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[Letters to the Editor](#)

Academic freedom under threat



People protest outside the Hungarian Academy of Sciences against government plans to weaken the institution in Budapest, Hungary, on Tuesday. (Tamas Kaszas/Reuters)

On his current trip to Central Europe, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the United States is increasing people-to-people ties with Hungary, including exchange programs for high school students [[“Pompeo, activists meet in Hungary,”](#) news, Feb. 12]. Before that happens, Mr. Pompeo would do well to call upon Laszlo Lovasz, president of the [Hungarian Academy of Sciences](#), to take the steps necessary to [protect academic freedom](#) and open intellectual inquiry on a nonpartisan basis. [Recent actions by the Hungarian administration](#) now require all research centers to apply for state financing on a project-by-project basis with unspecified evaluation procedures, allowing for arbitrary, politically motivated funding award decisions.

This process is a major departure from standard practice and places control over the evaluation and selection of meritorious research awards in the hands of politicians, not qualified scientists, where it belongs. Just as in the United States, where public funding for scholarly research is authorized by the national government but allocated according to a nonpartisan peer-review process, we urge Mr. Lovasz to intervene on behalf of free speech and sound scholarship to see that research in the humanities and social sciences, in particular, is protected from partisan politics.

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