

## Eurodoc Statement on Academic Freedom in Hungary

*Eurodoc strongly expresses its commitment to defend Academic Freedom in Europe. Hereafter, we define academic freedom based on legal and institutional documents, then we highlight the recent evolution of governmental action in Hungary. We finally formulate related recommendations to restore and sustain a healthy environment for research.*

**Academic freedom** is defined as “the right, without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research, in disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom to express freely their opinion about the institution or system in which they work, freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies” following [UNESCO recommendation](#) (1997). This right is guaranteed in European conventions and charters<sup>1</sup> and in the [European Charter and Code for Researchers](#) (2005)<sup>2</sup>. In accordance with these international conventions, the right to academic freedom is constitutionally defined and guaranteed in Hungary<sup>3</sup>.

However, the recent [Paris communiqué](#) of the European Ministerial Conference for Higher Education (2018) clearly recognizes that these fundamental values have been challenged in recent years in some European countries and stresses the importance of Academic freedom and public responsibility for and of higher education as the backbone of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

[EURODOC](#), the *European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers* follows with vigilance the evolution of the situation at european level. We are concerned about the recent governmental recurring intervention in higher education and research institutions in Hungary affecting academic freedom and autonomy, a *sine qua non* for the proper functioning of modern universities.

Governmental intervention within research and teaching have been applied to research programs considered as not concordant with governmental orientations through the restrictions made on certain research subjects in the academic curricula, namely gender studies (August 2018)<sup>4</sup>. Governmental intervention has already affected the independence and autonomy of the [Central European University](#) (CEU) and of the [Hungarian Academy of Sciences](#) (HAS)<sup>5</sup> and has led to the transfer of the US accredited master and doctoral degrees to Vienna (October 2018), despite massive student protest<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [European Convention of Human Rights](#) (1950 – articles 5, 10, 11), [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#) (2000/2012 – articles 10-14).

<sup>2</sup> [European Charter and Code for Researchers](#) (2005 – Annex: section 1, General Principles and Requirements applicable to Researchers) states that researchers should enjoy “the freedom of thought and expression, and the freedom to identify methods by which problems are solved, according to recognized ethical principles and practices.”

<sup>3</sup> [The Fundamental law of Hungary](#) (25 Apr 2011 – article X).

<sup>4</sup> [Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban bans gender studies programmes](#). *The independent* (24 Oct 2018).

<sup>5</sup> [Hungary's scientists outraged by government budget grab](#). *Nature News* (15 Feb 2019).

<sup>6</sup> [Embattled university switches countries in the face of controversial law](#). *Nature News* (26 Oct 2018).



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That is why, Eurodoc, along with other stakeholders ([EU parliament](#), [EUA](#), [ALLEA](#), [Academia Europea](#), [EuroScience](#), [Coimbra Group](#), [EURASHE](#), [The Guild](#), [ESU](#), [ERASMUS+ Jean Monnet Chairs](#),...) hereby states its support to all researchers and institutions affected in their educational programs and research plans. We exhort the Hungarian government to fulfil its binding commitments to safeguard freedom to found and run educational establishments with due respect for democratic principles by :

- Strictly separating political purposes from academic affairs by lifting the conditional accreditation and financing of programs, regardless of their alignment with government's politics;
- Guaranteeing the independence of academic institutions and organizations, without interfering within teaching and research curricula in line with the [resolution of the Presidium of the HAS](#), in order for the scientific community to fully contribute to the development of the country in a healthy environment.

Eurodoc and the Hungarian representation of early career researchers *The Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (DOSZ)*<sup>7</sup> will collaborate in monitoring the evolution of the situation in Hungary in the future.

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Signed by Eva Hnatkova [President [European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers \(Eurodoc\)](#)] on 15 April 2019.

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