**Contribution of Hungary**

**to the forthcoming report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights addressing the right to access and take part in scientific progress**

**Connecting science and policy-making**

**7. As recommended by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, “States should endeavour to align their policies with the best scientific evidence available”, (General Comment 25, para. 54). How is this principle implemented, following which kind of procedure? How is this implemented in case of scientific dissensus?**

Hungary believes that states should endeavour to align their policies with the best scientific evidence available. Supporting research, development and innovation (RDI) is a key priority for the Hungarian Government. We believe that RDI as well as science and technology are the engine for economic growth and key factors in strengthening competitiveness.

Therefore, the Hungarian Government puts a special emphasis on promoting high-technology investments with a wide range of incentives aimed at ensuring sustainable economic development, transforming the country into one of the most attractive research and development centre of Central Europe. The main target of the Government is to increase RDI expenditures to 3% by 2030.

The Hungarian Government is committed to establishing an environment for an internationally competitive RDI system. There are several RDI-intensive industries with comparative advantages in Hungary. Hungarian companies are particularly strong in pharmaceutical manufacturing, health industry, IT, biotechnology, green technologies, and car manufacturing.

To enhance our competitiveness in the RDI and achieve even better results in the technology sector, it is inevitable that **we also strengthen our international science-technology relations**. There is no country in the world today that can face alone the ever-growing costs of research.

In the spirit of the concept **„Diplomacy for Science”,** this is why the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has been given responsibility for science diplomacy in Hungary. In 2014, we were one of the first in Europe to integrate this field into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

These policy aims also help to foster evidenced-based decision-making in governance, which, in turn, leads to better public policies. It is important to channel all relevant, scientifically proved information and findings towards the highest levels of government, in order to facilitate meaningful reforms for all aspects of life.

Hungarian government agencies, particularly the National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NKFIH), work to ensure that policies and decisions are based on the most up-to-date and relevant scientific research. This may involve consulting with experts, research institutions, and academic organizations.

In cases where scientific evidence is lacking or there is a need for more information, Hungary may fund or conduct research to gather necessary data and insights. Research grants from the NKFIH can support studies that inform policy decisions.

The specific procedures and mechanisms for handling scientific dissensus in Hungary may vary depending on the issue and the relevant government agencies and advisory bodies involved. The key is to maintain transparency, inclusivity, and adaptability in the policymaking process to align policies with the best scientific evidence available.

**8. In particular, what kind of science policy interface platforms, understood as channels connecting science with policymaking, have been put in place, to ensure input of scientific information in decision-making processes? What are the challenges and the elements necessary for the efficiency of such interfaces? How is the agenda set and who participates in these institutions?**

The science-policy interface is a critical aspect of ensuring that scientific information informs the decision-making processes of governments and other relevant institutions. The specifics of these interfaces can vary by country and region.

*1.* *Science-Policy Interface Platforms:*

Many governments and international organizations establish scientific advisory committees or councils composed of experts from various fields. These committees provide recommendations and scientific insights to policymakers.

Research institutes and think tanks conduct research on policy-relevant topics and often produce reports and recommendations that policymakers can use.

A few Hungarian examples to these:

* Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA): The Hungarian Academy of Sciences is a prominent scientific institution that plays a significant role in advising the government on scientific matters and contributing to policymaking.
* The Hungarian Research Network (HUN-REN) is an independent public budgetary institution. It was established by the Parliament effective August 1, 2019 with the aim to manage and operate the publicly funded independent research network in Hungary, which constitutes a central pillar of the country’s scientific domain. HUN-REN is led by a 9-member independent Governing Board whose President and most members are academicians, among others a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. HUN-REN currently comprises 11 research centres, 7 research institutes and 116 additional supported research groups operating at universities and other public institutions, conducting research in the most varied disciplines of mathematics and natural sciences, life sciences, social sciences and the humanities.
* National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NKFIH): NKFIH is responsible for allocating funds to support scientific research and innovation projects in Hungary, making it a key player in the science-policy interface.

*2.* *Challenges:*

Limited resources can pose a challenge to the effectiveness of science-policy interfaces. Ensuring sufficient funding for scientific research and advisory committees can be a challenge.

Ensuring Hungary's participation in international scientific collaborations and adhering to international standards can be challenging, especially in an evolving geopolitical landscape.

Bridging the gap between the language and priorities of scientists and policymakers can be difficult. Effective communication is crucial. Scientific information needs to be available when policymakers need it, which can be a challenge, especially when dealing with rapidly evolving issues.

Ensuring a diversity of scientific perspectives and avoiding bias is important. This can be a challenge when selecting experts or sources of information.

*3.* *Elements for Efficiency in Hungary*:

Promoting transparency in decision-making and advisory processes is vital to build trust and efficiency in the science-policy interface.

Encouraging collaboration between different scientific disciplines and involving social sciences and humanities can be beneficial when addressing complex policy issues.

Engaging with various stakeholders, including civil society organizations, can help ensure that the science-policy interface is inclusive and considers a broader range of perspectives. Offering training and resources to both scientists and policymakers can improve the efficiency of interactions and decision-making processes.

The agenda for science-policy interfaces in Hungary is often influenced by government priorities. The immediate needs and priorities of the Hungarian government shape the agenda, particularly in areas like healthcare, education, and innovation.

The Hungarian scientific community, including researchers and experts, contributes to setting the agenda by identifying emerging issues and conducting research relevant to policymaking.

Hungary participates in various international agreements and EU programs, which can also influence the national agenda.

Participation in these interfaces in Hungary typically involves government officials, researchers, and experts from various scientific disciplines, as well as representatives from relevant ministries and agencies. The specific composition may vary depending on the topic and the institution involved. Efficient science-policy interfaces in Hungary, as in any country, depend on effective communication, collaboration, and a commitment to evidence-based decision-making, while addressing the specific challenges and opportunities present in the Hungarian context.