

Report on the European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop

Elite Formation, Modernization, Nation-Building

having taken place in

Budapest, Central European University

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Executive Summary

The conference has gathered specialised scholars – mostly social and political historians, sociologists and political scientists – from not less than thirteen countries, belonging mostly to what can be termed the European periphery, in terms of belated historical modernization. Only two participants hailed from the West (France and Germany) and we had two special guests reporting on Brazil and Algeria as contrastive examples of historical elite formation and nation building. It was heavily regretted that the biggest 'peripheral' nation state, Poland, was not referred to in any of the exposés for lack of specialists ready to attend. Nevertheless the conference and the venue must have exerted significant intellectual attraction, so that none of the invited and expected participants have actually failed to arrive in due course and stay. Similarly, there were very few examples of lack of attendance to the consecutive study sessions. Though we had a rather overcharged programme during the two and a half days of our work, it was fully carried out following the plans. Debates were organised deliberately at the end of each session during at least half an hour, so that related problems of various exposés could be discussed together.

The initial session started with formalities limited to the minimum, though the interesting intervention of our special guest, Professor Heinrich Best, envoy of the ESF, off programme, made an excellent impression with its large scale presentation of ESF operations and projects.

The first session comprised four exposés on major comparative and monographic achievements related to the central topic of the conference, the empirical study of emerging elites in modern nation states. Peter T. Nagy and myself had the privilege of speaking about our big four years project, probably the largest empirical survey on historical elite groups ever undertaken in Europe (or elsewhere, for that matter). Christophe Charle, the leading French scholar in elite studies offered a broad comparative study on the three major Western countries, which, in many ways, served as historic models for the modernization of latecoming peripheral nation states in the continent. Jan E. Myhre gave a report on Norway, based on almost as vast survey results as our own for Hungary. With these presentations the main topical areas of the conference were also indicated and in part explored. The ensuing sessions could thus focus on more specific aspects of the topics concerned.

The first of these had to do with political and social 'power elites', those holding the reins of administration and dominating politics in various emerging states, like multi-ethnic Austria (Franz Adlgasser, Peter Urbanitsch), Romania (Marius Lazar) or Slovakia (Roman Holec). This topical area touched upon several other major problems of the conference as well, like the recruitment patterns of specific elite groups or the various sorts of 'capital' (educational, social, economic) applicable in the promotion of outsiders into elite clusters.

The third session was precisely dedicated to objectivations and different forms of application of the 'capital' represented by higher educational assets in the training and selection of elites in Bulgaria (Alexander Kostov) or Romania (Lucian Nastasa), as well as to the functions of universities in and outside nation states – Finland (Pieter Dhondt), Romania (Lucian Nastasa) – in elite formation.

The fourth session was dedicated to different intellectual clusters trained in universities in Estonia (Lea Leppik) or in Bulgaria (Georgeta Nazarska) or as members of learned societies (Christine Ottner for the Austrian Academy of Sciences), both as regards their career and as to their place in the middle classes (Andrea Pokludová, for the Czech lands). This session touched upon a number of interesting questions related to the process of professionalization, the relationship between intellectual and other elite groups, but also (for Estonia) the paradoxical question of ethnic minorities under local ethnic domination whose career chances via higher studies improved thanks to expatriation.

The fifth session of the conference dealt with old and new elites around problems of the nobility in Germany, Austria (Jaap Dronkers) and Bohemia (Milos Reznik) or those of classical noble professions like army officer staff (Tibor Hajdú for Hungary). We wanted to have a larger section on this important topical area, but no further contributions have been found in the field which concerns heavily Central and Eastern European countries where feudal ties and behavioral patterns, as well as power relations survived more often and more strongly than elsewhere.

The sixth session included specific studies devoted to the social functions of secondary education in elite training in countries as different as the Netherlands (Kees Mandemakers), Serbia (Nenad Milenovic) or Russia (Julia Disson). There again, further studies were in demand, since secondary education was, at least up to World War I. the main avenue of elite training, a good part of political or administrative elites at that time not having reached university level training.

The final session of our conference was destined to inter-cultural and inter-national comparisons. We were offered in this respect a substantial exposé on three Balkan states as to

socialist intellectuals in Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece (Augusta Dimou) and presentations on some crucial questions of the transformation of political elites in Brazil in the early 20th century (Afranio Garcia) and the difficult process of 'nationalisation' of Algerian petty intellectuals (primary school teachers) under French colonial rule (Fanny Colonna). These extra-European examples reminded us that historical processes of modernization in emerging 'national societies' during the first long period of industrialization had quite a lot in common, irrespective of geographic location, cultural bonds or historical specificities.

Our gathering took place in the Senate Room in the Old Historic Building of the Central European University, generously put at our disposal by the Rector, and a number of colleagues (between 5 and 15) interested in the subject from Budapest joined our discussions. Thus with all the participants present we had regularly a quorum of 20 to 35 persons attending in the Senate Room. Some of our Budapest colleagues joined us during the very informal lunches we had in the premises of the University thanks to the contribution to a very good local caterer service. The quality of the latter, though of modest price level, was duly appreciated by participants as representative of typical Hungarian food (a doubtful characteristics in this context). Evening dinners were arranged in restaurants near the University.

The venue, the surroundings and the mixing of local and foreign guests permitted a number of interesting exchanges, some of which must have been pursued after the gathering. The general atmosphere was studious but relaxed at the same time, given the charming environment of the Senate Room.

Scientific content of the event

The focus of our conference was historically delimited to the first long period of nation-building after the fall or the decline of feudalism (late 19th-early 20th century) and on studies using preferentially prosopographical methodology (based on standardized serial biographies of members of elite clusters concerned). A special stress was laid on the comparative dimension of observations.

The emergence and transformations of new elite clusters was, obviously enough, strongly determined by local-territorial circumstances. One can identify though a number of more general and in part common features – rather variables or factors – operating in the formation of modern elites.

One is certainly linked to the different nature of the three multicultural Empires – the Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman states - dominating the whole intermediary region of Europe during most or part of the long 19th century. A second relevant aspect had to do with the position and the capacity of reconversion of traditional power elites (the nobility) within their given system of economic stratification and political rule. Thirdly the ethnic and confessional set-up of the population (and the institutional relations of influence, prestige and authority among the Churches, attached to it) was exceptionally important, since ethnicity and religion provided a peculiar source of symbolic capital giving rise in the age of 'nationalisation' to often conflicting movements of nation-building as well as implementing dispositions and forms of collective agency liable to promote or to hinder modernization and mobility towards elite positions. Fourthly, new and old elites appeared always as stratified social clusters with historically changing internal power relations between their constituents, be it nobles or commoners, free professionals and civil servants, privately employed or independent intellectuals, brackets with more or less income, wealth, political leverage, symbolic authority or prestige convertible into social standing (such as Western Christianity as against Eastern

Christianity, let alone Jewry) etc. Moreover, the relatively autonomous functions of the educational provision must be taken into account, since this was a direct instrument of modernisation via alphabetisation and the general expansion of instruction as well as a leverage in support of processes of assimilation of alien or non dominant minorities via 'national education'. Finally all these emergent societies under scrutiny were united by their geo-political status as backward and economically underdeveloped – as compared to their earlier established Western counterparts -, generating in their ruling elites an effort to catch up with the West, to adopt Western ways and follow Western models of modernity.

The exposés presented in our workshop do not cover systematically all these major socio-historical issues, but each of the latter has been in one way or another touched upon in our discussions, so that they can serve as convenient topical themes for an overview of our achievements.

The position and the legacy of empires, as well as the relationship with the imperial powers that be in new nation states belonged to quasi-permanent implications and topical accompaniments of the analytical schemes applied in several if not all studies offered. Christophe Charle, as one of the first speakers at the conference, started by drafting an illuminating comparison of elite formation in the three dominant European powers France, Germany and Great Britain during the long 19th century, the very period when they achieved their imperial stature. Peter Dhont's essay openly broached the subject of 'ambiguous loyalties to the Tsar' when analysing the social functions performed by the two universities of Dorpat/Tartu and Helsinki in the Eastern Baltics under Russian rule. Part and parcel of an imperial academic network, they could accomplish with ups and downs in some historical junctures significant contributions to the training of local elite groups. A very close problem was raised in Lea Leppik's study on career patterns of Estonian intellectuals in the Russian Empire, which – may be paradoxically - could develop more dynamically outside than inside Estonia proper, because of the quasi monopoly of regional elite positions maintained by the traditional local Germanic ruling class as well as the relative indifference of the Russian imperial bureaucracy as to ethnic selection, at least when Christian candidates to elite posts were concerned. The recruitment of the Hungarian officer corps of the national Honvéd Army, as opposed to the 'Common' imperial Army in the Dual Habsburg Monarchy following the 1867 Compromise (*Ausgleich*), owes a lot, in Tibor Hajdu's analysis, to the fact that the latter was conceived as a supra-national institution of a liberal imperial confederation of sorts where, contrary to the Russian Empire - inventing and more and more enforcing its Russian national nature since the outgoing years of the 19th century -, could remain open to ethnic and social outsiders (even to Jews) and reject pressures for nationalisation (like in Hungary), except for the technically indispensable use of German, as the language of command. Fanny Colonna's study tackles a similar but quite different situation, the slow and difficult process of autonomisation of a national elite in Algeria under French colonial domination.

The problem of what happened to feudal elites in modern times, essentially the nobility, should have been a central issue in elite change of the three national societies – Croatia, Hungary, Poland – with the largest proportions of the gentry within the population in a European country. The topic was indirectly addressed in the workshop under various disguises, due also directly in at least two exposés centred, one, on the new political role assumed by the nobility in the building of the nation state, the other, the internal transformation of the cluster as to its exclusivist reproduction. The first issue is the target of Milos Reznik's study on the reemergence of sectors of the nobility in the Czech Lands as a nation-building cluster in the 19th century, split though between imperial loyalties and political brackets of Czech nationalism. This was a historic resumption of political agency,

making to forget the consequences of the traumatic experience of Counter-Reformation in the early 17th century. Jaap Dronkers' essay is a richly documented piece of empirical survey on the declining homogamy – that is partial opening up – of an erstwhile strictly closed social caste in three large national environments: the Netherlands, Austria and Germany. Other papers also referred but more indirectly to the problems of the landowning nobility, like Afranio Garcia's study on Brazil, especially as concerned the inter-war years, Julie Disson's on the privileged educational provision of the Russian gentry in the 19th century or Tibor Hajdu's presentation of the transformations of the officer corps of Hungarian background, due among other things to the progressive withdrawal of noblemen from the armed services.

Ethnicity and religion have been permanent factors in nation building elites, often closely connected since the basic division of Western Christian Europe after the Peace of Westphalia into a Catholic and a Protestant geo-political zone with absolutely dominant religious majorities everywhere, except a few local societies (like Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands or the Swiss Confederation), but with very entangled ethnic-linguistic mixtures in several large regions of Eastern and Central Europe. Ethnicity as a nation-building force and reference for national legitimation was certainly a focal point in the exceptional success of Czech nation-building, facing the counter-power of the established German bourgeoisie in Bohemia, Moravia and (even more radically) in Silesia. The issue is essential in Milos Reznik's treatment of the Czech nobility, but also in Andrea Pokludová's meticulously grounded local survey on the transformation and modernization of the educated professional clusters in a number of Czech provincial towns confronted with the challenges and chances of industrialisation (Moravska Ostrava, Opava, Olomouc, Mistek, Vitkovice). One can find here a first reference to the extraordinary professional mobility of modernizing Jewry in Central Europe, one of the central topical areas of my own long term research as well as those of my close associate Peter Tibor Nagy on the alterations of elite recruitment in Hungary during the whole post-feudal and pre-socialist Old Regime. Peter Tibor Nagy offered to our workshop an overall presentation of his special research on 'reputational elites' in Hungary, based on a large biographical data bank of 26000 of those individuals having entries in one of the national encyclopaedias published since the outgoing 19th century (*Pallas Lexikon*) to the recently completed representative *Hungarian Great Encyclopaedia* (2005). He has expanded on some details of this study in his work focused more specifically here on students of the Faculties of Arts and Sciences of the second Hungarian university in Kolozsvár/Cluj (1872-1918). As to my own exposé, attempting an overview of our enormous survey of graduates and students of all institutions of higher education in Hungary, within its changing historical borders in the long period of 1867-1948 (probably the first ever attempt at a quasi-exhaustive prosopography of all educated elite groups in the framework of an entire nation state), its fundamental analytical tools related to selection processes consisted precisely of ethnicity (defined both by mother tongue and the national character of surnames) and religion, besides regional origins, gender, nobility, etc. Ethnicity (or 'nationality' as it was alluded to in the 19th century) and confession were central categories for the classification of people in the only multi-cultural would-be national society in Europe (or elsewhere in the world, for that matter) typified by the absence of an ethnic or a confessional majority within the population during its formative period (before 1918).

The internal stratification and, occasionally, power relations between established elite groups is a topic touched upon in several papers. Jan Eivind Myhre dedicates his study on Norwegian elite formation on the particular strong and consensually accepted position of civil servants with university education in a national society in the making, which lacked a local aristocracy or otherwise constituted traditional ruling class. Peter Urbanitsch research on the high civil service in the multi-cultural Habsburg Empire with supra-national political commitment can be considered as the exploration of an unexpected parallel situation in

obviously quite different socio-historical conditions. The same can apply with some qualifications to Franz Adlgasser's report (absent from the volume) on members of the federal type Parliament of the Austrian part of the post-1867 'Dual Monarchy'. Marius Lazar attempted an ambitious project to interpret the historically identifiable internal oppositions in the Romanian ruling elites during the first long phase of independent statehood by resorting to an ingenious theoretical construction related to two types of social capital capable to legitimate ruling positions in the state, a historical-symbolic and charismatic as well as confrontational type and another one with reference to compromise oriented bureaucratic rationalism. The paper is also absent from the volume, though it could serve as a probably resourceful guide for the interpretation of power relations in the romantic phase of 19th century nation-building in other East European societies as well. The scheme could have concerned aspects the analysis of Slovak national elites from Hungarian rule till the post 1945 temporary rebirth of the Czechoslovakian state, as presented by Roman Holec (absent from the volume). Afranio Garcia's study of Brazilian elites has also been focussed on aspects of internal fragmentation and alliances, notably via marriage strategies.

The role played by the educational provision and its historical development was another central issue in the conference, but some papers dealt with it more explicitly. This was the case of Pieter Dhondt's study of the two would-be national universities of Helsinki in Finland and Tartu/Dorpat in Estonia and that of Jan Eivind Myhre focussed on alumni of the University of Oslo (since 1811). The autonomous effect exerted by a relatively over-developed secondary school and higher educational network in Hungary (with over 10 Academies of Law, besides two Legal Faculties around 1900) on the multiplication of educated men and women was a major issue in my project as well. This also applied to Fanny Colonna's study of the impact of French education on Algerian elites. But three papers tackled problems of the very institutional functions of educational agencies proper. Julie Disson, our only Russian participant, offered an interesting study of a very special, socially selective educational track, reserved for the nobles in 19th century Russia, placed between gymnasiums and universities – which were open to all rank and file candidates to advanced studies. Kees Mandemakers' paper (absent from the volume) has dealt with fundamental issues of the modernization process via education in the Netherlands by studying the promotional capacity of secondary schools in two historical cohorts (1880 and 1920) following their career achievements broken down by social background, religion and other 'independent' variables of the position of alumni in social space. Nenad Milenovic (with a paper absent from the volume) studied generations of alumni of the Belgrad *licej*, precursor of the local university, who graduated before the period of independence.

Finally, several papers touched upon one of the most important specificities of emerging East-Central European elites, their often submissive relationship to the West, remarkably objectified in the impact of francophone (French, Swiss, Belgian) and germanophone (Austrian, German and Swiss) universities in their training during and even beyond the long 19th century. The Balkan countries were specially concerned by the Western intellectual temptation, since they were the latest in Europe to found national universities which, for a long time, were poor partners to compete with their Western counterparts. Hence an overwhelming sector of their elites, often with outright state support, was educated in the West, especially in Germany and in France, reproducing in their cultural preferences and orientations the geo-political competition between the two powers. Lucian Nastasa's study explicitly deals with this question, showing in a short but brilliant analysis the quasi exclusive importance of graduation in the West for those aspiring to an academic career in Romania till the very end of the pre-socialist era. Alexander Kostov offered a parallel study on Bulgarian elites between independence and the First World War, whereby he compared alumni of the University of Sofia with a large selection of Bulgarian students trained in a

number of Western countries. The paper of Georgeta Nazarska on Bulgarian women doctors completes the previous study on a number of specific points but goes much further in time (till the end of the Old Regime) and in thematic scope, since it includes in the investigation the future career of lady doctors for whom studies abroad represented often an essential factor of professional and social legitimacy.

Our success or failure can be measured by the fact that the workshop could mobilize students doing prosopographically grounded elite studies in most large territorial units of the region – with the notable and regrettable exception of Poland among major would-be nation states with in part new elites in post-feudal times, but comprising Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Lands, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Norway, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Slovakia. Moreover it also attracted in the perspective of problematic but heuristically always revealing comparisons Dutch, French and German colleagues, together with two other scholars engaged in research on elite change in colonial or post-colonial countries of the Third World (Algeria and Brazil)

Assessment of the results.

Besides classical foci, like the opposition between old and new elites, processes of professionalisation or the specific functions of various universities, the conference has brought into the light a number of issues rather neglected in previous researches on elites. Among these one has to mention the importance of the ethnic and religious (denominational) factor in elite formation in many Central and East European societies, with special reference to Jews and Germans in non Germanic environments (Hungary, Bohemia, Russia). The question of institutional arrangements (universities, vocational schools of advanced learning, normal schools, theological seminaries, etc.) was also stressed as important factors to modify the culture of elites and their capacity to act as modernizers in their respective societies. In spite of national specificities of development, the interrelated nature of the modernization of elite clusters has also been duly emphasized, especially as far as studies abroad and East-West student migrations were concerned.

Among the new research objectives identified implicitly in our gathering one can cite three in which new projects have already been formulated and made public. One has to do with the transformation of elites in multi-ethnic societies where one dominant elite group had to cede its positions to another ethnic cluster (like in most countries of the Carpathian Basin after 1918). A second important new line of research would concern the impact of religion, that is confessional membership, in the shaping of dispositions and capacities applicable in the modernisation process, notably in educational success : such studies could focus separately on comparisons between Catholics and Protestants inside Western Christianity, between Western and Eastern Christians, and between Christians and Jews. Thirdly the autonomous supportive functions of the educational provision itself, its strength (by the number of schools), its pedagogical efficiency as an instrument of transmitting and developing learning and its selective outreach (in terms of preferential selection or exclusion of some categories of candidates to education) has been identified as a study target among possible future scholarly priorities in this line of research.

Final Programme

Thursday 3 May 2007

Evening

Arrival

Friday 4 May 2007

09.00 *Registration, come-together meeting (with coffee)*

09.30 **Welcome by the head of the History Department of the CEU**

09.45 **Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)**

Heinrich Best (Standing Committee for the Social Sciences)

Comparative and long term perspectives

10.00 Introductory lecture by the convener, **Victor Karady** (History Department, CEU, Budapest), „The experience of the overall survey of university graduates in Hungary (1867-1948)“

10.30 **Christophe Charle** (History Department, Université de Paris-Sorbonne), „Elite Formation in Late 19th Century France, Germany and Great Britain“

11.00 **Peter Tibor Nagy** (Doctoral School 'Education and Society', University of Pécs - Hungary), „Reputational Elites in Hungary from Feudalism to Post-Communism“

11.30 **Jan Eivind Myhre** (Department of Archeology, Conservation and Historical Studies, University of Oslo), „Academics as a Ruling Elite in Norway in the 19th and 20th Centuries“

12.00 **Discussion**

12.30 *Lunch*

Ruling (Power) Elites

14.00 **Franz Adlgasser** (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Commission for the History of the Habsburg Empire, Vienna) „Political Elites in a Multi-Ethnic Body. The Austrian Parliament“

14.30 **Marius Lazar** (Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, Cluj), „Various Species of Political Capital in the Making of Modern Romania (1866-1916)“

15.00 **Roman Holec** (Department of Slovak History, Faculty of Art of Comenius University, Bratislava) „The Slovak Elites between State and Nation“

15.30 **Peter Urbanitsch** (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Commission for the History of the Habsburg Empire, Vienna), „The High Civil Service Corps in the Last Period of the Multi-Ethnic Habsburg Empire, Between National and Imperial Loyalties“

16.00 **Discussion**

16.30 *Coffee break*

Universities and Academics

17.00 **Pieter Dhondt** (University of Helsinki), „The Universities of Dorpat and Helsinki as Nation Building Institutions (1800-1850)“

17.30 **Alexander Kostov** (Institute of Balkan Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia), „University Students from Bulgaria at Home and Abroad“

18.00 **Lucian Nastasa** (Institute of History, Romanian Academy of Sciences, Cluj), „The Education of Romanian University Professors in Western Universities“

18.30 **Discussion**

19.00 *Dinner*

Saturday 5 May 2007

Professionals, Intellectuals, Middle Classes

10.00 **Georgeta Nazarska** (Institute of History, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia), „Women Medical Doctors and the Modernization of the Bulgarian Nation State (1878-1944)“

10.30 **Lea Leppik** (Museum of Tartu University History, Estonia), „Social Mobility and Career Patterns of Estonian Intellectuals in the Russian Empire“

11.00 **Andrea Pokludová** (Silesian Museum, Opava, Czech Republic) „ Intellectuals and Educated Middle Classes in Moravia and Silesia around 1900“

11.30 **Christine Ottner** (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Commission for the History of the Habsburg Empire, Vienna), „The Imperial Academy of Sciences at the Middle of the 19th Century“

12.00 **Discussion**

12.30 *Lunch*

Traditional Elites and Nobility

14.00 **Jaap Dronkers** (Department of Political Sciences, European University Institute, Florence), „The Social Position of the Austrian and German Nobility in the 20th Century“

14.30 **Milos Reznik** (Philosophy Faculty, University of Chemnitz) „Bohemian Nobility and Nation Building in the 19th Century“

15.00 **Tibor Hajdú** (Institute of History, Hungarian Academy of Science, Budapest), „Transformations of the Officer Corps in Hungary (1900-1940)“

15.30 **Discussion**

16.00 *Coffee break*

Secondary schools and elite education

16.30 **Kees Mandemakers** (Center for Applied Social Research, Amsterdam), Secondary Education, Modernization and Changing Patterns of Elite Recruitment in the Netherlands"

17.00 **Nenad Milenovic** (Institute of History, University of Belgrade), „The ' Licei' (1838-1863) and the Early Generations of Serbian Intellectuals"

17.30 **Julie Disson** (Faculty of History, University of Moscow), „Privileged Noble High Schools and the Formation of Russian National Elites in the First Part of the 19th Century"

18.00 **Discussion**

19.00 *Dinner*

Sunday 6 May 2007

New elites, nations and political agendas

10.00 **Augusta Dimou** (Institute of Slavic Studies, University of Leipzig) „Socialist Intellectuals and Party Cadres in the Balkans, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, (1870-1914)"

10.30 **Fanny Colonna** (Genèse et Transformation des Groupes Sociaux, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris), „Educated Algerian Elites under French Colonial Rule"

11.00 **Afranio Garcia** (Centre Brésil, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris), „Elite Recomposition and State Building in Contemporary Brazil 1920-1970)"

11.30 **Discussion**

12.00 **Conclusion and final discussion**

13.00 *Farewell Lunch*

14.30 *Historic tour in Central Budapest (for those who can stay)*

Afternoon

Departure

Final List of Invited Participants

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Statistical Information on Participants

The invited participants (24 Total ,
ESF Representative not included) came from
the following European countries as far as
their institutional attachment is concerned
(without being necessarily citizens of these
countries) : Austria (3), Bulgaria (2), Czech

Republic (2), Estonia (1), Finland (1), France (3), Germany (1), Hungary (3), Italy (1), Netherlands (1), Norway (1), Romania (2), Russia (1), Serbia (1), Slovakia (1).

They are all academics, with positions in a university, a vocational institution of higher learning, an archive or a research center under the aegis of a national Academy of Sciences.

There were 7 women and 16 men. No data on age brackets.

Budapest, 4. April, 2008.