



**Letter from Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje
in support of Gender Studies programs in Hungary**

We at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje call on the Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources and the Orban regime to suspend its attack on academic freedom. Those same gender studies programs, having been approved by the Ministry, have already produced experts and knowledge instrumental for both Hungary’s development and its internationalization in terms of education.

The lack of any public debate on the matter indicates that the espoused reasons for cracking down on gender studies have nothing to do with the field’s economic relevance to Hungary’s domestic economy. The ongoing toxic climate of illiberal democracies throughout Europe affects unequally various actors seeking progressive socio-political change. Of those affected, the first in line are as usual women and minorities. The ongoing attack by the Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources against scholars and institutions providing education in gender studies in Hungary is an example of illiberalism gone awry.

The Ministry’s intention to crack down on gender studies programs lacks any basis and argumentation; the Ministry and Orban’s regime do not need any such argumentation to begin with, as the climate to attack gender studies has been already settled by that same regime’s illiberalism.

We in Macedonia have experienced what it means to subvert progressive higher education and turn it against itself, when in 2011 the University of Skopje’s gender studies undergraduate degree was transformed into “family studies.” The ongoing campaign in Hungary is however unprecedented, but not shocking. Closing down a widely useful and legitimate field such as gender studies will have long-term impact on Hungary. Hungary’s international isolation and its particular role as an EU country will weaken the country’s reputation and will affect knowledge production relevant for anyone interested in the country and beyond.

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Skopje, August 24th, 2018

