



University of Sheffield
2 Hounsfield Road
Sheffield
S3 7RF

Tel: 0114 222 8976
ucu@sheffield.ac.uk

29th June 2018

Letter of solidarity to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

To our colleagues and comrades at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences,

We write to you to express our support and solidarity to you, Hungary's most noted society of academics, and also to express our support for academics and for academic freedom in general, a vital component of any democratic and progressive society.

Like you, we are angry and disturbed to hear of new plans which could potentially allow the Hungarian government control of how approximately half of the Academy's funding is allocated¹ through the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. We note that this move comes at a time when a major pro-government Hungarian magazine, *Figyelő*, has just published a list of 200 academics who study gender, migration, ethnic minorities and LGBT+ issues, which it has accused of being politically suspicious². We note also that the racist, ultra-nationalist and anti-working class Orbán government is attempting to drum up support for its anti-migrant and anti-worker policies and to label critics of the government as "mercenaries"³ employed by the anti-Brexit billionaire George Soros. The right to criticise governments is essential to any democratic system and the Hungarian state must not be allowed to silence this. We fear that, in this inhumane political climate, the effects of this new funding structure will be to silence and repress those academics who are bravely engaged in dissent and in the exposure of governmental misdeeds.

Please let us know if we can do anything in particular to help at this or any future time.

Yours in solidarity,

The University of Sheffield branch of the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU)

¹ <https://hungarytoday.hu/orban-govt-plans-greater-control-over-academy-of-sciences-budget-which-critics-call-assault-on-academic-freedom/>

² <https://sciencebusiness.net/news/orban-allies-target-hungarian-social-scientists-battle-academy-sciences>

³ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/hungary-victor-orban-magazine-list-journalists-refugee-george-soros-mercenaries-a8301806.html>

