



Belgrade, 11 February 2019

Dear Prof. László Lovász,

We write to you as the President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, to express our solidarity with the predicament with which your institution is faced and our concern for the future of academic freedom in Hungary.

As scholars in neighbouring Serbia, our research has immensely benefitted due to cooperation with scholars and institutions in Hungary. We have been engaged in bilateral projects, we have jointly participated in various conferences, and we have also seen how academia in Serbia has benefited from young scholars who were enrolled at postgraduate courses in Hungary. It is, therefore, not surprising that we have been closely and worriedly following how the grip of the current neoliberal government in Hungary tightens around academic freedom: first with the discriminatory acts against Central European University, then with the audacious campaign against gender studies programs, and now with the open attack on Hungarian Academy of Sciences. We are prompted to reaction by these last events, as we closely cooperate with Institute of Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and we have had a chance to witness first-class scholarship being produced in this institution.

In past few years scholars at state institutes in Serbia have fought similar battle as you are facing now: the one to have secure employment and fair wage as a prerequisite of academic freedom and performing research. We do not believe that system of short-term tenders, "excellence projects" and similar concoctions, which are usually assessed under arbitrary evaluation procedures, can vastly contribute to the excellence of scholarly output, especially in humanities, where critical thought and academic freedom are of outmost importance. Moreover, we are justly vigilant and wary that these kinds of reform can be used to curtail independence of institutions such as ours, that is, academies of sciences and state institutes.

For the aforementioned reasons we fully support your protest against the so-called reforms aimed against your institution and we stand in solidarity with our fellow workers in science in Hungary as you take the streets tomorrow!

Sincerely,

Dr. Katarina Tomašević

Director of the Institute of Musicology,

Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade