



Agricultural Economics Society

18th February 2019

Dr. László Lovász
President Hungarian Academy of Sciences,
(*Magyar Tudományos Akadémia*)
Széchenyi István sq. 9
1051 Budapest,
Hungary

Dear Professor Lovász,

I am writing to you as President of the Agricultural Economics Society (AES), one of the world's leading associations of professional and academic agricultural economists, founded in 1926. It aims to promote the study and teaching of agricultural economics and related disciplines, and their application to policy issues and practices in the agricultural, food and related industries, rural communities and the environment.

The AES welcomes membership from all countries and over many years has developed strong links with Hungarian agricultural economists, who regularly attend and present their research at its annual conferences, as well as actively engaging with members of the Society.

The AES has always vigorously emphasised the importance of and the need to recognise, in principle and in practice, that academic freedom is a key element of a functioning democracy and underpins internationally recognised research excellence. This is the standard practice in applying the fundamental principles of academic freedom in the European Union. It is vital that the funding of research is based on fully transparent criteria and procedures and that the ability to initiate research programmes and publish evidence-based results should not depend on political patronage.

In this respect, the AES is aware that a reorganisation of the funding arrangements for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences via the Ministry for Innovation and Technology is currently underway and would strongly stress that this should in no way undermine these key principles and practices that are universally recognised in functioning democracies.

We therefore fully support our agricultural economics colleagues in Hungary in ensuring that these principles and practices are upheld. To this end, we support the calls for concerted discussion and open consultation with all interested parties within Hungary with a view to maintaining the independence and research integrity of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

AES Secretariat, Holtwood, Red Lion Street, Cropredy, Banbury, Oxon, OX171PD

Tel: +44 (0) 1295 750 182

Email: secretariat@aes.ac.uk Web: www.aes.ac.uk

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The AES would welcome your comments on the concerns highlighted in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John Davis'.

Professor John Davis
President of the Agricultural Economics Society 2018-19
www.aes.ac.uk