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Mr. Chancellor Sebastian Kurz
Bundeskanzleramt Österreich
Ballhausplatz 2
A-1010 Wien

10 September 2018

Subject: The Section “Feminist Theory and Gender Studies” of the Austrian Association for Sociology condemns Hungary’s attempt to prohibit Gender Studies!

Dear Mr. Chancellor Kurz,

We, the Section “Feminist Theory and Gender Studies” of the Austrian Association for Sociology (ÖGS), write to you today in your current capacity as the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU).

Throughout Europe and internationally, Gender Studies has become an established academic field of research and teaching. We think that the EU’s long-standing engagement with research and policy promoting gender equality has played a significant role in this.

Considering this development, it is with great concern that we have learned that the Hungarian government is planning to enact a law that would terminate Gender Studies programmes at Hungarian universities. Gender Studies scholars trained at Hungarian universities have taken an important role in advancing scientific knowledge about gender relations and gender inequalities, both in Hungary and internationally, a role which continues today. They have also engaged in encouraging much-needed emancipatory social change. The intended regulations may be legal according to Hungarian legislation. However, they are an attack not only against this scientific field of research and teaching but also against democratic institutions and the freedom of science more generally. The ban would be an unprecedented act of political intervention into the curriculum of universities, to which autonomy is conferred by the country’s constitution. By denying academic freedom to faculty and administrators, the Hungarian government is setting itself outside the community of nations upholding this democratic principle, one of the five principles on which the European Union is founded. Furthermore, we believe that, once this line has been crossed, other fields of research providing critical voices may be attacked next.

The undermining of such a fundamental principle as the freedom of science in one member state cannot possibly be treated as some national issue pertinent only to its sovereignty. This violation must be dealt with as a common concern of the EU as a whole. We thus strongly

urge the Austrian government, in its capacity as the Presidency of the Council of the European Union to engage in dialogue with the Hungarian government to prevent the announced ban on Gender Studies.

We also call upon member states of the EU, as well as EU institutions of which Hungary is a part, to take a stand against this proposed legislation, which violates the fundamental principles of its community.

We call for solidarity from, and echo solidarity with, the international scientific community!

Sincerely,



The Board of the ÖGS Section "Feminist Theory and Gender Studies"

Univ.-Prof.in Kyoko Shinozaki, Ph.D., Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg

Dr.in Kristina Binner, M.A., Johannes Kepler Universität Linz

Univ.-Prof.in Dr.in Petra Dannecker, M.A., Universität Wien

Jana Mikats, M.A., Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz

Univ.-Ass. Dr. Paul Scheibelhofer, Universität Innsbruck

CC:

Dr. Miklós Kásler, Minister of Human Capacities, Hungary

Dr. József Bódis, Minister of State for Education, Ministry of Human Capacities, Hungary