played important roles in the life of AE and our 29th Annual Plenary Conference in 2017 took place at MTA in Budapest. We welcome any efforts by the Hungarian government to improve the Hungarian science system, but the proposed amendment, no doubt due to lack of proper consultation with MTA, threatens the scientific autonomy and, most importantly, the quality of scientific output from MTA. The amendment, if implemented, would diminish the quality and scope of the scientific output from Hungary and fail to have positive effects on the Hungarian research environment.

The excellence of MTA's researchers and the output of its research centres, institutes and research groups are second to none in Hungary, and due to the autonomy of the institution it enjoys widespread trust among the Hungarian population and within the European scientific community. The exceptional results in the region in winning grants from the European Research Council are also noteworthy. The Budapest offices of the Academy have and continue to be important hubs for European science diplomacy meetings.

AE currently has over 3,800 independently elected scientists and scholars (including 114 from Hungary) who are drawn from the entire continent and more widely. Our members are elected purely for their excellence irrespective of citizenship or nationality. Recognizing the pre-eminent role of MTA in ensuring Hungarian scientific excellence, we strongly support MTA's demand to withdraw the proposed amendment of the Law on MTA and the Law on the 2019 state budget

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from voting in Parliament, to allow for a wider consultation on the effects of the law. This would ensure that the academy's autonomy remains untouched and that an appropriate role for basic and fundamental research is safeguarded. We therefore endorse the Resolution of the Presidium of MTA issued on 15th June 2018.

Yours sincerely,



Sierd Cloetingh

President of Academia Europaea

President of COST (European Co-operation in Science and Technology)

Knight of the Royal Order of the Netherlands Lion

Member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences

Member of the German National Academy of Science & Engineering

Honorary Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences



Ole H Petersen

Vice-President of Academia Europaea

Commander of the Order of the British Empire

Fellow of The Royal Society

Member of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina

Honorary Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Copy to: Professor László Lovász, President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences



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