

CBA/ABC response to the move of the Hungarian Natural History Museum from Budapest to Debrecen, Hungary, drafted by T. A. Dickinson, ROM Senior Curator Emeritus, with French translation by Frédérique Guinel.

Preamble: The Canadian Botanical Association has been asked to show support for the campaign against the proposal by the government of Hungary to move the 200 year old Hungarian Natural History Museum from Budapest to Debrecen, just under 200 km away. The Natural History Museum contains more than 10 million specimens of modern and fossil plants, fungi, and animals from Hungary, Europe, and around the world. The Museum's herbarium alone contains over two million specimens of algae, fungi, and plants (http://www.nhmus.hu/en/collections/department_of_botany). The campaign to stop this move has come from the staff and researchers of the Museum, and numerous Hungarian academics, including members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Abbott A. 2020. NEWS - 24 February 2020 - Outcry over plan to move Hungarian natural-history museum to remote town <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00490-x> accessed 24 February 2020).

The concerns expressed about this move include the way in which most of the Museum's researchers and staff will be unable to relocate with the collections on which their research is based, for which they care, and which they interpret to the public. This poses the risk of interrupting important research on Hungarian biodiversity and ecology, of exposing the collections to the risk of damage, and depriving them of the expertise with which they have been and can be interpreted for the Hungarian public and for international visitors (in person, or online). Already the Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF) has written in support of the Hungarian Natural History Museum, emphasizing that... "Museums play a central part in historical, cultural and scientific patrimony of any particular country and disruptions to these relationships can be detrimental to the collections, to the standing of the institution itself, as well as to society itself due to the strong cultural links to the natural sciences and biodiversity discovery" (see below).

Resolution: Be it resolved therefore that the Canadian Botanical Association / l'Association Botanique du Canada (CBA/ABC) strongly supports the efforts of the Hungarian Natural History Museum, its researchers and staff, and its other supporters in Hungary and elsewhere, to prevent the move of the Museum from Budapest to any other location. Such a move would be destructive to the integrity of the collections, to their care, and to the research being carried out using them.

The CBA/ABC urges the government of Hungary to keep the Museum in Budapest where its collections will be maintained by those who are familiar with them and who are dedicated to their care and protection. Keeping the Museum in Budapest is essential in order to preserve the vital role that the Museum plays in Hungarian and international science and education. This will also ensure the uninterrupted care of the collections and the continued association of the collections with the expertise

that is essential if they are to play their roles in scientific research, higher education, and the education of the general public.

Finally, **the CBA/ABC suggests** that the government of Hungary reconsider the move of the Museum from Budapest as doing so will enable the Hungarian Natural History Museum to continue providing its services to the nation without interruption, while making possible other, perhaps more valuable, ways of developing outlying cities like Debrecen. Creating a new, satellite department of the Museum in Debrecen, with new exhibitions, could meet the needs of this university town by providing an opportunity for enhanced natural history and museology training in eastern Hungary.

Préambule : Il a été demandé à l'Association Botanique Canadienne de soutenir la campagne contre la proposition du gouvernement hongrois de déplacer le Musée Hongrois d'Histoire Naturelle, vieux de 200 ans, de Budapest à Debrecen, à un peu moins de 200 km. Le Musée d'Histoire Naturelle contient plus de 10 millions de spécimens modernes et fossiles de plantes, de champignons et d'animaux de Hongrie, d'Europe et du monde entier. L'herbier du musée contient à lui seul plus de deux millions de spécimens d'algues, de champignons et de plantes (http://www.nhmus.hu/en/collections/department_of_botany). La campagne visant à mettre un terme à ce déménagement a été menée par le personnel et les chercheurs du musée, ainsi que par leurs défenseurs parmi les universitaires hongrois, notamment les membres de l'Académie Hongroise des Sciences (Abbott A. 2020. NEWS - 24 février 2020 - Le projet de déménagement du musée d'histoire naturelle hongrois dans une ville isolée fait l'objet d'un tollé (<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-00490-x>)).

Les inquiétudes exprimées à propos de ce déménagement portent notamment sur la manière dont la plupart des chercheurs et du personnel du musée pourraient ne pas être en mesure de déménager avec les collections sur lesquelles se fondent leurs recherches, dont ils prennent soin et qu'ils interprètent pour le public. Cela risque d'interrompre d'importantes recherches sur la biodiversité et l'écologie hongroises, d'endommager les collections, et de les priver d'être interprétées par des experts pour le public hongrois et pour les visiteurs internationaux (en personne ou en ligne). Le Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF) a déjà écrit pour soutenir le Musée d'Histoire Naturelle Hongrois, en soulignant que... "Les musées jouent un rôle central dans le patrimoine historique, culturel et scientifique d'un pays et les perturbations dans ce rôle peuvent être préjudiciables aux collections, à la réputation de l'institution elle-même, et à la société en raison des liens culturels étroits établis entre celle-ci et les sciences naturelles et la découverte de la biodiversité" (voir ci-dessous).

Résolution: Qu'il soit résolu que l'Association Botanique du Canada/ Canadian Botanical Association soutienne fermement les efforts du Musée Hongrois d'Histoire Naturelle, de ses chercheurs et de son personnel, et de ses autres partisans en Hongrie et ailleurs, d'empêcher le déménagement du Musée de Budapest vers un autre lieu. Un tel déménagement serait préjudiciable à l'intégrité de ses collections, à leur entretien et à la recherche qui les utilise.


L'ABC/CBA demande instamment au gouvernement hongrois de maintenir le musée à Budapest, où ses collections seront entretenues par ceux qui les connaissent, en prennent soin, et les protègent. Le maintien du musée à Budapest est essentiel pour préserver le rôle vital que le musée joue dans la science et l'éducation hongroises et internationales. Maintenir le musée à Budapest permettrait aussi d'assurer le soin ininterrompu des collections et leur utilisation par des experts afin qu'elles puissent jouer leur rôle dans la recherche scientifique, l'enseignement supérieur et l'éducation du grand public.

Enfin, l'ABC/CBA suggère que le gouvernement hongrois reconsidère le déménagement du musée de Budapest, car cela permettrait au Musée Hongrois d'Histoire Naturelle de continuer à fournir ses services à la nation sans interruption, tout en rendant possible d'autres moyens, peut-être plus précieux, de développer les villes périphériques comme Debrecen. La création d'un nouveau département satellite du musée à Debrecen, avec de nouvelles expositions, pourrait répondre aux besoins de cette ville universitaire en offrant la possibilité de renforcer la formation en histoire naturelle et en muséologie dans l'est de la Hongrie.

Resolution Approved by the Membership at the CBA/ABC Annual General Meeting

June 2, 2020

Deborah A. Metsger



Secretary

Canadian Botanical Association /

Association Botanique Du Canada





CETAF in support of European Natural History Museums and scientifically accessible natural history collections

The Natural History Museum of Budapest is an active and highly appreciated member of the Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities (CETAF), a Europe-wide organisation of more than 60 Natural History Museums, Science Centres and Botanical Gardens that support collections and biodiversity research from 21 countries within and all across Europe.

In the interests of European scientific mobility and quality research, CETAF encourages physical and digital access to collections. It also promotes, via the establishment of guidelines or standards, the formation of working groups, or initiatives or projects (such as the COST action Mobilise or the new European Scientific Research Infrastructure, Distributed System for Scientific Collections – DiSSCo) the principles of well-maintained, well-curated and well-integrated collections as part of the European network of scientific collections.

We fully support the need for accessibility to collections that are housed in central, recognized centres of research, in each of our member countries. Both scientific mobility (the ability of scientists to access collections) and accessibility to the collections (digital or physical availability of well-curated collections) are essential requisites that support the scientific use of collections and thus advances in biodiversity sciences. Established centres of research formed by national collections call for skilled curatorial and taxonomic staff to maintain suitable standards of collections care that is based on expertise that has been built up by institutions over many years. Such established centres of research also form an important part in citizen science activities and public engagement in science, again based on the expertise and stability that has been built up over the years.

National museums, as centres of national heritage are important elements in both civil and academic society. Museums play a central part in historical, cultural and scientific patrimony of any particular country and disruptions to these relationships can be detrimental to the collections, to the standing of the institution itself, as well as to society itself due to the strong cultural links to the natural sciences and biodiversity discovery.

The Executive Committee of the Consortium of European Taxonomic Facilities

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