

Csaba Lentner

Do Members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Exhibit Competitive Performance? – A Scientometric and Empirical Analysis¹

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Motto: ‘...the social science research groups and institute staff members who continuously criticize the government and show poor performance – and whose removal we would have preferred – will remain a continuing burden; they lack international demand, and even if their institutes were to cease operations, they would nonetheless remain in their university positions, from which they would continue to shape public discourse and influence younger generations’

– Tamás Freund, 2019(current President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences)²

Summary

The effective and objective functioning of the flagship institution of Hungarian science constitutes a public matter of paramount national interest, yet this requirement remains unmet, particularly in the social sciences. In the case of a national institution, such criticism does not constitute an attack but rather an expression of a constructive intention to improve it. Improving academicians’ scientific performance, institutional operations, and the establishment of objective, transparent processes for academic succession would fundamentally serve the nation’s interests. A broad intellectual discourse has emerged concerning the manner of change, intensifying from spring 2025 around the bicentennial of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the election of its new president. The identified institutional challenges have now entered public discourse. The inadequate performance of certain academicians increasingly provokes widespread dissatisfaction, while Hungarian scientific life continues to operate under the influence of underperforming members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences,³ who also increasingly seek to shape political public discourse.⁴

This paper shows how a Hungarian Academy of Sciences that operates through non-transparent, non-objective mechanisms while delivering weak scientific performance can undermine economic competitiveness and weaken the quality of academic succession. To substantiate the performance deficit of academicians, the analysis employs concrete sciento-

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metric methods and empirical observations. The paper argues that a new, performance-based Academy of Sciences, with new academicians, is required.

Keywords: Hungarian Academy of Sciences, competitive science, competitive economy
Journal of Economic Literature (JEL) Codes: B20, N01

COMPETITIVE ECONOMY – WITHOUT COMPETITIVE SCIENCE?

The aim of this paper, as articulated in the abstract, is to examine the scientific performance of members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, particularly in law and economics, as measured by international metrics – that is, the international competitiveness of their scholarly contributions. The fundamental question is whether academicians in these fields can make a meaningful contribution to Hungary's economic competitiveness and thereby to stronger macroeconomic and corporate performance. The analysis rests on the premise that national economic development depends fundamentally on enhancing competitiveness, which must be evaluated within international frameworks where products, services, labour, capital, and financial resources move freely across borders. Consequently, the performance of the 'knowledge infrastructure' can only be meaningfully assessed in an international context. It follows that, national economies capable of effectively organizing their production and service sectors, implementing superior regulatory frameworks, and achieving efficient output – thereby gaining competitiveness – can produce goods of higher quality and greater utility precisely because they are supported by a sophisticated knowledge industry. At the operational level, competitiveness depends upon the capabilities, qualifications, and motivational systems of employees organized within corporate structures, complemented by state legal frameworks that coordinate these elements, effective corporate management methodologies, and efficient state fiscal-and-monetary governance. From a technocratic perspective, production and service industries rest upon physical, chemical, biological, mathematical, and agricultural foundations. These constitute the domains of natural and applied sciences – encompassing technical-technological, pure science, and healthcare-medical fields – alongside the social sciences and humanities. Within the Hungarian academic system's eleven scientific sections, the Department of Economic and Legal Sciences (Section IX) holds particular relevance for this investigation.

This examination focuses primarily on this domain, which continues to provide the scientific, research, and higher-education foundation for the managerial and administrative infrastructure of both state and corporate sectors. The central question remains: Can the quantity and quality of knowledge generated by academicians within the Section of Economic and Legal Sciences exert a positive catalytic effect on the Hungarian economy?²⁵

ON THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMY

In 2010, Hungary's GDP per capita at purchasing power parity (PPP) stood at 66 per cent of the European Union average. This provides the baseline for the subsequent analysis. By 2023, performance had risen to 76.1 per cent, an improvement of 10.1 percentage points.

However, among the five EU countries with the strongest indicators, GDP per capita increased from 130.9 per cent to 142.7 per cent relative to the EU average, constituting an 11.8 percentage point improvement. Conversely, in the five weakest-performing EU countries, GDP per capita grew from 54.6 per cent to 70.1 per cent, representing a 15.5 percentage point increase in per capita performance over this period of nearly one and a half decades. The data indicate that top performers have further consolidated their competitive advantage, while the weakest economies are gradually converging toward Hungary's position.

IMD, the Swiss-based international competitiveness assessment institute, had already published worrying data on Hungary in the early 2020s. Between 2022 and 2023, Hungary fell by seven places in the ranking, while Poland, which has comparable economic characteristics, improved by seven. Hungary slipped to 46th place, whereas Poland advanced to 43rd.

IMD's longer time series is even less favourable – especially for Hungary. Among the 69 countries examined, Hungary maintained its 42nd position in the comprehensive evaluation in 2021, yet fell to 48th place by 2025. Over the same period, the Czech Republic's overall comprehensive evaluation moved from 34th to 25th position, indicating substantially improved competitiveness.

A closer look at the Hungarian data shows that Hungary fell from 8th to 41st place in per capita economic performance. In the assessment of government effectiveness, the country fell from 40th to 46th place. In the evaluation of the efficiency of Hungarian enterprises, performance declined from 56th to 61st position. These declines in the sub-indicators collectively account for the six-position deterioration in Hungary's overall competitiveness ranking.

The Czech economy demonstrates superior innovation capacity compared to Hungary, supported by a more robust science and innovation infrastructure. The proportion of domestic value-added in exports stands at merely 54.1 per cent in Hungary, compared with 62.3 per cent for the Czech Republic. Czech firms therefore embed more domestic value in comparable export products, reflecting stronger managerial and organisational capacity. The contrast appears elsewhere as well: in 2023 Hungary registered 132 new patents, while the Czech Republic registered 352. Among 18-24-year-olds, early leaving from education and training was 11.6 per cent in Hungary and 6.4 per cent in the Czech Republic. The share of employed people with only primary education was 9.7 per cent in Hungary, compared with 4.6 per cent in the Czech Republic.

The IMD international competitiveness assessment institute evaluates country performance based on empirical data, analysing publications, scientific research, and expert opinions to establish comparative rankings. The institute primarily systematises and evaluates scholarly publications in academic journals concerning governmental and corporate efficiency. IMD examines public sector predictability and efficiency, the evolution of state intervention and bureaucracy, and SME access to state subsidies and innovation opportunities. The assessment encompasses governmental resource allocation for artificial intelligence development and associated investment levels. A comparative analysis of Hungarian budget legislation and Czech budgetary data reveals that the domestic approach remains explicitly subsidy-centric, encompassing both business and household sectors. Czech national economic data do not reflect similarly extensive subsidy policies – which would indeed be impractic-

cal, considering Hungary's generous family support schemes, child-related tax benefits, and comprehensive corporate assistance systems. Public evaluations by competitiveness assessment institutes significantly influence decisions by international credit rating agencies and financial and investment capital providers. When a country's image is perceived as weak and deteriorating, investment flows can become constrained, prompting governments to offer stronger incentives to attract investment, while government bond subscriptions demand higher interest rates, thereby increasing the burden on taxpayers.⁶ While government interest expenditure amounted to 4.7 per cent of GDP in Hungary, it was only 1.3 per cent in the Czech Republic.

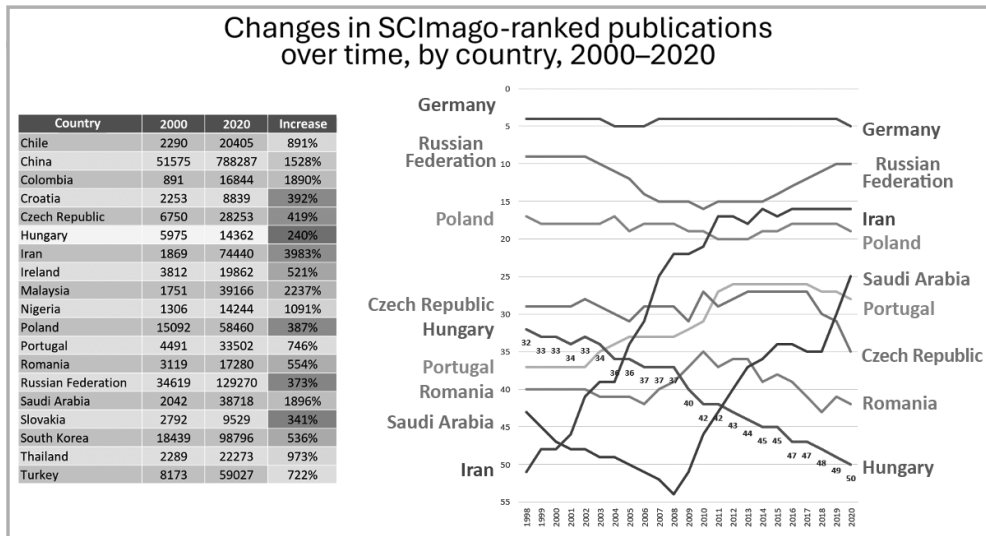
TRACING THE PROBLEM

Given how generous the state's budgetary support schemes for businesses and families are, why does Hungary remain so uncompetitive? First, the production of knowledge at international standards and its management within the Hungarian scientific establishment are of questionable quality and, indeed, display demonstrably weak performance. Only this substandard level of academic performance can trickle down to universities and, through specialists trained in higher education, to companies and to primary and secondary educational institutions.⁷ Second, the limited academic capabilities are often directed primarily toward criticism of governmental economic and social policies within both international and domestic political spheres.

I personally consider the role of knowledge in value-added production decisive. Consequently, the international competitiveness of a nation's scientific elite assumes paramount importance. Hungary faces substantial challenges regarding internationally measurable scientific research and its publication in high-quality international journals (D1 and Q1–Q4 categories).⁸ Its rate of development remains insufficient compared to both international leading nations and comparable developing countries and regional neighbours. Even over two decades, Hungary's production of outstanding international-level publications failed to achieve even a 2.5-fold increase in volume, despite the theoretical expectation that Hungarian Academy of Sciences members – with the highest scientific rankings – and the academic community they lead should spearhead such advancement. While Hungarian academicians' low performance and limited capacity to invigorate scientific progress remain a serious constraint, China achieved 1,528 per cent growth in quality publication volume, Colombia reached 1,890 per cent, Iran 3,983 per cent, and Malaysia 2,237 per cent, while Saudi Arabia realized 1,896 per cent growth – alongside corresponding improvements in underlying research quality. Even regional comparisons appear unfavourable: Romania demonstrated 5.54-fold growth, the Czech Republic achieved 4.19-fold growth, and Turkey realized a 7.22-fold increase. (See Figure 1 for detailed analysis).⁹

This requires a closer examination of the underlying details. This examination assesses the performance of the academicians of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences – the apex of Hungarian scientific achievement – across eleven distinct academic Sections, with particular emphasis on legal and economic members who constitute the analytical focus. What contri-

Figure 1: Changes in SCImago-ranked publications over time by country, 2000–2020



Source: Scopus, www.scientometrics.org, <https://www.SCImagojr.com/journalrank.php> 2025

But how do these scholars make to Hungarian national economic competitiveness from their privileged, highest-ranking, and most remunerated scientific positions? What characterizes the quality of their research performance?

The data sources for the examined academicians are authoritative: the Hungarian Scientific Bibliography Database (MTMT) and the international Scopus scientific database. The examination utilized MTMT data current as of May 8, 2025, while Scopus data processing was conducted on April 3, 2025. The number of academicians examined was 332 according to MTMT records, compared with 310 based on Scopus data. The sample is smaller than the formal total of 365 Hungarian academicians because many maintain MTMT databases that cannot be interpreted in a fully comparable way and because many scholars leave little or no trace in Scopus, which in turn signals limited participation.

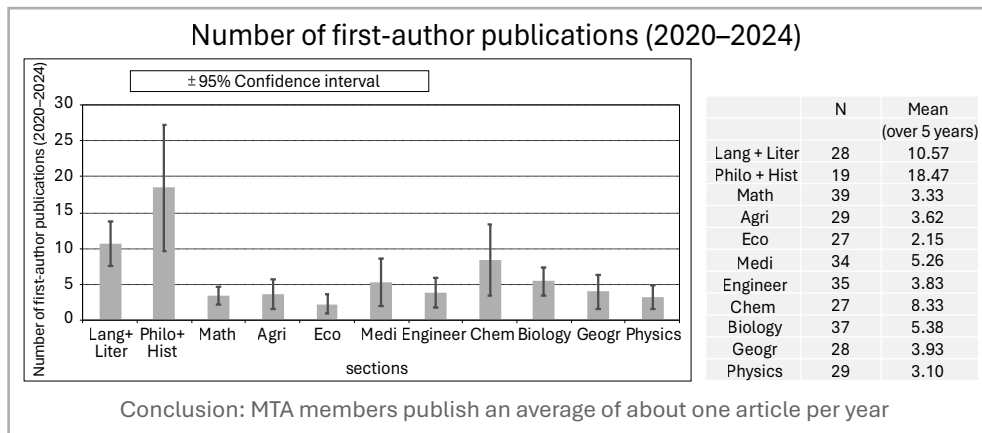
For the purposes of this study, 'original articles' are defined as first-author publications in internationally ranked journals (at or above a specified minimum quartile) published during the preceding five years. No such filtering was applied in the fields of language and literature, philosophy, or history.

Total publication output includes every publication from the preceding five years, regardless of authorship position and irrespective of quartile ranking.

The analysis also examines the presence of Top 1% articles – that is, whether academicians have any first-author publications in Top 1% journals. Anticipating weak results, this part of the analysis extends over the last ten years.

Average percentage output is calculated by comparing academicians with researchers of comparable age active in similar scientific fields. When members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences were compared with the broader cohort of Hungarian non-academic scientists, the MTMT database served as the reference source, while comparisons of Hungarian acade-

Figure 2. Number of first-author publications (see description) by members of academic Sections, 2020–2024



micians with researchers of similar active age in international scientific discourse utilized the Scopus database as the primary data source.

The column on the right in Figure 2 shows the five-year aggregate, requiring division by five to determine annual averages. Based on this calculation, Hungarian Academy of Sciences members (across all eleven Sections) publish roughly one original article per year on average.

Figure 3. Number of publications by all authors (see explanatory notes) by academicians in academic Sections, 2020–2024

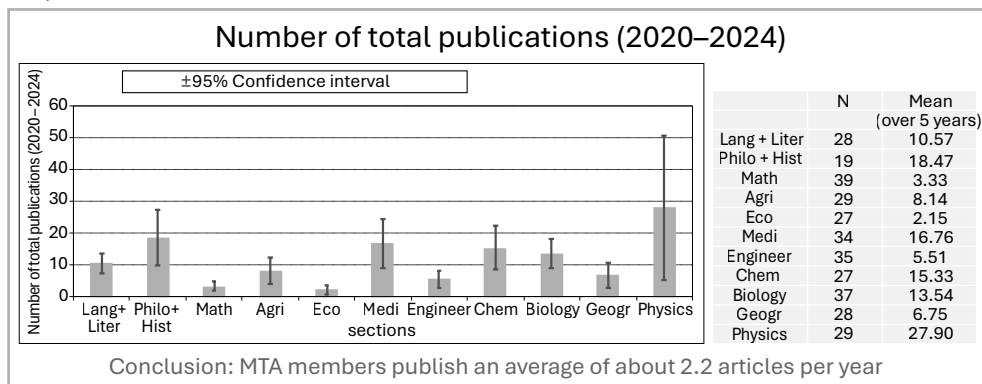
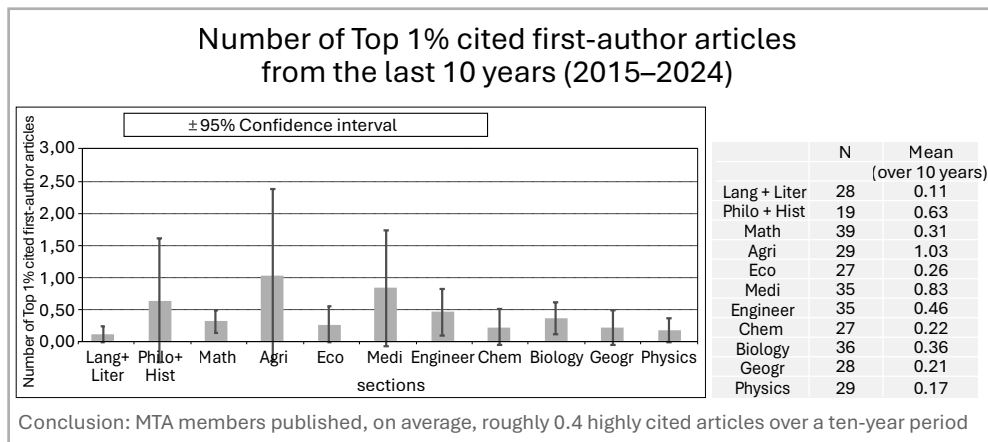


Figure 3 illustrates the same performance metrics as Figure 2, but encompasses all co-authored and first-authored publications. Hungarian Academy of Sciences members contribute to approximately 2.2 articles annually on average, representing performance levels comparable to those expected of doctoral candidates and university assistant professors.

Figure 4. Number of Top 1% cited first-author articles from the last 10 years, by academic Section, 2015–2024



In Figure 4, N denotes the total number of highly cited articles in the given Section, while the mean shows the per-academician average. The aggregate mean equals 0.4, which indicates that each academician produced an average of 0.4 highly cited articles over the ten-year period.

Figure 5. Number of Top 1% cited co-authored articles from the last 10 years, by Academic Section, 2015–2024,

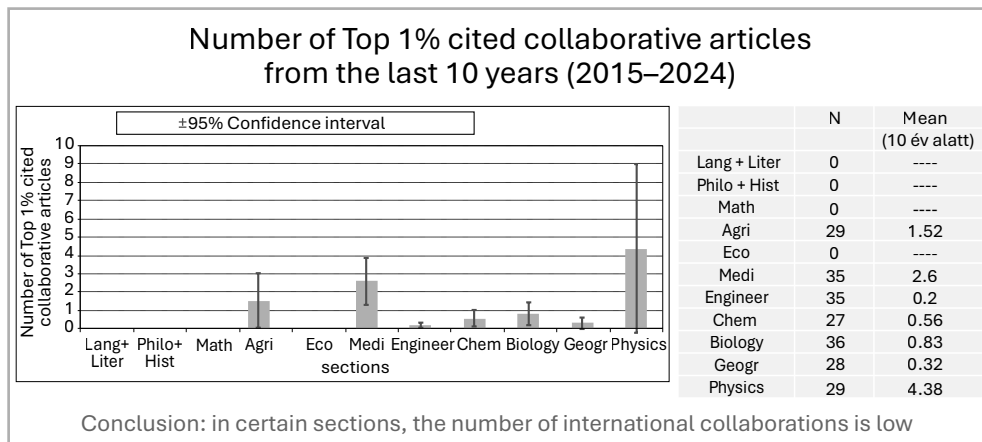


Figure 5 captures the participation of Hungarian academicians in international scientific discourse, specifically their publications in exceptionally strong journal articles co-authored with foreign scholars and cited by the world's leading (Top 1%) journals. For academicians in the economic-legal and historical-literary sections, such output cannot be quantified; no such articles are discernible over the preceding decade.

This analysis illustrates the performance of regular and corresponding members of the Academy across different scientific fields organized by academic Sections, and compares it with that of other Hungarian researchers, revealing no substantial performance differential. Consequently, academician performance across academic sections scarcely differs from the aggregate national average for the scientific community.

Based on international scientometric databases, the entire membership of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences performs markedly below international researchers of comparable age and status. Hungarian academicians reach 39 per cent of the international average – essentially just over one-third of baseline performance levels – thus remaining separated from

Figure 6. Mean academic publication output ratio compared to other Hungarian researchers, by Academic Section (average = 50)

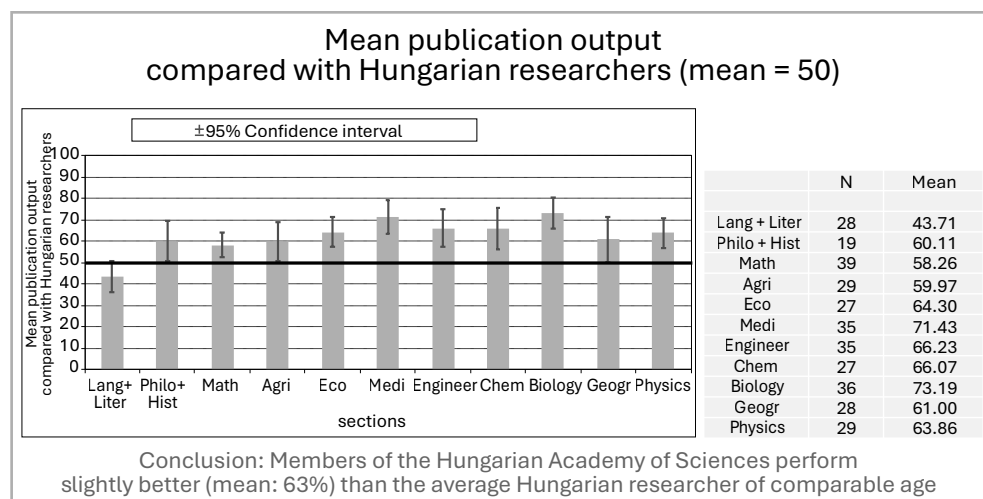
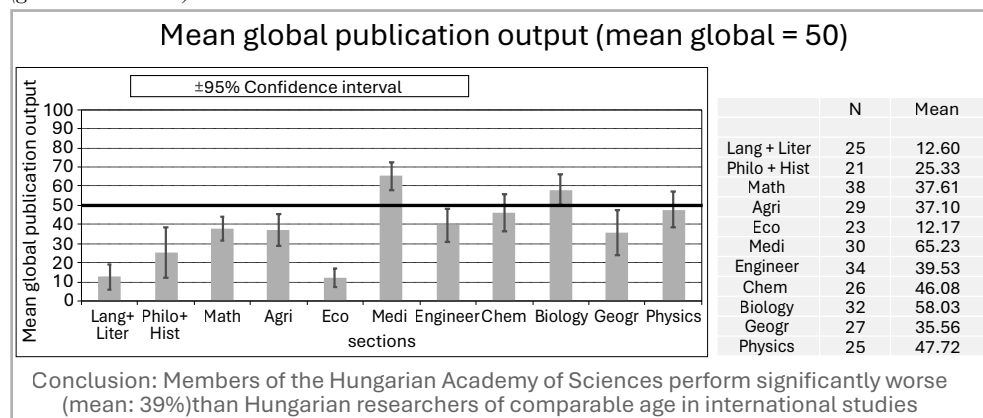


Figure 7. Hungarian academicians compared with mean global publication output, by Academic Section (global mean = 50)



average standards by roughly two-thirds. It bears emphasis that their scientific deficit exists not relative to global excellence, but merely relative to international average performance. (See Figure 7)

The entire examined academic cohort published an average of one original article over the five-year period from 2020 to 2024 – defined here as first-author publications in Q-ranked journals. (See Figure 2.).¹⁰ This output is gravely insufficient. However, analysing all publications from the academic community while disregarding first-author requirements and international Q-ranked journal publication standards reveals that each academician published only 2.2 articles annually on average (Figure 3). Data derived from Figures 2 and 3 establish that academic output operates at performance levels characteristic of less productive assistant lecturers in their twenties or doctoral candidates. Nevertheless, this production rate of one to 2.2 articles per year is insufficient for doctoral degree completion; doctoral candidates must demonstrate substantially higher achievement levels. During doctoral degree proceedings, academicians serving on examination panels consistently expect superior performance from candidates. One could argue that they demand more from doctoral candidates than from themselves – a practice that lacks justification, particularly in the case of academicians.

Figure 4 focuses on the Top 1% internationally highest-ranked professional journals and on the publications in those journals that receive the most worldwide citations, in which Hungarian academicians serve (or would serve) as first authors. Hungarian academicians demonstrate strikingly weak performance in this category as well. Calculations reveal that a Hungarian academician authored an average of 0.4 articles over ten years. Consequently, producing a single genuinely world-class publication – one that presents underlying research findings meeting international standards – might require as much as 25 years. Further examination of academician performance organized by scientific Sections during this same ten-year period points to one of the principal obstacles to Hungary's economic competitiveness and advancement. The average performance of Section IX, which includes economists and lawyers, totals 0.26 studies – equivalent to one-quarter of an article – meaning that they require 40 years to produce an article cited in Top 1% of journals. More precisely, they need four decades to conduct research of sufficient quality to enter the highest tier of international academic scholarship.

Notably, the other defining branch of the humanities – literature and linguistics – shows even weaker performance, with the academicians of that Section producing 0.11 outstanding international articles over ten years. This represents the capacity to publish one world-class scholarly article in these fields per century. According to this trajectory, generations of Hungarian literary scholars since 1925 would have had to wait for current academicians to produce at least one globally recognized article – yet they have failed to meet even this modest benchmark. However, to maintain perspective: English lawns allegedly required 400 years of cultivation to achieve their proverbial excellence.

Naturally, by comparison, Hungarian MTA members in medicine, physics, mathematics, and other natural and applied sciences demonstrate somewhat superior performance to those in literature and linguistics. Nevertheless, the overall average remains problematic: members

of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences may require up to 25 years to approach world-class standards and produce even one internationally competitive article.¹¹

The analysis therefore indicates a substantial lag in international competition in knowledge production. Compared with researchers of similar age in similar fields worldwide, Hungarian academicians achieve only 39 per cent of average output. Their performance is thus 61 per cent below the global average, not merely below the top tier. It bears emphasis that their performance is not 61 per cent weaker than that of the top performers, but 61 per cent below the average. As established, competitive economies and competitive knowledge systems require exceptional development, not moderate or average performance. Examinations conducted using international Scopus and MTMT databases reveal a particularly concerning picture for individual scientific field Sections. Hungarian legal-economic academic performance stands at 12.17 per cent of the global average. Literary scholars demonstrate similarly diminished output, though they arguably do not influence GDP as directly as academicians in economic and legal sciences.

When examining Hungarian academicians in terms of average percentage output relative to domestic researchers of lower academic rank but similar scientific fields and age cohorts (on the basis of the calculations in Figure 6), their results barely exceed national averages – that is, the average for similarly aged non-academic Hungarian researchers. However, the performance level of academicians in literature and linguistics fails to reach even the average of non-academicians in these fields, positioning them below the standards of non-academic researchers of lower scientific rank engaged in literary and linguistic studies. This raises a fundamental question: what justifies their academician status?

The performance of individual academic field Sections varies considerably; within each Section, outstanding, internationally recognized researchers exist, yet their achievements are offset by colleagues whose performance is weak or whose productivity remains limited. However, the fields of law, economics, literature, and history appear to require substantial reform. In philosophy and history, academicians reach only 25.33 per cent of the global average – roughly 75 per cent below even baseline international standards. (See Figure 7)

AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE PERFORMANCE
OF LEGAL AND ECONOMIC ACADEMICIANS
IN SECTION IX OF THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

The analysis draws on the scientometric project at www.scientometrics.org, which is based on numerous international publications.¹² The aim is to provide an objective comparison of academic researchers and scientific fields through a common reference database containing Hungarian researchers of similar age and active in the same scientific fields. The analysis encompasses 31 Hungarian legal and economic academicians. For enhanced clarity, the methodology and results are presented in tabular format.¹³

It should be emphasized that, when the indicator calculations for legal and economic research are compared (see Figure 9 for the methodology used) with the determination of excellence metrics in the natural sciences,¹⁴ these results derive from significantly more lenient

calculation methodologies than those applied in natural science disciplines. Consequently, for the economics and law Sections, the foundational data were determined with substantially reduced stringency in order to create visible, comparable graphics demonstrating the results.

When article output over the previous five calendar years was assessed, the publication types counted differed by field. In the natural sciences, output was sufficiently strong for the analysis to focus exclusively on Q1 articles as the clearest indicator of excellence.

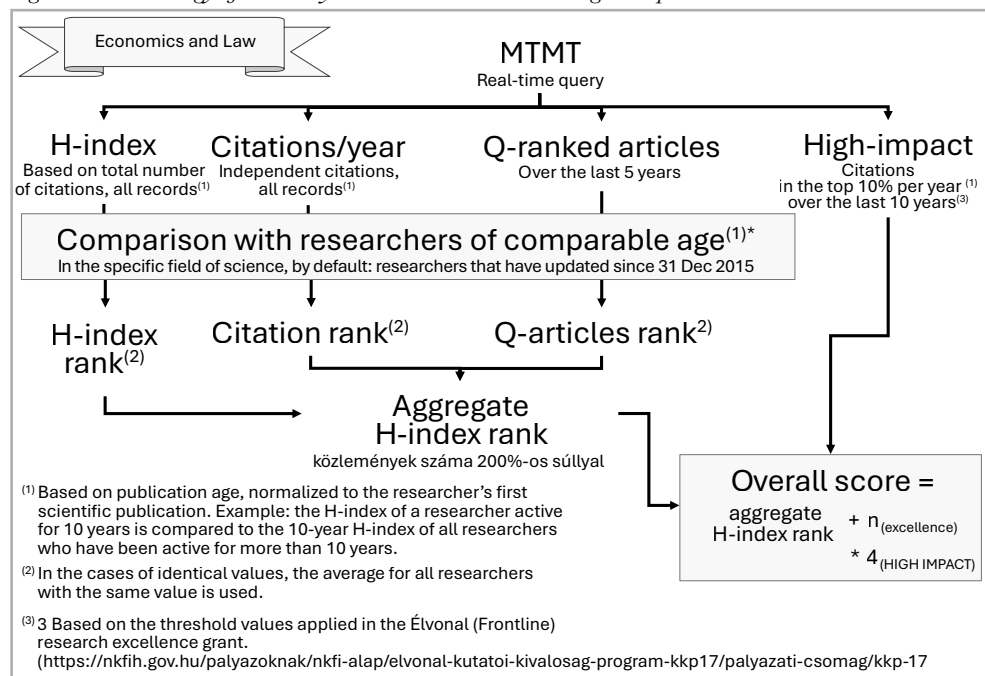
This approach proved unrealistic for economics and law; consequently, all Q-ranked articles, regardless of quartile, had to be included to obtain graphically meaningful data – thus Q3 and Q4 articles contribute to total publication counts, representing journals targeted by recently graduated doctoral researchers seeking competitive research scholarships or advancing toward appointment to professorships. What university instructor would fail to set such objectives? How often is it emphasized that academician status stands above a professorship? This analysis has not yet addressed the fact that in the social sciences and humanities, essentially any publication counted toward total publication numbers in this examination, not exclusively Q-ranked publications.¹⁵

Similarly, for natural and applied sciences (except mathematics), first- and last-author publications in internationally ranked journals were weighted more heavily. In economics, law, and much of the social sciences and humanities, however, performance was so limited that the analysis had to include publications from all authorship positions over the previous five years; otherwise, the figures would scarcely have been interpretable.

Figure 8. Research methodology with explanatory notes

Methodology	Academicians
	AA
	ÄÄ
	BB
	CC
	DD
	EE
	ÉÉ
	FF
	GG
	HH
	II
	JJ
	KK
	LL
	MM
	NN
	OO
	ÖÖ
	PP
	QQ
	RR
	SS
	TT
	UU
	ÜÜ
	VV
	WW
	XX
	YY
	ZZ

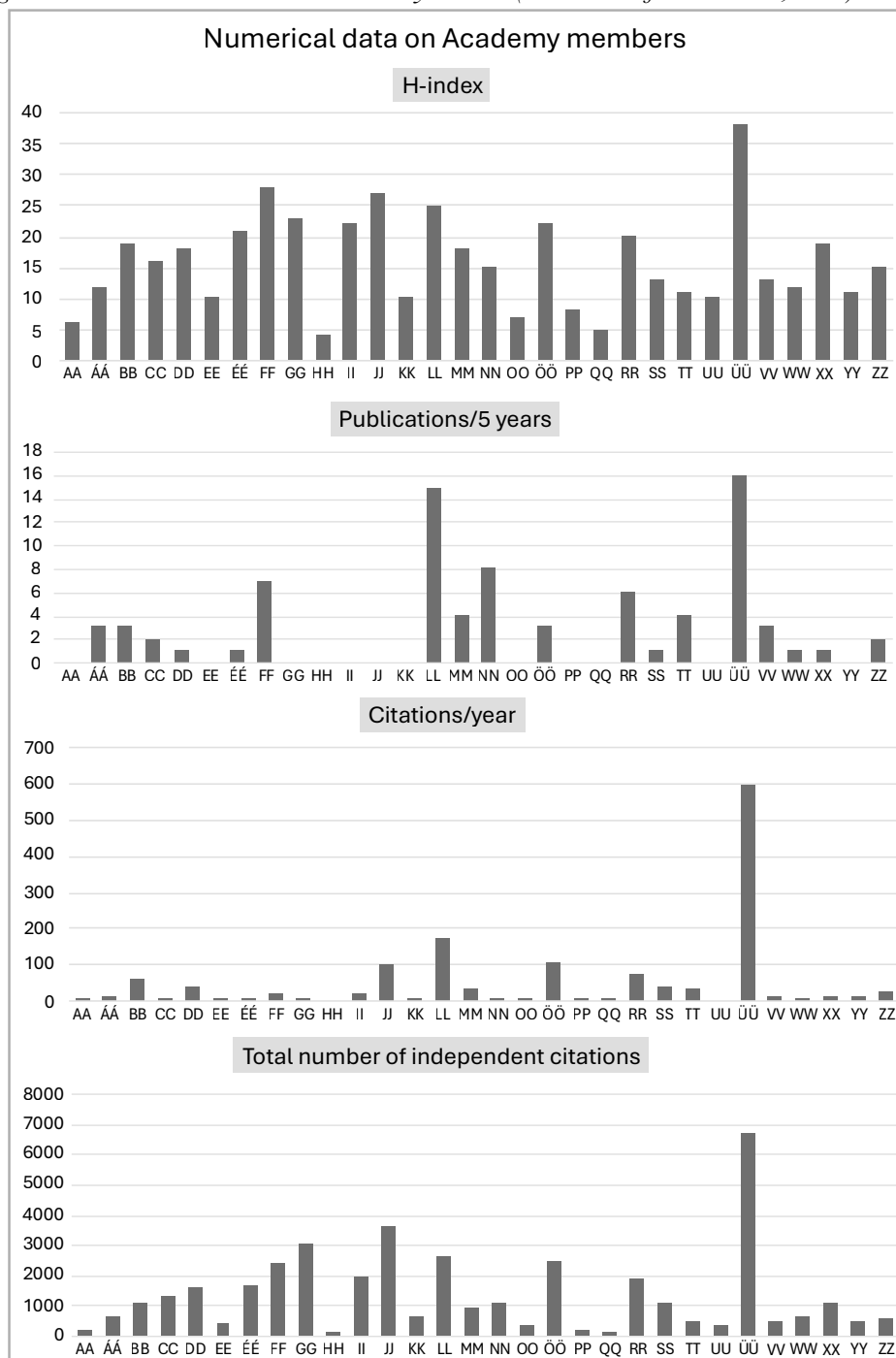
Figure 9. Methodology of the analysis based on scientometrics.org description



It must be emphasized that this analytical series becomes increasingly permissive solely in order to generate comparable data, resulting in progressively reduced filtering for economics and law, followed by the social sciences and humanities. This demonstrates that scientometric concessions were established specifically to make the analysis of academicians outside the natural and applied sciences possible.¹⁶

The individual data of the academics show a rather heterogeneous picture in terms of H-index values, publications, citations, and total independent citation data when compared with one another, so this is not a homogeneous body in terms of research quality. The other critical area is the group of academicians (some four-fifths of whom fall into this category) who are barely visible or completely invisible in both the domestic and international scientific community.¹⁷ This characterizes them not only over the last 5 or 10 years across numerous indicators, but also across their entire career output, which Figures 10–12 also demonstrate. For the majority of academicians elected (or admitted as full members) in 2025, compared with their colleagues already in the Academy, with one exception, the performance deficit is even more striking if we look back over even the last few years.

Figure 10. Numerical data on Section IX Academy members (with data as of December 31, 2024)

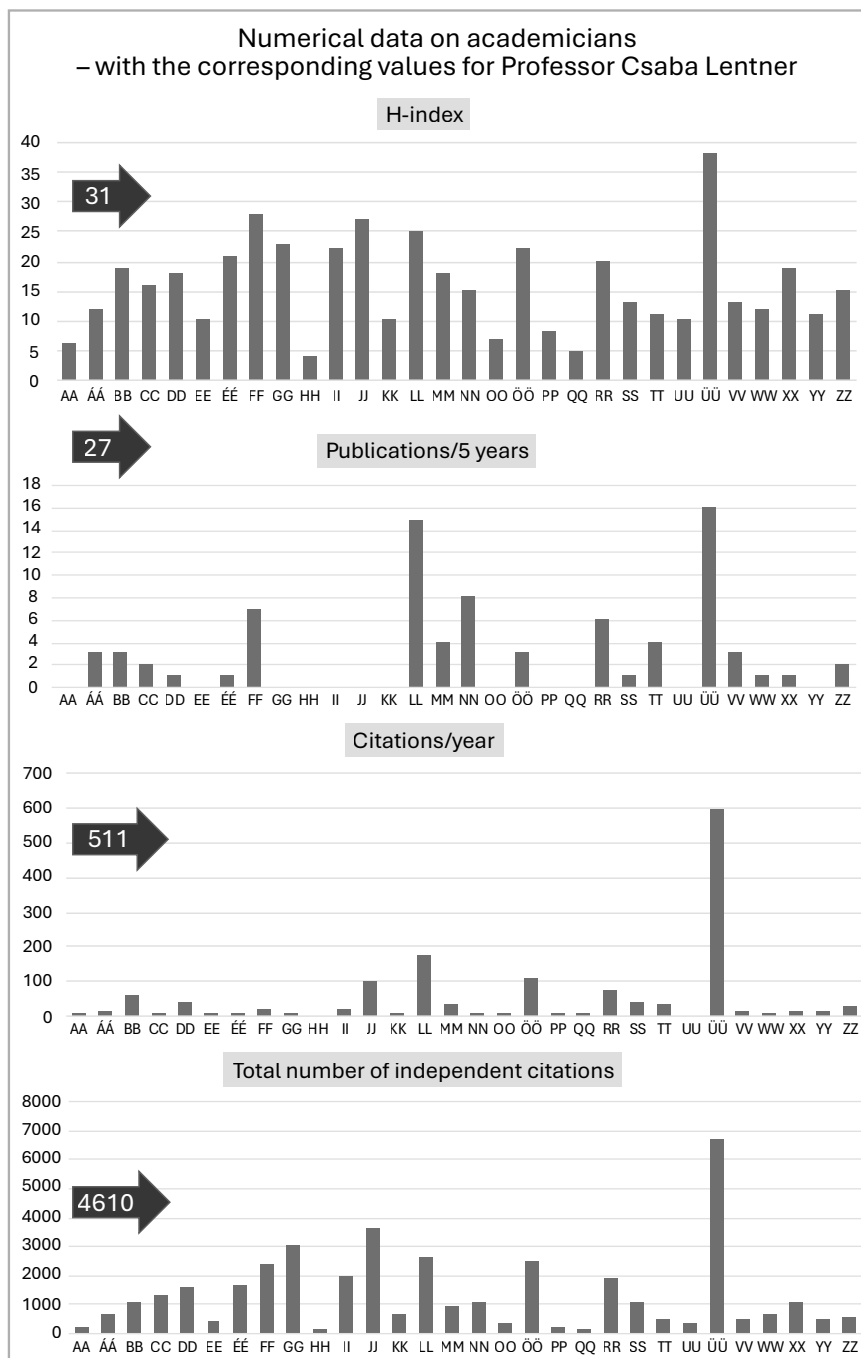


COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SCIENTIFIC PERFORMANCE OF SECTION IX
LEGAL AND ECONOMIC ACADEMICIANS AND PROFESSOR CSABA LENTNER

In spring 2025¹⁸, and earlier in 2016¹⁹, I sharply criticised the actions of Section IX members and their criticisms of unconventional economic policy doctrines.²⁰ The 2016 confrontation was prompted by the fact that they sharply criticised the government's and the central bank's new programme for shaping public economic thinking, as well as the unconventional economic policy associated with it. I spoke out in defence of this new programme, for which I am the lead expert. In connection with the 2016 events, I had already suffered setbacks²¹, but my scholarly work gained new momentum, especially internationally, where I was able to publish papers analysing the scientific systematics and operational mechanisms of national economic policy in the highest-ranking scientific journals; and bring the research behind them to fruition through the scientific workshops I lead.²² My research and publications, recognized nationally and internationally as school-founding, were first acknowledged through the Wekerle Sándor Scientific Lifetime Achievement Award (2012)²³ and I was further honoured with the Officer's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit in 2018²⁴, the Magyary Zoltán Public Administration Science Memorial Medal in 2021²⁵, and the title of Ambassador of Financial Culture in the mid-2010s on the recommendation of the Hungarian Banking Association²⁶. Since the introduction of the Ludovika University of Public Service Performance Evaluation System (TÉR), I have consistently achieved first place in the professorial category.

Based on this record of scientific advancement, leading research leadership, and domestic and international recognition, on February 2, 2021, I submitted an application to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Public and Legal Science Committee in the field of state sciences and public finance, demonstrating the advantages of active state-led financial management over both socialist planned economy and neoliberal market economy structures. The processing of a Hungarian Academy of Sciences doctoral application generally takes one to one and a half years. In my case, however, this had still not occurred even after five years. Partial review procedures did take place: during the habitus examination, all three evaluators rated my work as excellent, and the score awarded in the complex habitus examination by the acting committee reached 600 per cent of the required level. Even so, the five-year procedural delay was already telling in itself. I came to the view that, because of my work refuting neoliberal financial policy on scientific grounds, a fully objective evaluation of my application was difficult to expect from the relevant reviewers²⁷, including certain historians whom I regarded as Marxist-leaning.²⁸ Meanwhile, the lawyer and economist members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences collectively requested Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's absence from the Academy's jubilee ceremonial session and raised the prospect of criminal proceedings for incitement against a community.^{29,30} In light of all this, I decided to withdraw my application, having found myself in the same position as the Prime Minister of Hungary when excluded from the Academy. My withdrawal notice for the application registered under number 72/24/2021/DTT_D was confirmed in writing by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on May 7, 2025; that is, the Academy formally acknowledged my decision to withdraw. My withdrawal after five years was influenced by the conclusion that the Acade-

Figure 11. Numerical data on academicians, compared with the corresponding values for Professor Csaba Lentner (data as of 31 December 2024; based on www scientometrics.org)



my might not have been capable of making a fully objective scientific decision in this case³¹. I also concluded that many of the Section IX members called upon to review my application performed weakly by international publication standards and appeared insufficiently familiar with those standards. In my assessment, this made them professionally ill-suited to evaluate my application. I also came to believe that my conception of state finance, which is fundamentally at odds with the mentality of Section IX, may have contributed to slowing the procedure, and that my public role alongside the civic government counted against me.³² The conditions prevailing at the Academy, especially in the social science Sections, do not appear to allow for fully objective, politics-free evaluation.³³ There also appears to be a kind of resentment, and a desire to regain influence in the background. Other Academy application and evaluation problems have also emerged beyond my own and likewise require clarification.³⁴ At the same time, there are responsible leaders elsewhere in Hungarian academic life³⁵ whose example of critical self-improvement could be followed usefully by the leadership of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Following my withdrawal, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences leadership characterized my scientific work in dismissive terms; this chapter responds by presenting a scientometric comparative analysis.³⁶ The analysis employs the scientometric framework of www.scientometrics.org used throughout this paper and draws on the MTMT and Scopus databases.³⁷ My performance is compared with that of the academicians of Section IX. The examination methodology adheres to the logical framework presented in Figure 9. Age adjustment is not relevant to this analysis. The examination was conducted on July 25, 2025. Additional methodological details of the exploratory analysis are available at: https://scientometrics.org/updates/files/Tudomanymetria_rovid_leiras_hun.pptx

Figure 12. Age-normalized mean score (based on Scopus data, overall member average: 16%*)

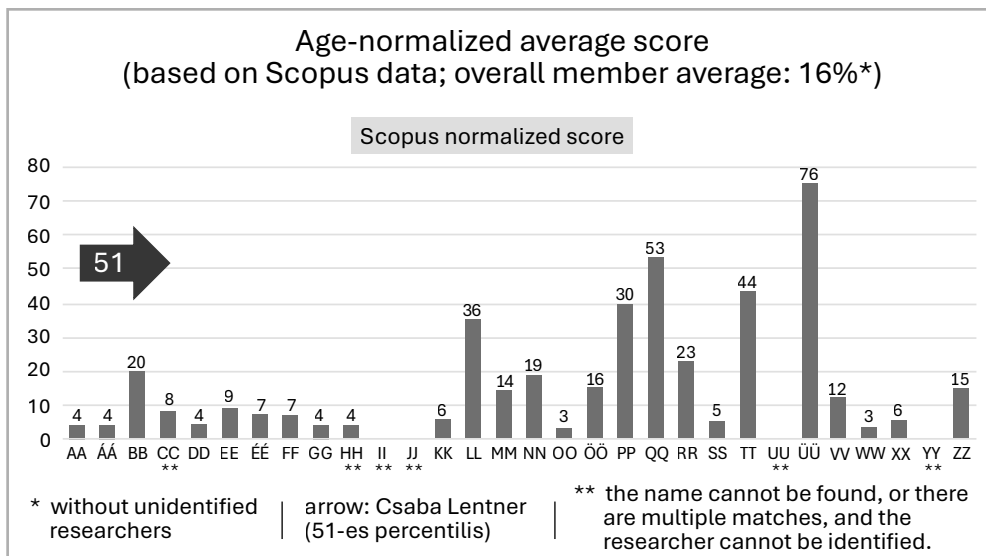


Figure 13. Csaba Lentner's scientific excellence ranking based on MTMT data

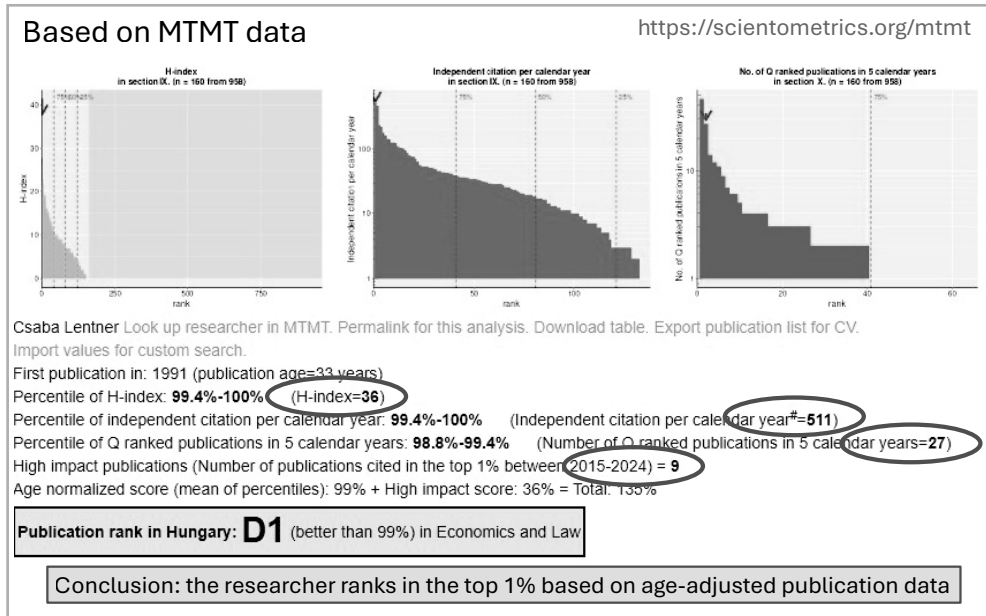
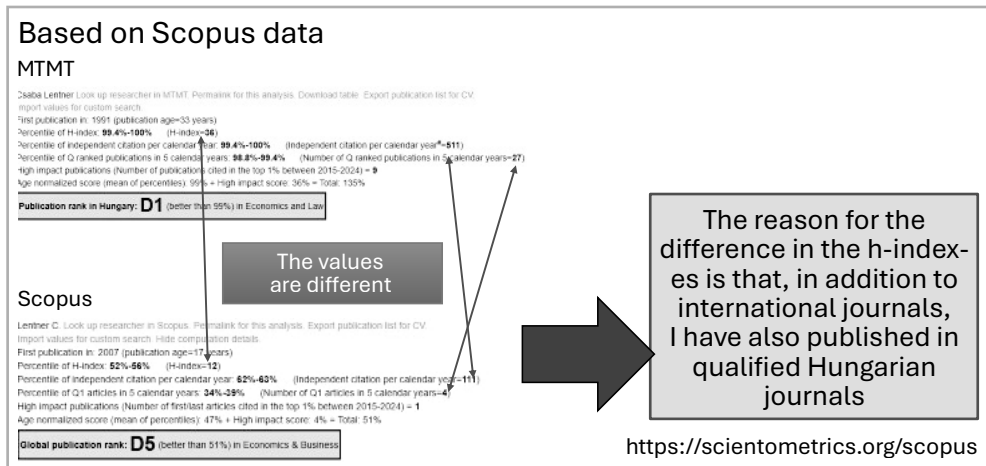


Figure 14. Csaba Lentner's scientific excellence ranking based on Scopus data



In my analysis, I compared the h-indexes of the legal and economic corresponding and full members of Section IX of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, their annual average publication output over the preceding five years, their annual citations, and their total independent citations with my own performance metrics. The analysis shows that during the 2020–2024/2025 period, when my application was under review, my scientific performance was substantially stronger than that of all legal and economic Academy members

Based on the age-normalized percentile (Scopus data), my research performance (Scopus identifier: 56614522100) during my application period was stronger than that of all those in academic positions.³⁸ In the left field of Figure 12, academicians marked with different colours either cannot be found in the Scopus database (which may indicate the absence of international publications), or multiple entries appear for identical names, or the researcher cannot be definitively identified.

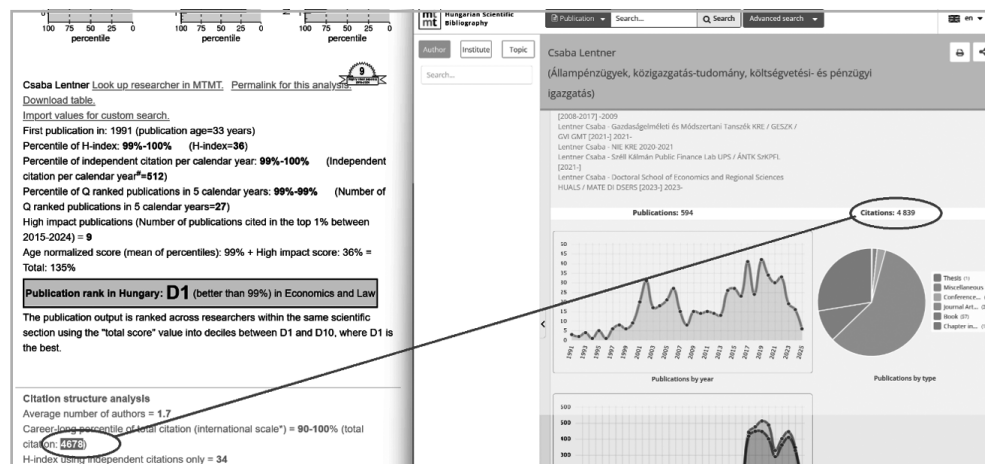
The numerical data in Figure 11 and the age-normalized percentile values in Figure 12 together support the conclusion that my scientific performance was exceptional. Figures 13 and 14 develop this point further on the basis of MTMT and Scopus data.

Note: With regard to the academic and proprietary numerical data presented in Figures 10 and 11, which are based on MTMT, it is important to note that the data in the MTMT author data sheet and the summary table may differ. The calculations presented use the more favourable data. See the MTMT data presented on the right-hand side of Figure 15. The left-hand side is calculated based on the scientometrics.org database. Even within Scopus, differences may arise depending on whether the data are retrieved via API or viewed on the website. Accordingly, minor differences may also occur in the case of MTMT for the same reason.

The scientometric calculations presented above show that my performance exceeded that of the academicians within the Section responsible for reviewing my application. Once this became clear from the data, I regarded it as ethically untenable for scholars whose performance I substantially surpassed to sit in judgment on my candidacy.

In the struggle for Academy renewal, I am not the only one to take a stand against performance-deficient academicians; a broad civic intellectual stratum shares these views, including Mária Schmidt, Béla Pokol, András Láncki and other professors.³⁹ Over the decades preceding the current public manifestations, the need for reform of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was raised by academicians⁴⁰ and other leading professors, but their proposals have

Figure 15. Clarifying MTMT data



not yielded substantial results to date.⁴¹ From the civic perspective, this is why we came to regard it as necessary, from spring 2025 onward, to bring the issue of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences more forcefully into scientific and broader public discourse.

WHAT KIND OF ACADEMIC PORTFOLIOS DO THE ‘IDEAL’ NEW ACADEMIC
CANDIDATES HAVE? A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF
HUNGARY THROUGH TWO SPECIFIC CASE STUDIES

To further illustrate the contrast, I will present two case studies of preferred candidates for membership in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. I would like to note in advance that I do not conduct deeper scientometric calculations for these two candidates; I merely reference their limited numerical data based on MTMT summary tables in comparison with my own.⁴² My main aim was to examine the extent to which they appear aligned with the neoliberal mentality of Hungarian Academy of Sciences members. As someone whose academic achievements far exceed those of the members of Section IX, I emphasize that my performance is not the central issue; rather, it is the performance of academicians and new member candidates that requires scrutiny. Why do they lack adequate scientific performance?

Through random sampling, I examined the scientific publication activity of two Hungarian academic candidates from Section IX to assess the extent to which they contribute to the country’s international competitiveness, reputation, and the encouragement of positive investment decisions. I assessed the scientific rigor and world-class calibre of their research. This examination was motivated by the fact that, while two-thirds of Section IX academicians do not conduct internationally measurable scientific work and perform 87.83 per cent below global average levels, I hoped that the candidates – as the next generation within the institutional structure – might demonstrate greater activity and success.

Academic candidate 1 addresses the (mis)use of unlimited political power, interpreted in connection with Hungarian economic governance – specifically in relation to post-2010 economic policies. More precisely, he examines post-2010 economic irrationalities and economic populism, as they relate to current conditions, from his own analytical perspective. His intellectual framework spans from ‘goulash’ Communism to the decline into ‘goulash’ populism, drawing parallels between the socialist planned economy and the civic government’s economic policy. In his assessment, both constitute dictatorships and abuses of power. A research group has formed around him, producing scholarship in a similar style that offers unfavourable assessments of the country, at times moving away from scientific terminology. This candidate has achieved measurable results and appears to have strong prospects for membership in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He has been cited and referenced by approximately 200 international scholars, meaning that Swiss IMD credit rating agencies could readily encounter his characterizations of the Hungarian government as populist, power-hungry, and economically misguided. He works within the HUN-REN Hungarian Research Network while also holding full-time positions at Corvinus University and the Ludovika University of Public Service, where he has served as a distinguished scholarship research professor since 2020. He had, and still has, the means to influence thousands of economics and political

science students through his lectures and books. He maintains, or has maintained, multiple ties to CEU.⁴³ While the candidate is fully entitled to pursue independent methodology and research generating its own results, questions may nevertheless be raised regarding the use of triple state financing from taxpayer resources. Why is activity presented here as damaging to the country's image supported from budgetary sources? Perhaps the candidate's superiors and research institute directors could provide a more detailed explanation while also considering their own responsibilities. The candidate has authored 196 scientific papers, accumulating 1,221 total citations. He has published 19 articles in foreign-language professional journals abroad, receiving 229 citations. His H-index stands at 14.

Academic candidate 2 focuses his research on contemporary Hungarian reality, which he characterizes in populist and authoritarian terms. His writings, even when appearing in leading Hungarian-language journals recognized by members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, often adopt a 'popularizing science' approach. He maintains extensive connections to the liberal intellectual circle that critiques the Hungarian government's economic and science policies both domestically and internationally, and he appears to be an emblematic figure within this group. He has also maintained connections to CEU. He protested against the separation of the research network from the oversight of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, joining those who condemned Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and sought to exclude him from the bicentennial academic general assembly. Serving as chairman of an academic committee, he has also campaigned prominently against battery factories in the Hungarian economy. Although such investments have economic constraints, attracting battery factories to Hungary nonetheless supports employment – albeit at modest levels – while generating added value and integrating the country into international production chains. The candidate does not address why more demanding, higher-added-value foreign capital has failed to enter the country. In my view, he should know the answer, as should academic candidate 1: for decades, economic science, together with liberal circles, was not allowed to develop in what I regard as the right direction, and approaches that did not fit corporate and state budgets – and especially the interests of families and the prevailing zeitgeist – were prevented or filtered out. He even shares his views in an electrical engineering magazine. According to MTMT database records, his international academic profile is measurable; however, two-thirds of those citing his writings in foreign professional journals are his university colleagues and like-minded Hungarian liberal intellectuals. He appears to have strong prospects – should these academic conditions persist – of attaining academic status. The candidate has authored 125 scientific papers, accumulating 861 total citations. He has published 12 articles in foreign-language professional journals abroad, receiving 160 citations (as noted, two-thirds from Hungarian colleagues). His H-index stands at 14.

The reader will hardly be surprised that my academic performance substantially exceeds that of the members of Section IX of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, nor will it be unexpected that I surpass the academic candidates by even greater margins. I have authored 594 scientific papers, accumulating 4,065 total citations. I have published 53 articles in foreign-language professional journals abroad, achieving 1,112 citations. My H-index stands at 35.⁴⁴ Crucially, however, I initially sought entry only to the antechamber of academician

membership, while, among the academic candidates presented here, the first has held the status of Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for four years and the second for ten years—meaning that they have occupied the antechamber of academician membership for four and ten years respectively. Yet I was compelled to withdraw even from the antechamber as a consequence of political pressure directed against me. In my view, this case demonstrates that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences does not operate in a manner consistent with constitutional requirements, since it fails to ensure the objective evaluation of scientific researchers and the freedom of science.

In summary of this chapter: the community of the Section of Economic and Legal Sciences, its academicians, and those who will eventually achieve membership through counter-selectivity – individuals involved in shaping, organizing, and regulating Hungarian economic and social competitiveness – certainly do not comprehensively serve Hungary's advancement and may not necessarily be the most qualified candidates. They tend not to align with Hungarian national economic practice and shifts in economic policy. This may explain Hungary's continued decline in international competitiveness rankings, the prevalence of EU infringement procedures and European court cases against the country, and the resistance and antipathy toward Hungarian government policy within influential segments of Hungarian society and entrepreneurial circles.⁴⁵

A WEB OF CONTRADICTIONS: THE HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES' DEFENCE STRATEGY⁴⁶

The leadership of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences published on its website an analysis of academician performance in response to criticism, and that analysis contains numerous methodological errors.⁴⁷ It relies on a database that, in my view, distorts the picture – unlike the one published in *Civic Review: Journal of Economic and Social Sciences*. Moreover, the background to their analysis remains unclear. These academic counter-statements, and the misinterpretations behind them, further undermine the credibility of Hungarian science by attacking non-academician researchers who articulate systemic criticism. I would argue that academicians either still fail to recognize the gravity of the problem posed by their performance deficit and to think through its consequences, or else deliberately evade responsibility. The Academy's leadership is also under significant internal pressure, particularly regarding the fate of its real-estate assets; thus, instead of focusing primarily on science, business considerations have also come to the fore.⁴⁸

Two key details must be highlighted from the MTA's own study.

1. They write that 'in many fields within the humanities and the social sciences, researchers present their results in books and monographs. In the humanities and social sciences, journals are often not accessible in international databases (their language is often Hungarian), and publications of the same value as journal articles are produced in the form of book chapters.' For this reason, the academicians and staff members at the MTA Secretariat added up peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles and book chapters recorded in MTMT, and compared these totals across different age groups. They themselves acknowledge that roughly

three quarters of the scholarly works recorded in MTMT are not included in international databases because they were written in Hungarian – and that the greater part of these belongs to the humanities and the social sciences.

2. The authors of the internal academic study then attempt to explain away their results by claiming that ‘in the humanities and social sciences, we did not analyse the number of citations received by the year of election as an academician, either for books or for journal articles and book chapters. First, a significant proportion of these publications is not included in the WoS/Scopus databases, from which automatic data import is possible, as in the natural sciences. In these fields, authors typically collect and record citations manually, so it can happen that major uploads and data cleaning take place only shortly before nomination. Second, trends in citation data may be influenced by the fact that the humanities and social sciences include many disciplines with different publishing customs (for example, publication practices in psychology are closer to those in the natural sciences).’ I would add that, if this is how the analysis presenting excellence was prepared, then its explanatory value is very limited. In any case, it does not provide answers to the problems I have pointed out.

WHY ARE THERE MULTIPLE FLAWS IN THE MTA’S SCIENTOMETRIC CALCULATIONS?

1. As a rule, academicians tend to publish predominantly on Hungarian-language platforms – and even the authors of the Academy’s own analysis fail to recognise that this is precisely the problem. As I stressed in my Civic Review article, publication in Hungarian-only venues means minimal international visibility, minimal international weight, and research that remains effectively confined to a drawer or, at best, a departmental library shelf. From the perspective of internationally measurable competitiveness, such books and book chapters carry little value.

In fact, they are seldom read even in Hungary. Typical examples of this publication type are festschrifts prepared for academicians’ 60th, 65th, 70th, 75th, 80th, 85th, 90th, 95th or 100th birthdays, and the proceedings volumes of mostly low-impact niche conferences. The latest textbook example of a mentality that treats scholarship as an insular affair is that, according to some academicians, a domestic journal intended to be rated ‘A’ (that is, a leading scholarly journal) should be expected to publish a funeral oration. Of course, the deceased can be commemorated in appropriate forums – this is what bulletins and newsletters in a given field are for.⁴⁹

2. The study published in *Polgári Szemle* largely compares Hungarian researchers with the international field and focuses on their articles in international journals, whereas the MTA communiqué benchmarks them against Hungarian researchers who are not academicians and then attributes outstanding results to the academicians. This is methodologically problematic. The Academy does not disclose its methodology in sufficient detail, and its conclusions are not properly substantiated. It also conflicts with Figure 6 of my own analysis, according to which academician performance only marginally exceeds that of other Hungarian researchers – and in some fields does not even reach the domestic aver-

age. I add, with some sadness, that the performance of members of the Academy's Section for literary and linguistic studies does not even reach the domestic level. What lies behind this? In essence, the Academy's internal analysis treats academicians' performance as a matter of sheer quantity. The quoted text makes it clear that, although they took peer-reviewed journals as the basis, they made no distinctions between their quality – treating a top-ranked international Q1 article as equivalent, for counting purposes, to a fourth-rate (D-rated) Hungarian-language publication – whereas I considered only research results published in appropriately ranked scholarly journals, as recognised by a broad scientific community. I presented my methodology, while the 'in-house' analysis – perhaps prepared for internal use, yet nevertheless made public – only partially and ambiguously indicates the basis of its calculations.

Once again: the MTA communiqué openly states that it deals only with the quantity of academician publications, not their quality. In other words, the Academy effectively 'measures' academician performance by weight: it does not focus on the quality of the journals or other outlets in which academicians' writings appear. They may be published by low-prestige publishers, in unranked international journals, or even in domestic samizdat outlets. The aforementioned funeral oration could even have been treated as a 'scientific publication' if an A-category journal had printed it

3. The academic analysis also does not show the impact of these publications – namely, how often they are cited – and instead invokes arguments that are difficult to defend. The explanation that citations are not reported because an academician (or candidate) uploads them to MTMT in waves rather than as a steadily increasing series is not persuasive. Whether someone uploads citations continuously or all at once, by the time of nomination at the latest, MTMT – as an official research-evaluation database – should show how many citations a candidate has received in total, whether many or few. Nor is it convincing to avoid citation analysis on the ground that citation practices vary across sub-disciplines within the humanities and the social sciences. A researcher working in a given field generally knows where to look first for colleagues' new publications – whether as book chapters or journal articles – and will be able to find and cite them. Furthermore, if someone publishes a long book less frequently, and if that monograph is significant, it will attract heavy citation until the next book appears (all citations attach to that book rather than being spread across journal articles – yet the author's total citation count will still remain high). The Academy does show book citations in one figure; however, even the most-cited works do not receive more than 80 citations, and the composition of these citations is not disclosed. Whether they cite one another remains unclear.

Moreover, even in the humanities and the social sciences, the MTA's analysis should have used international WoS and Scopus data as the basis, because, internationally, these are the sources that carry weight, and they determine an academician's international reputation. It is hard to justify why the Academy avoids this in its analysis. Why, when compiling rankings, did they not take these international articles, books, and book chapters as the basis? Presumably because in the humanities and social sciences there is hardly any international output, and hardly any work that generates international impact (or resonance).

The dismissive treatment of PhD holders in the Academy's internal analysis is striking. As I have indicated, scholarly performance today is measurable in the international arena, and those who have earned a PhD increasingly publish on international platforms. It is harder to publish in a prestigious international journal than in a volume of essays dedicated to an academic's birthday. In terms of scholarly quality, fewer publications of higher quality would carry greater scientific value.

One interpretation of the MTA analysis is that it compares the performance of academicians, measured in raw numbers, to the publications of non-academicians, i.e. authors with PhD degrees, in fewer but more prestigious international journals. If this is the case (unfortunately, the detailed methodology has not been disclosed), then it suggests that non-academicians aim for lower quantity but higher quality, whereas academicians are evaluated primarily in quantitative terms.

Furthermore, the international citation rate of Hungarian researchers in the humanities and social sciences would be visible even on the basis of books and book chapters, because uniform international indices exist for counting citations to books and chapters. SCImago ranks not only journals but also classifies book series into Q1–Q4 quartiles (for example, series published by Brill), so a Q-ranking can apply to a book chapter as well; a chapter would raise international standing if it appeared in such a place. If it appeared in such a place. But this is not the case. I must note that even a university teaching assistant can publish in a Q2 Brill series – so why can an academician not do so?

Moreover, the Web of Science (WoS) has a separate Book Citation Index (which also includes book chapters). Why does the Academy's analysis not cover this? This may suggest that MTA members perform weakly in this respect as well. I did find one good example – so that I may not be accused of political bias: the Book Citation Index also shows citations to the book chapters of the economist Csaba László, which is a notable exception, at least in this particular area.

Google Scholar, too, indexes book chapters in much the same way as articles. Thus, book chapters are included in a scholar's overall citation count and international visibility, because international citation-tracking services index them. If academicians were publishing book chapters in internationally prestigious venues, these would also be expected to appear clearly in citation data. There should be traces of them, just as there are for journal articles.

THE SOBERING REALITY OF ACADEMIA

1. The problem with the academicians aged 80 or over described as typical in the MTA's communication report is not that they do not produce enough at this age to be cited now, but that they were not cited 20 years ago, when they were 60 years old. I note that in the humanities and social sciences it is entirely possible to write enduring works that remain widely cited even decades later. They had ample time to publish abroad in the decades following the change of regime, but did not do so then, and have not done so now. It is therefore unsurprising that they are not cited, because there is little to cite. What, then, is the typical academic achievement? If there is none, what justifies membership of the Academy in the first place?

As for younger members, the problem is equally clear: it is a problem if, at that age, they are not cited either. The issue lies with their performance and with their attitude to academic policy and to the measurement of scholarly performance.

This suggests that the current average academician was not cited 20 years ago, and that the lack of visibility on the international stage is not a recent problem. Let the field of economics serve as an example. For a long time, distinguished authors have repeatedly issued serious warnings about the domestic provinciality of this field and about the divergence between Hungarian economics' self-assessment and its international reception. Ákos Valentinyi (an economist who built a major career abroad) wrote clearly, decades earlier, in the *Budapest Review of Books* (*Budapesti Könyvszemle* – BUKSZ), that Hungarian economists operate in a narrow domestic market that is essentially closed off from the world; Hungarian economics has no international reputation; and it cannot overcome the chasm that separates it from the international level – and Valentinyi did not hesitate, even then, to argue in terms of citations and publication counts.⁵⁰

2. It is highly characteristic that the Academy once again does not disclose gender statistics. Around Katalin Karikó's Nobel Prize, it resurfaced in the Hungarian press that her success – her ascent – was merely a 'glitch in the matrix', and that in that very year, in the Academy's new member election, the ratio was 26:0 in favour of male candidates.⁵¹ The two Hungarian Nobel laureates deserve every respect, but we should not forget that Katalin Karikó could not continue her research career in Hungary because of scientific-policy constraints, while Ferenc Krausz effectively never even embarked on one there. It is rather distasteful and hypocritical for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to invoke them as a cover. It should also be noted that the Academy elected Katalin Karikó an honorary member only in 2022 – that is, only after she had become world-famous. True, she received the Nobel Prize only in 2023; but we remember the press explanations suggesting that the Swedish Academy had been 'slow' after everyone was surprised that she was not the 2022 laureate. In other words, first, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences did not recognize in advance that she represented a unique, unrepeatable scientific achievement. Nor did the leadership of the Szeged research institute recognize her talent when, in 1985, she was dismissed in a downsizing and forced to leave the country. At the same time, the Swedish Academy nevertheless recognized her world-class expertise, despite what the MTA described as her 'low citation count'. Second, among the current academicians elected despite very low citation figures – and there are many under-cited members, most of whom have been members for quite some time – which of them has, over the years, justified their election with a breakthrough comparable to Karikó's, demonstrating that they deserved to enter the Academy despite having had scarcely any demonstrable impact in their field?

The dismissive reference to Katalin Karikó as 'poorly cited' in the Academy's internal analysis is difficult to overlook, given that the Hungarian Nobel Prize laureate has nearly 20,000 international citations, while most Hungarian academicians have barely one thousandth of that number over the past decades. Even so, one might accept that new Academy members may be elected with very few citations – provided, at least, that they later become world-famous as Nobel Prize contenders. In the last 100 years, only Albert Szent-Györgyi has

succeeded in doing so for research conducted in Hungary, in 1937. That was nearly 100 years ago, and it has not happened since then. That, in itself, is sobering. The problem is not the absence of high-performing Hungarian researchers; it is the demoralising, talent-suppressing Hungarian academic atmosphere.

3. A disingenuous answer to my criticism concerning nepotism is that, at the Academy, they at least keep up appearances and have some conflict-of-interest-type regulations in force, so that an immediate family member recognized by law cannot directly recommend a relative.. Yet the devil is in the details: at the stage of deciding who even has a realistic chance to enter the process – who has a realistic chance to collect the three recommendations from academicians that are a condition of eligibility – those who want to usher in their family members, friends, or business partners lobby heavily among their fellow academicians. hen, in the same way, only the same narrow academician circle votes on candidates who have made it onto this preliminary list. This is far from transparent; it is not based on a rational decision by the scientific majority, but rather on sympathy for club members, which places it in a rather grey area. That is why I proposed, as part of the academic reforms, that the 17,000-strong public body should elect new academicians in the future, following a transparent scientific screening process.

If my suspicion of nepotism were unfounded, the Academy could refute it very easily – provided that there were evidence with which to do so. Let us examine family and institutional entanglements between new and old members in a given election period,⁵² and then examine the performance of the new member who is connected in some way; and if it is truly outstanding compared to their own candidate field and to the other researchers who did not even become candidates, then it is acceptable that they entered despite the degree of kinship. Anyone who is outstanding has nothing to hide; they can hold their head high and show their performance to the world.

ANOTHER CASE STUDY: A SELF-CONFESSION – A COMPLETE EMBARRASSMENT

In this insular and simultaneously non-performance-oriented milieu, an eloquent example of what a person who has been an academician for decades – indeed, a system-specific ‘typical’ academician – thinks, and of how far removed they have become from a realistic assessment of academic functioning, is provided by an opinion piece published in *Élet és Irodalom* (*Life and Literature – ÉS*).⁵³

The academician’s name is not important, because I wish instead to present the essence of the system from the perspective of a typical member of that system. A 32-year member of the MTA writes in a wholly exclusionary and ‘elitist’ manner that the only credible circle is the one comprised of academicians, Doctors of the MTA, and chairs of specialist committees, who know one another directly or indirectly. They are the elite of Hungarian science; its members trust one another, co-operate, and authenticate one another.

With this conclusion, the academician is practically suggesting that the entire science-evaluation and scientometric system – painstakingly and carefully built over decades in an effort

to establish objectivity – is wrong, because all that matters is who knows whom, how capable they are of cooperating, and how willing they are to organize themselves into cliques.

This academician opinion can even be taken as lending support to the critical tone articulated on the civic side, because we, too, maintain that in academic elections and other application procedures it is not academic achievement that matters, but rather connections, in a milieu where nepotism appears to play a decisive role. This can include family ties, business relationships, and other interest-based connections. Candidates who represent different scientific views may be excluded from admission to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences from day one if they are not regarded as part of the ‘inner circles’: the academician’s account suggests the features of a closed and exclusionary system in the circumstances surrounding admission to the Academy.

However, so as not to be accused of political bias again, others on the other side have also taken issue with the person in question: ‘It is unacceptable how vehemently and destructively he turns against those who do not share his views, while presenting himself as the guardian angel of an intellectual community that is inherently diverse. This role does not in itself call to mind the well-known role he once proudly assumed in the Hungarian Workers’ Militia. Yet his Workers’ Militia⁵⁴ past, and his attitude, may help explain the dictatorial academic appointment processes – also openly presented in his article – that evoke times long past: the need to remain in favour with those in authority. All this is especially worrying because his article suggests that the privileged beneficiaries of the Kádár era have smuggled back into the Academy one of the dictatorship’s most harmful instruments from a scholarly perspective: a system in which the loyal comrades in the highest circles decided behind closed doors which branches of which disciplines were prohibited, tolerated, or supported.’⁵⁵

The academician subjected to in-depth analysis by me and others has, incidentally, an H-index of 8, and barely 500 citations can be retrieved for him from MTMT. In other words, the academic work I cited in my case study has been referenced barely 500 times in the past half-century, or more precisely, in 57 years. Among those who criticize the existing academic system, for example – for the sake of comparison and to illustrate the problem – Professor Béla Pokol, who is also not an academician, has an H-index of 28 and has received 3,385 citations for his scientific works. I, as a critic of the Academy from the perspective of its performance deficit, have close to 5,000 citations, with an H-index of 35. For our academician’s specialist articles published abroad, 31 citations were received abroad; for Professor Pokol, 117; and for my own work, 1,130. There are also many academicians – especially in the social sciences – whose verified scholarly performance does not reach that of those outside the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, including excluded Hungarian researchers with a predominantly national orientation. Yet, characteristically, it is the scholars identified with the ‘national’ side who are outside the Academy, while liberals are within its walls. Unfortunately, the influence of the academic circle is also felt in university teaching and doctoral training: Let us recall the intense controversy and sharp criticism surrounding State Secretary Balázs Orbán’s PhD defence; it is far from an isolated case, as the MTA – left without substantive functions and with a performance-deficient membership – together with its behind-the-scenes actors, readily shifts its activity into doctoral schools and the political public sphere.

From the perspective of the case study presented by our academician (which may be read as a kind of self-confession), what matters is that he is precisely the kind of academician who looks down on his fellow scientists: someone who has already spent nearly half his life in the Academy as a member, enjoys additional income streams, and is not particularly troubled by the fact that he has not had any truly prestigious publications in the modern sense for a long time. He publishes predominantly with a third-rate (C-rated) publisher, and mostly in periodicals edited by Hungarians. He even reinforces this stance – rejecting modern, performance-centred scholarly publication practice and a performance-centred research career – in an opposition newspaper.⁵⁶

Thus, we are not mistaken when we continue to claim that Hungarian academicians' performance and their approach to performance leave much to be desired. The problems have been around for decades, and they have hindered effective scientific work. This is confirmed by the typical academician's admission that 'For years I have refused to submit to what I see as editorial 'terror'; consequently, I publish my studies and books online.' In my view, this places him at a distance from substantive, transparent, and controlled scholarly life. He is also hostile towards artificial intelligence (AI): 'AI is the miracle of the mind and, at the same time, something comparable to the climate crisis; on average, mediocre authors have ChatGPT write their papers for them, and editorial offices have them reviewed by AI.' It is clear that he is apparently referring here to younger PhD holders, which amounts to an unvarnished insult to young researchers.

With regard to those who have earned a PhD – some 17,000 members of the public body – our system-typical academician goes on to claim that 'most of them have achieved little beyond the mandatory PhD; their publication performance is sometimes deplorable.' Then, demeaning many of us, he writes that 'the public body in its current form is ballast.' This is true only in the sense that the 17,000-strong public-body membership does not count for much in the life of the Academy; we have no substantive function. It is true that there is a public body director, who in many cases serves as a harsh-toned counterpoint to criticism of the Academy.

And the essence of the development of Hungarian scholarly life would lie in what truly demonstrates the real impact of science and of a scientist: that one's published research results are recognized, through citations, by people who have no personal acquaintance with the author. It is only the ideas encountered in high-quality publications, in prestigious scholarly journals, that impress readers enough to adopt them and thus, in recognizing the scientist's work, to cite them.

CRITICISM OF THE ACADEMY IS GROWING

The performance deficit and destructive attitude of the MTA's membership lead me to the view that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences cannot be reformed from within. Since the sharpening of the academic debate in 2025, researchers who do not share 'civic' values have also begun to make their voices heard. To further support my findings concerning this performance deficit, I will draw on observations from the work of the researchers Katalin Bella⁵⁷

and Imre Fertő^{58, 59} With regard to academic organisational reforms, Professor Levente Hufnagel's series of articles in *Élet és Irodalom* is noteworthy.⁶⁰

Bella's research suggests that, among members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' Section IX, publication performance, as measured in the Web of Science, shows considerable dispersion and does not reveal a uniform, Q1-dominant pattern of excellence. The historically entrenched closed nature of academic institutions, the strong role of regulation (in the absence of independent initiatives), and the importance of personal networks all contribute to appointments not only reflecting but also reinforcing the scientific periphery. In her view, the centre–periphery relationship is not a static state, but is continuously constructed through a series of institutional decisions.

Imre Fertő examined the corresponding membership nomination processes within Section IX of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences between 1990 and 2025, as the mechanism for awarding corresponding membership of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is a central issue in Hungarian academic life. In a quantitative analysis, Fertő showed that scholarly performance (publications, citations) plays only a minor role. The main role is played by informal personal networks: behind successful nominations there is, time and again, a strong support network. The selection process thus does not operate primarily on meritocratic principles, but on the basis of informal bargains and relational capital. Institutional affiliations, as well as demographic factors such as gender and age, play only a marginal role. The study demonstrates that serious institutional reforms are required if academic selection is truly to be based on scholarly performance rather than informal connections. Thus, while Levente Hufnagel describes what the Academy ought to be like and how it ought to function, Fertő describes how it actually functions – in other words, not well. One may therefore conclude that, in the absence of publications of a high standard and international reputation of their own, the MTA's academician circle tends to avoid merit-based admissions when it comes to bringing in new generations (corresponding membership, Doctors of the MTA), and instead draws from its own relational and ideological network

SUMMARY AND PROPOSED SOLUTION

In its present form, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences raises constitutional concerns. Although Hungary's Fundamental Law (Act CXIX of 2011) protects scientific freedom, the Academy does not safeguard that freedom in practice where doctoral and academic applications are not assessed transparently and on a performance basis. The exclusion of researchers holding different views from recognised scholarly discourse, together with the weak international visibility of many academicians and decision-making mechanisms shaped by political priorities and private interests, inhibits the development of Hungarian science. For that reason, a deeper institutional reset – including a new Academic Law – appears necessary.

1. The full membership of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences should be reviewed from the perspective of scientific performance. Academicians and Doctors of the Academy who fail to meet expected international standards should no longer retain the privileges

attached to membership, while any honorary or emeritus recognition should be handled separately. Such a review should involve both Hungarian and international scientific experts.

2. Honoraria paid to people who are not worthy of academic membership, Academy doctorates, or committee posts should cease. Central-budget financing of the Academy should be reviewed and restructured in line with the purposes of a new Academic Law. The academic remuneration system (the *apánage* system) should be eliminated. Academy membership should signify moral and scientific recognition, not an unearned supplementary income stream.
3. A new Hungarian Academy of Sciences – with a renewed membership and a smaller institutional footprint – should be established on the basis of scientific performance alone. The requirements for becoming an academician should be set by Hungarian and international experts appointed by Parliament and by competent scholarly bodies. A new Academic Law would be required to provide the institutional framework.
4. In keeping with the spirit of István Széchenyi, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences should be more closely aligned with Hungarian interests while also serving knowledge, the nation, and universal scholarship. Its mission should include contributing to the country's economic and social development, improving family living conditions, and developing expertise and capabilities. The relationship between academic life and scientific governance should be set out in a two-thirds law, which would define rights and obligations. The Fundamental Law and related legislation should redefine the tasks and operational frameworks of scholarly bodies (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungarian Accreditation Committee, HUN-REN, universities).
5. Future organizational leaders of the Academy and new academy members should be elected by the nearly 18,000-member public body of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences from among candidates meeting international standard requirements, rather than by one-and-a-half to two dozen predominantly underperforming, like-minded ('well accustomed to one another') departmental communities sharing broadly similar political perspectives. The approximately 18,000-member public body represents the backbone of Hungarian science and must be engaged in academic decision-making processes.
6. The Academy should remain a central institution of Hungarian science, but it should exercise its rights through the whole public body rather than through a narrow internal circle.
7. The Hungarian Accreditation Committee should be strengthened as a central institution of Hungarian scientific life. The Academy's influence over the measurement of scientific performance and over professorial appointments should be removed. In evaluating publication records before professorial appointments, Academy-issued journal lists should no longer be decisive; instead, the Hungarian Accreditation Committee should develop and apply its own transparent criteria across university, faculty, and doctoral school accreditations. The current academic title and Hungarian Academy of Sciences doctoral degree, given the damage to their credibility, should not represent an advantage in the performance evaluation of faculty members at higher education institutions.

8. The role of universities as scientific resource centres should be strengthened further. The influence of current Academy members over university doctoral training should be reduced, and the degree structure of Hungarian scholarly life should be redesigned around professorial categories assessed by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee, with elements drawn from the French model where appropriate.

NOTES

- 1 This study is a revised and expanded version of the article published in *Polgári Szemle*, vol. XXI, issues 4–6. Lentner Csaba (2025): *For the Renewal of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences II*. (AMagyar Tudományos Akadémia megújításáért). Vol. II. DOI: 10.24307/psz.2025.0901
- 2 <https://qubit.hu/2019/10/28/megszabadulna-a-kormanyt-kritizalo-tudosoktol-freund-tamas-az-mta-lehetseges-uj-elnoke>
- 3 The influence of the historical, social science, and legal-economic Academic Sections was particularly strong at research institutes operating under the HUN-REN Hungarian Research Network until the summer of 2025. In early summer 2025, at the initiative of the senate of Eötvös Loránd University, these research institutes (whose membership had been described in strong terms by the current President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Tamás Freund, in 2019) were transferred to ELTE under an agreement with HUN-REN. As is well known, in 2019 the management of all research institutes operating under the supervision of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was withdrawn from the Academy, and the Eötvös Loránd Hungarian Research Network was established. The former ELKH, currently HUN-REN social science and economic research institutes – apparently due in large part to persistent performance deficiencies – have remained under continuous supervisory change. Tamás Freund offered a striking diagnosis of their operation in 2019, almost predicting the changes.
- 4 In their populist ‘popularising-science’ writings and interviews, they regularly criticize the civic government’s industrial location policy and economic policy, but they have scarcely raised their voices against the Bokros economic austerity package, the spread of foreign-currency lending, and other restrictive measures linked to liberal governments; indeed, they often supported them.
- 5 Admittedly, the pull effect on national economic competitiveness can be judged even more thoroughly from a holistic perspective, but my position is that the problem must be grasped at its root: at the fundamental institution of scientific life and university education, namely the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, especially among lawyers and economists, whose influence on university education, doctoral schools, and the broader spirit of the Academy remains decisive to this day. Essentially, their theories and performance shape the university curriculum, the scope of expertise to be acquired, and, ultimately, what appears in the economy, in the labour market, and in the workforce’s capabilities, quality of expertise, and attitude toward government economic policy.
- 6 Data compiled from publicly available sources at <https://www.imd.org/>.
- 7 This volume and quality of expertise ‘trickle-down’ is still under review, but the process has not yet ended. As will be shown, the weak performance of the social science academic sections virtually paralyzed the research institutes operating under their supervision until 2019. After the first reorganization, from 2019, their influence on research institutes has been only indirect, but it remains significant. Yet they are still capable of influencing the content of university education, though the further reduction of this role is an increasingly urgent necessity, particularly in the field of the social sciences.
- 8 For more information on this international quality category, see: <https://www.SCIImagojr.com/journalrank.php> <https://www.editage.us/blog/guide-to-journal-rankings-what-are-quartiles-q1-q2-q3-q4-journal/>
- 9 An academic counter-argument to what I have described, based on data extracted from Scopus, might be that scholars in countries achieving outstanding scientific performance publish in so-called ‘predatory journals’, which are not authoritative. The problem is, as will be shown later, that Hungarian lawyer and economist academy members barely publish anywhere. Furthermore, applying the term ‘predatory’ to internationally ranked journals such as the Los Angeles-based scientific journal PLOS ONE, with an h-index of 467, or the Swiss MDPI

journal *Sustainability*, with an h-index of 207, reflects a serious lack of discernment on the part of Hungarian academicians. The somewhat absurd nature of the criticism is demonstrated by the fact that Hungarian academicians (only a few of them) are mainly able to publish their writings in the Hungarian-published *Acta Oeconomica*, with an h-index of 21, and *Public Finance Quarterly* (currently published by Corvinus University), with an h-index of 7. There is a wide prestige gap between the domestic and foreign journals being compared (as the very different h-indexes clearly show), and, accordingly, between underperforming Hungarian scholars and competitive international scholars.

- 10 For a more detailed definition of this international quality category (i.e. quartile ranking), see: <https://www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php>, <https://www.editage.us/blog/guide-to-journal-rankings-what-are-quartiles-q1-q2-q3-q4-journal/>
- 11 The performance of academicians in the natural and applied science Sections is significantly better than that of their counterparts in the social sciences, but even within these Sections there is considerable differentiation. There are some with outstanding international achievements (physicians, physicists, mathematicians, and agricultural scientists); there is a middle tier broadly corresponding to the overall Hungarian average; and there are others whose performance remains very low, accounting for roughly one-third of the members of these Sections.
- 12 B. Györfly, A. M. Nagy, P. Herman, Á. Török: *Factors influencing the scientific performance of Momentum grant holders: an evaluation of the first 117 research groups*. *Scientometrics* 2018;117(1):409–426. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-018-2852-1\(01234567890\)-volV\(01234567890\)-volV](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-018-2852-1(01234567890)-volV(01234567890)-volV)
 B. Györfly, Gy. Csuka, P. Herman, Á. Török: *Is there a Golden Age in publication activity? – an analysis of age-related scholarly performance across all scientific disciplines*. *Scientometrics* 2020;124:1081–1097. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03501-w>
 B. Györfly, P. Herman, I. Szabó.: *Research funding: past performance is a stronger predictor of future scientific output than reviewer scores*. *Journal of Informetrics* 2020;14:101050. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2020.101050>
 Gy. Munkácsy, P. Herman, B. Györfly: *Comparison of scientometric achievements at PhD and scientific output ten years later for 4,790 academic researchers*. *PLoS One* 2022;17(7):e0271218. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0271218>
 B. Györfly, B. Weltz, Gy. Munkácsy, P. Herman, I. Szabó: *Evaluating Individual Scientific Output Normalized to Publication Age and Academic Field Through the Scientometrics.org Project*. *Methodology* 2022;18(4):278–297. <https://doi.org/10.5964/meth.9463>
 B. Györfly, B. Weltz, I. Szabó: *Supporting grant reviewers through the scientometric ranking of applicants*. *PLoS One* 2023;18(1):e0280480. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0280480>
 P. Szluka, E. Csajbók, B. Györfly: *Relationship between bibliometric indicators and university ranking positions*. *Sci Rep* 2023;13:14193. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-35306-1>
- 13 For reasons of timeliness and completeness, the evaluation includes both a professor who died in 2024 and a professor elected a corresponding member in early summer 2025 who is the most outstanding researcher in his field. A further line of analysis may be why he was admitted to the circle of academicians only in 2025. The performance of the new MTA member essentially rivals the combined performance of the entire group of academicians who had already been inside for years or decades.
- 14 See Figure 1A in B. Györfly, B. Weltz, Gy. Munkácsy Gy, P. Herman, and I. Szabó (2022). *Evaluating individual scientific output normalized to publication age and academic field through the Scientometrics.org Project*. *Methodology*, 18(4), pp. 278–297. <https://meth.psychopen.eu/index.php/meth/article/view/9463/9463.html>
- 15 See Figure 1B in B. Györfly, B. Weltz, Gy. Munkácsy, P. Herman, and I. Szabó (2022). *Evaluating individual scientific output normalized to publication age and academic field through the Scientometrics.org Project*. *Methodology*, 18(4), pp. 278–297. <https://meth.psychopen.eu/index.php/meth/article/view/9463/9463.html>
- 16 See Table 1 in the same publication.
- 17 This may be viewed differently if an academician decides to organize or lead a major national or international scientific organization, which might reduce their publication activity.
- 18 Csaba Lentner: *For the Renewal of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (I.)*. *Polgári Szemle*, 21st year, issues 1–3, 2025, pp. 5–12. DOI: [10.24307/psz.2025.0501]{.underline} <https://polgariszemle.hu/aktualis-szam/1367-a-magyar-tudomanyos-akademia-megujitasaert>

- 19 Gazdasági Rádió (Trend FM) (2016) – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Euv7SAxWAKU>, Kossuth Rádió (2016) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNIHFUaotxc>, Echo TV (2016) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FH_3UmE0c8Y
- 20 See the statement of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences : https://mta.hu/data/dokumentumok/ix_osztaly/KTB%20ALLASFOGLALAS%20-%202015%20DECEMBER%2010.pdf As one of the main theorists of active state-led economic policy, I formulated a strong counter-position. I objected that the academic initiative was launched even though the academicians had requested and received substantial financial support from the Hungarian National Bank (MNB) foundations for their books, foreign travel, and research projects, despite not agreeing with the aims and spirit of the National Bank's programme. The confrontation deepened because my decades of scientific work have led me to conclude that the exclusive and uncompromising application of neo-liberal economic doctrines is wrong. Before 2010, I was one of the developers of the government programme; after 2010, I became, and remain, one of its representatives in public and academic life. My main works include: Csaba Lentner: *Public Finance and Public Administration* (2013); Csaba Lentner: *System Change and Financial Policy*, Academic Press, 2016, Csaba Lentner: *The Development History of Hungarian Public Finance from the Dualism to the Present* (2019) (English edition 2020, French edition 2023, Chinese edition 2023).
- 21 In 2016, after the conflict with neoliberal academicians, I faced serious institutional consequences at the Ludovika University of Public Service. My economic and public-finance theories, subjects, and textbooks were removed from economics and public finance education, my Institute of Public Finance and Public Administration was dissolved, and I was removed from its leadership. Despite these developments, the National University of Public Service continued to support my work. https://hirtv.hu/ahirtyhirei_adattar/nke-levelthattak-matolcsy-bizalmasat-1395874 My activity then continued in the Public Finance Research Institute and, from 2021, in the Széll Kálmán Public Finance Research Workshop, which I have led ever since. In civil servant training, including the civil servant professional examination curriculum, I was able to maintain my positions continuously; and from 2025 my role was strengthened once again in the Public Administration Science Doctoral School. During the 2016 episode, the person who questioned my teachings and, in my view, actively worked against them at the University was the same person who, from 2023 onward, and also at the time of my withdrawal from the application process, served as the chairman of Section IX of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.
- 22 For the complete register of my scientific publications and citations, see: <https://m2.mtmt.hu/gui2/?type=authors&mode=browse&sel=10008404&view=pubTable>
- 23 Available at: <https://wekerlealapitvany.hu/wekerle-sandor-tudomanyos-eletmudij>
- 24 See: <https://antk.uni-nke.hu/hirek/2018/08/21/allami-elismeresben-reszesult-az-akk-intezetvezeto-egyetem-tanara>
<https://www.veol.hu/helyi-kozelet/2018/09/ader-janos-koztarsasagi-elnok-magas-allami-kituntetesben-reszesitette-lentner-csaba-kozgazdaszt>
- 25 <https://antk.uni-nke.hu/karunk/cimek-kituntetesek/cimek-kituntetesek-antk>
<https://ajk.kre.hu/index.php/1591-magyary-zoltan-emlekerem-kituntetesben-reszesult-lentner-csaba.html>
- 26 <https://www.penz7.hu/hir-reszlet.cshtml?hirId=69>
- 27 CEU-affiliated historians were also involved, including academic candidates whose applications were still pending ahead of the spring 2025 election of Academy members. In my view, these were people either whom I regarded as lacking the disciplinary competence to assess the field of public finance or as unlikely to exercise objective judgment because of perceived or experienced grievances under the post-2010 system of government. They appeared to see in me above all a leading theoretician of the civic government, which, in my assessment, made an objective evaluation of my scientific work difficult to expect. The process also appears to have involved a former MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party) minister whose doctoral degree was obtained only after a lengthy period and whose scientific work, as far as I can determine, has attracted almost no citations.
- 28 Personal appointments (committee invitations) were made on the basis of individual approaches, without the knowledge of the chairman of the history committee. The conditions for a transparent procedure were therefore not met in this area either.
- 29 *Heti Válasz Online* (2025): <https://www.valaszonline.hu/2025/04/01/mta-200-emlekuless-tiltakozo-akademiku->

- sok/, This was followed by a partially phrased and unclear retreat or clarification by six academicians, which *Válasz Online* itself also found difficult to interpret. <https://www.valaszonline.hu/2025/04/02/visszakozo-akademikusok-nem-is-akarnak-kivonulni-orban-latogatasakor/> – In my view, those members who had earlier rejected Viktor Orbán subsequently stepped back from their previous position; most of them also receive significant compensation from state institutions. I further note that, under the civic course, they also received high state decorations and benefits. As an indication of the persistence and seriousness of the 2025 spring academic conflict, I interpret the call made a few months later by a Section IX legal committee member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for pressure aimed at overthrowing the constitutional order: <https://mandiner.hu/belfold/2025/09/az-elte-nema-maradt-buntetlenul-megusztja-sulyos-a-fenyegetozest-a-szelsoseges-fleck-zoltan> – <https://magyarnemzet.hu/belfold/2025/09/lanczi-tamas-az-mta-elnokenek-ne-engedje-magat-megfelemliteni>
- 30 The quality of the Section IX academicians' procedure in relation to Viktor Orbán is well expressed by István Kenesei's remark: 'After press deadline, some of the defiant academicians reconsidered and requested a correction from *Válasz Online*.' See also Kenesei's complete paper on the academic atmosphere and the politicization of science: <https://www.es.hu/cikk/2025-04-04/kenesei-istvan/a-miniszter-felrelep-.html>
- 31 See the interview with academician Csaba László about the 'now politically charged' Hungarian Academy of Sciences: <https://24.hu/belfold/2025/04/14/akademikus-vita-csaba-laszlo-az-orban-beszedrol/> <https://hirklikk.hu/kozelet/jo-ha-a-torvenyhozok-erzekelik-hogy-az-oroszag-elitje-nem-azonosul-azzal-ami-zajlik/444411> – I referred to this hostile environment – especially what I perceived as the marked hostility toward me among certain Section IX members – (among them neoliberal theoreticians, former socialist-liberal ministers, and state secretaries) – when, after five years, I withdrew and did not request the continuation of the application procedure, thereby also waiving my right of appeal. See footnote 32 for the detailed reasons underlying my withdrawal after five years.
- 32 <https://magyarnemzet.hu/belfold/2025/07/lentner-csaba-egy-arctalan-elnyomo-intezmeny-ellen-harcolok-2>
- 33 <https://magyarnemzet.hu/belfold/2025/06/pokol-bela-magyar-tudomanyos-akademia>
<https://mandiner.hu/belfold/2025/05/az-mta-az-utolso-sztalinista-intezmeny>
<https://index.hu/kultur/2025/02/28/magyar-tudomany-hun-ren-mta-radnoti-sandor-voros-imre-akademikusok-akademiai-dolgozok-foruma/>
- 34 <https://magyarnemzet.hu/belfold/2025/09/itt-az-ujabb-bizonyitek-teljesen-atlatthatatlanul-valasztja-tagjait-a-magyar-tudomanyos-akademia>
<https://qubit.hu/2025/09/11/nem-meghurcolni-kellene-oket-hanem-orulni-hogy-itt-dolgoznak-egy-mas-utan-allnak-ki-a-tudosok-a-magyar-nemzet-altal-megtamadott-ket-kutato-mellett>
<https://magyarnemzet.hu/belfold/2025/09/kutatok-hata-moge-bujva-terelne-el-a-figyelmet-a-hibas-tagfelvetteli-rendszerrol-az-akademia>
- 35 <https://infostart.hu/interju/2025/09/10/gulyas-balazs-paradigmavaltas-kell-a-magyar-kutatasban-mert-a-hun-ren-teljesitmenye-elmarad-a-nemzetkozi-atlagtol>
- 36 I present this analysis in *Civic Review*, since the civic intelligentsia and young researchers are extremely interested in the performance of Hungarian Academy of Sciences academicians in comparison with my own, particularly in light of the fact that I have served as the editor-in-chief of this journal for one and a half decades.
- 37 I refrain in this paper from extending the analysis to the OpenAlex database because of space constraints and technical problems. The conclusion that my work exceeds the performance of the academicians is therefore already supported here, and could also be confirmed on that basis.
- 38 I note that professor ÜÜ's corresponding membership became effective only after my application had been withdrawn, so he did not participate in his capacity as an academician in the five-year handling of my application. professor ÜÜ – the contested chairman of the body managing the assets of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and a member of the Academic Workers' Forum – was elected a corresponding academician in mid-2025. <https://magyarnemzet.hu/belfold/2025/05/ellenallas-es-a-hatalomfeltes-a-magyar-tudomanyos-akademian>
- 39 See for example some well-intentioned public manifestations: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwOvA1hnlBM>, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBTI8dYGT_0
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRIQRTmUn-I>

- <https://magyarnemzet.hu/belfold/2025/06/pokol-bela-magyar-tudomanyos-akademia>
- 40 See first the motto of this paper from Academy President Tamás Freund's opinion expressed six years earlier.
- 41 For example: László Csaba, Tamás Szentes, and Ernő Zalai (2015): *Still, Whose Academy? Magyar Tudomány* 2015/9. <https://real-j.mtak.hu/6151/9/2015-09.pdf> – The authors there sought to identify the bureaucratic outgrowths appearing at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, especially those that hinder efficient public-body work and disturb performance evaluation. Gyula Vastag (2019): *Habilitatio – Persona non grata: Don't habilitate, publish! Statisztikai Szemle*, vol. 97, no. 5, pp. 504–511. https://www.ksh.hu/statszemle_archive/2019/2019_05/2019_05_504.pdf
- 42 Query date: September 15, 2025, together with the anonymous candidates. <https://m2.mtmt.hu/gui2/?type=authors&mode=browse&sel=10008404&view=pubTable>
- 43 In 2017, the Hungarian government and parliament took measures that removed the Central European University's (CEU) ability to award degrees in Budapest through the state of New York. As a result, CEU's substantive operations in Hungary came to an end, since it did not hold Hungarian accreditation. Since then, left-wing intellectual circles have often shown hostility toward right-wing researchers who support the conservative government.
- 44 My data for 2025 from the Hungarian Science Bibliography (MTMA).
- 45 In spring 2025, in a podcast episode, I got into a debate with an investor aged approximately 40 or 50 who held a degree from Corvinus University. As one of the causes of Hungarian inflation, I argued that Hungary imported substantial quantities of food and energy, so its level of self-sufficiency was low, and that this was occasionally further aggravated by the depreciation of the Hungarian forint, which contributes to inflation. In response, my debate partner questioned why high import levels should be a concern, claiming that self-sufficiency – and the highest possible degree of self-sufficiency – was not important because 'for example, in Switzerland they do not produce oranges, yet they drink orange juice.' In my view, this opinion is a typical imprint of the excessively neoliberal-global orientation of economic education over recent decades, in which national interests and national perspectives were not sufficiently taken into account. My podcast discussion partner's views on the national and global economy are, in my view, a direct result of the educational and publishing activities of the academic candidates featured in my case study, particularly given that he studied at the same university as the academic candidates who hold opposing views on economic policy. I was likewise unsuccessful in persuading him when I pointed out that the production verticals fragmented by Trianon were inherently inefficient and inflationary <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfJei5dzGM>
- 46 The second part of my essay consists of a further elaboration of ideas previously published in *Mandiner*: <https://mandiner.hu/belfold/2025/10/a-magyar-tudomanyos-akademia-serto-megjelolesse-utalt-kariko-katalinra-belulrol-mar-nem-lehet-megreformalni-az-mta-t>
- 47 https://mta.hu/data/dokumentumok/egyeb_dokumentumok/2025/Akademikusok_publikacios_teljesitmenye.pdf
- 48 <https://index.hu/kultur/2025/02/28/magyar-tudomany-hun-ren-mta-radnoti-sandor-voros-imre-akademikusok-akademiai-dolgozok-foruma/>
- 49 <https://www.es.hu/cikk/2025-10-17/kertesz-janos/a-felelossegről.html>, <https://www.es.hu/cikk/2025-10-03/kardos-julianna/bucsu-a-magyar-tudomanytól.html>
- 50 See Ákos Valentinyi: *The Market for Science and Hungarian Economics*. *Budapesti Könyvszemle* 12. 2000.
- 51 See <https://telex.hu/komplex/2022/07/01/nok-a-tudomanyban-mta-doktori-uevegplafon-diszkriminacio-1>
- 52 <https://mersz.hu/magyar-tudomany-202412/>
- 53 <https://www.es.hu/cikk/2025-10-10/nyiri-kristof/tudosok-a-lathataron.html>
- 54 The Workers' Militia was the armed wing of the communist dictatorship before 1990, the armed 'shock troop' organized by the former Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party after the suppression of the 1956 revolution, in which not only workers and farmers but also leading intellectuals (including some who are still alive today) took up arms to maintain the dictatorship.
- 55 László Bitó: *The Guardian Angel of the Institute of Philosophy*. *Népszava*, January 2010, vol. 137, no. 11. https://adt.arcanum.com/hu/view/Nepszava_2010_01/?pg=174&layout=s
- 56 https://nepszava.hu/3298601_elt-200-evet

- 57 Katalin Bella (2026): *On the International Periphery? The State of Hungarian Economics in the Light of Bibliometric Data* (Nemzetközi periférián? A magyar közgazdaságtudomány helyzete bibliometriai adatok tükrében). Forthcoming.
- 58 Imre Fertő (2025): *Meritocracy or Informal Networks? On the Mechanism for Awarding Corresponding Membership in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences* (Meritokrácia vagy informális hálózatok? Az MTA levelező tagságának odaítélési mechanizmusáról). *Külgazdaság*, Vol. LXIX, November–December 2025, pp. 78–113. Fertő is a professor at Corvinus University of Budapest.
- 59 We could also refer to other economic researchers who have criticised the functioning of the elite economists of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, but these criticisms are often muted, perhaps because those on the inside fear reprisals; consequently, their writings tend to have a ‘gentle touch’
- 60 See, for example, Levente Hufnagel (2025): *On the Public Debate Concerning the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Publicisztika*, Vol. LXIX, No. 41, 10 October 2025. <https://www.es.hu/cikk/2025-10-10/-hufnagel-levente/az-mta-rol-szo-lo-kozeleti-vitahoz.html>