



February 15, 2019

David B. Cornstein
U.S. Embassy Budapest
Szabadsag ter 12
H-1054 Budapest Hungary

Dear Ambassador Cornstein,

We, the American Sociological Association, representing more than 12,000 professionals in our field, are writing to express our concern and to register opposition to the proposed changes in governance of the world-renowned Hungarian Academy of Sciences, including the Social Science Research Institute in which many Hungarian sociologists are employed.

Putting academic research institutes under the direct control of political ministries, in any country, endangers academic freedom and scholarly inquiry. The proposed requirement by the Hungarian government that researchers must apply for funding for specific projects from ministerial authorities threatens to create a situation in which the creation of scholarship may become subject to political approval. The international standing of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences will suffer if the independence of its scholarship is compromised.

We understand that Hungary's leadership is seeking to improve innovation for economic benefit. As sociologists, we know that the freest and fairest societies are the ones most likely to spawn scientific discoveries and insight. We respectfully ask that you communicate to Dr. Palkovics, Minister for Innovation and Technology, and other appropriate members of the Hungarian government, that it would be wise to reconsider a plan that might sacrifice independent inquiry to political objectives and instead preserve the Academy's longstanding independence and reputation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Mary Romero'.

Dr. Mary Romero
President
American Sociological Association