

Urgent appeal of six European Rectors' Conferences to the Hungarian government

Solidarity with the Budapest University of Theatre and Film Arts (SZFE): The Rectors' Conferences of the Czech Republic (CRC), Germany (HRK), Poland (KRASP), Slovenia (RKRS) and Austria (uniko, FHK) are seriously concerned about the threat to university autonomy.

The six Rectors' Conferences express their concern about the Hungarian government transferring all of the management powers of the Budapest University of Theatre and Film Arts (SZFE) to a new board of trustees, which is appointed directly by the government.

After the forced move of the Central European University and the withdrawal of the autonomy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences last year, these measures are a further step toward silencing critical positions by reducing the political independence of art, culture and science in Hungary.

This action violates internationally accepted and generally valid principles of academic freedom and self-government of academic institutions. The six Rectors' Conferences refer to their Vienna Declaration, signed in 2018, which identifies academic freedom and institutional autonomy as key elements for the functioning and development of higher education institutions. Autonomous universities are an essential element of democratic societies, because they are a place of free discourse on current social and political developments.

The Rectors' Conferences therefore urge the Hungarian government to restore full autonomy of the university and they declare their solidarity with the resigned university management and the protesting students.

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