

CHANGES IN HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES RESEARCHERS'
INTENTION TO RESIGN AND JOB SEARCH EFFORTS BETWEEN 2017
AND 2019
Survey results

Figures

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The research was made possible by the volunteer work of the participants.

The following researchers assisted in the preparation of the survey, the compilation of the questionnaire, the organization and conduct of the survey data collection, the design of the online filling-in interface and the conduct of the research: Iván Csaba, Mária Csanádi, Adrienn Fónagy, Jenő Gyenese, Miklós Hajdu, Zoltán Hajnal, Balázs Hangya, Károly Héberger, Zsófia Horváth, Katalin Juhász, Csaba Katona, Dániel Lévai, Árpád Magyar, György Molnár, Balázs Muraközi, Dániel Papp, Endre Szabó, Adrienn Szilágyi, Emőke Rita Szilágyi, Melinda Tir, Márton Zászkaliczky, and many others. We would like to thank them for their valuable help. Without them, research and analysis would not have been possible.

The research was led by István János Tóth.

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Abstract

Based on data from a self-administrated questionnaire survey, this paper analyses the motivations behind researchers resigning from the research network formerly under the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) and their job search efforts one year before and one year after June 12th, 2018. This was the date on which Hungary's Ministry of Innovation and Technology sent the HAS an e-mail message, informing it of a proposed amendment to Act XL of 1994 on the HAS and inviting the HAS to comment on the draft legislation with an extremely short turnaround (54 minutes). In the proposed amendment, the Hungarian government formulated its intention to withdraw research and development funds from the HAS research network and redirect them to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. This shocking event was followed by a long and abortive series of negotiations between the HAS and the Hungarian government. In the end, on July 2nd, 2019, the Hungarian Parliament passed a new law (Act LXVIII of 2019) that stripped the HAS of its research network and placed it under more direct government control. According to statements by a number of international scientific organizations, the HAS and its research community, these measures pose a serious threat to freedom of science in Hungary. The aim of the research was to examine if there was a change in researchers' intention to resign from the research network as a consequence of this institutional shock. 747 researchers responded to the survey, i.e. nearly 40% of the researchers in the former HAS research network. The analysis used statistical, econometric and qualitative methods. The results show very large changes in researchers' intention to resign and the frequency of their job search efforts between the year before and after June 12th, 2018. In only two years (from May 2017 to June 2019), the share of researchers who are considering leaving the previous HAS research network has risen from 41 to 79 per cent. The proportion of researchers taking major steps to find a new job (the rate of those who have applied for a job, interviewed for a job or accepted a job offer) has risen from 12 to 22 per cent. Statistical tests showed that these changes are significantly more frequent among researchers in the social sciences and the humanities, mathematics and the natural sciences, and among talented young researchers and researchers with high human capital who are more competitive in the job market than other groups of researchers. The findings suggest that researchers in the former HAS research network are likely to expect restrictions in scientific freedom and act accordingly.

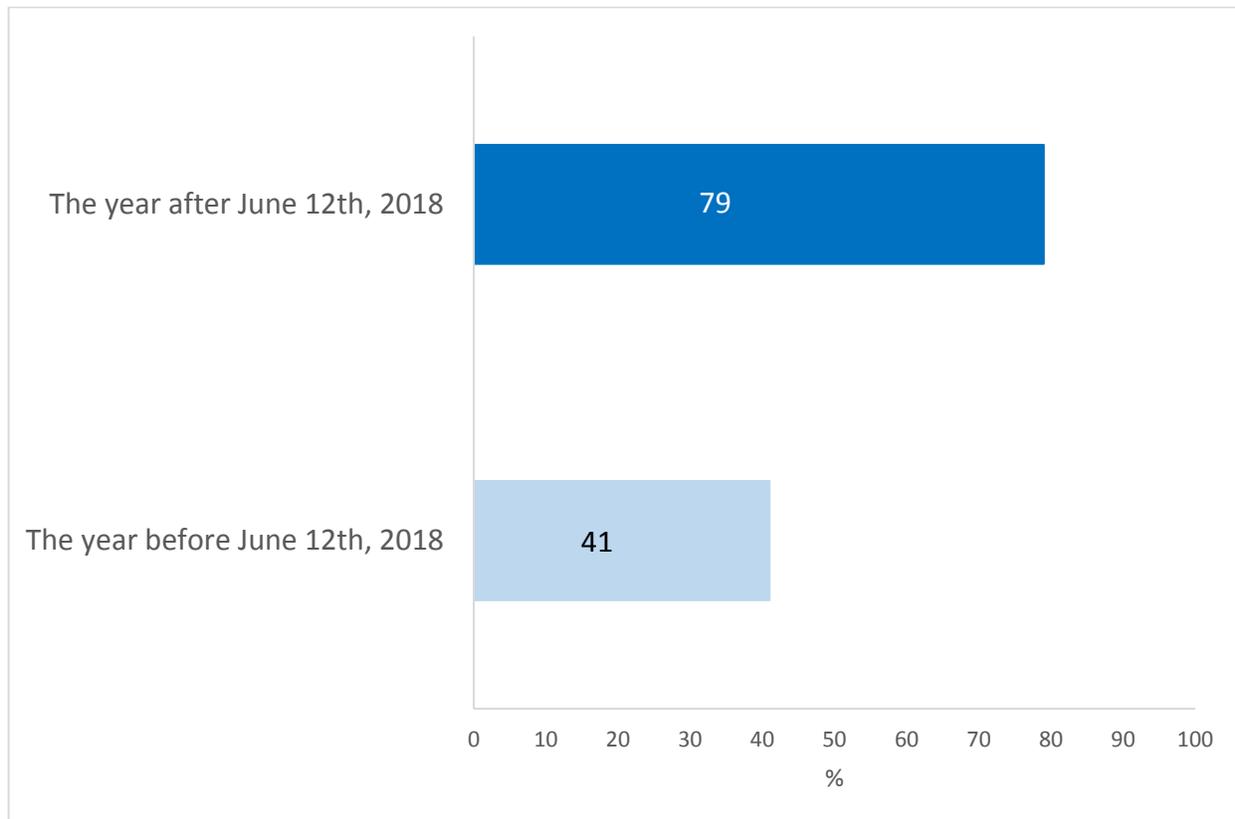
Keywords: Hungary, migration, academic freedom, researchers, survey, empirical analysis

Figures

"There are some who will leave and that we will know but there are some who will not come and we will not even know about them... "

[a respondent to the questionnaire]

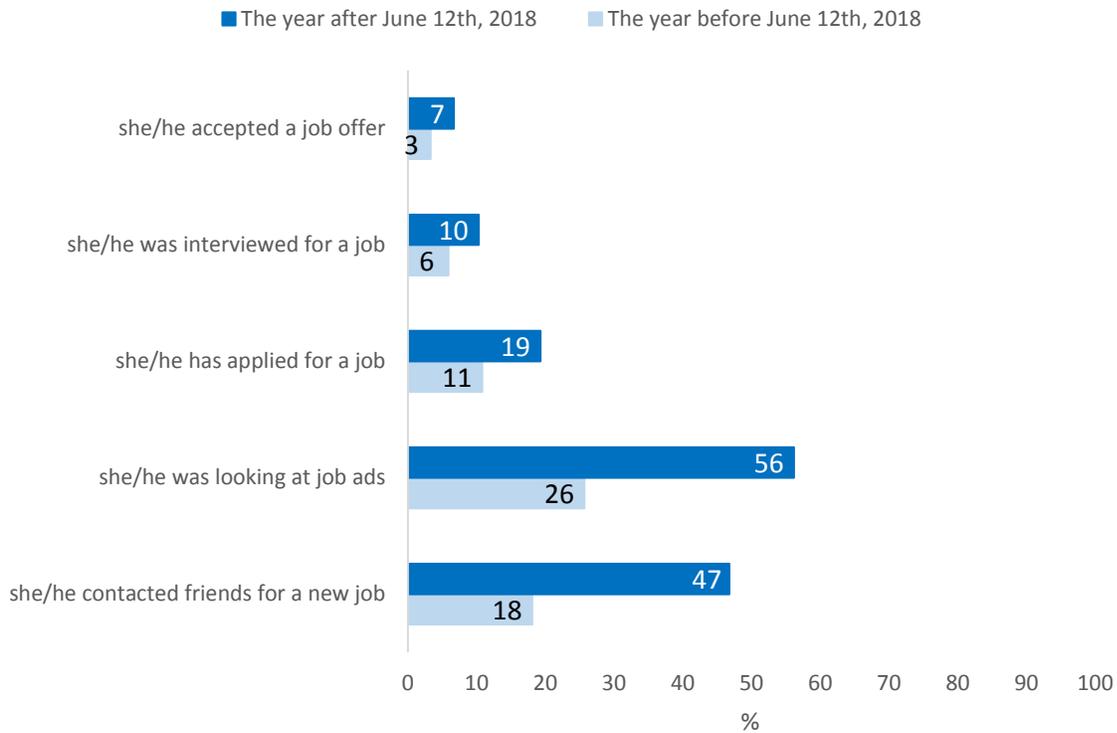
Figure 1: The share of researchers of the HAS who intend to change their job (going abroad for a scientific or non-scientific position or moving in Hungary for non-scientific position) in the years before and after June 12, 2018, per cent



Note: On June 12, 2018, the president of the HAS received a proposed amendment to Act XL of 1994 on the HAS and inviting the HAS to comment on the draft legislation that will allocate nearly half of its budget, HUF 23 billion, to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. See <https://www.parlament.hu/irom41/00503/00503.pdf>. The Orban’s government gave the HAS only 54 minutes to comment on the draft bill. The figure compares the one-year period preceding this date (June 12, 2018) with the following one-year period.

Figure 1 shows that from June 2018 to July 2019 79 per cent of researchers of HAS started thinking about that leaving the HAS research network and changing their job (going abroad for scientific or non-scientific positions or moving in Hungary for non-scientific positions) while only 41 per cent of them thought the same way from June 2017 to May 2018.

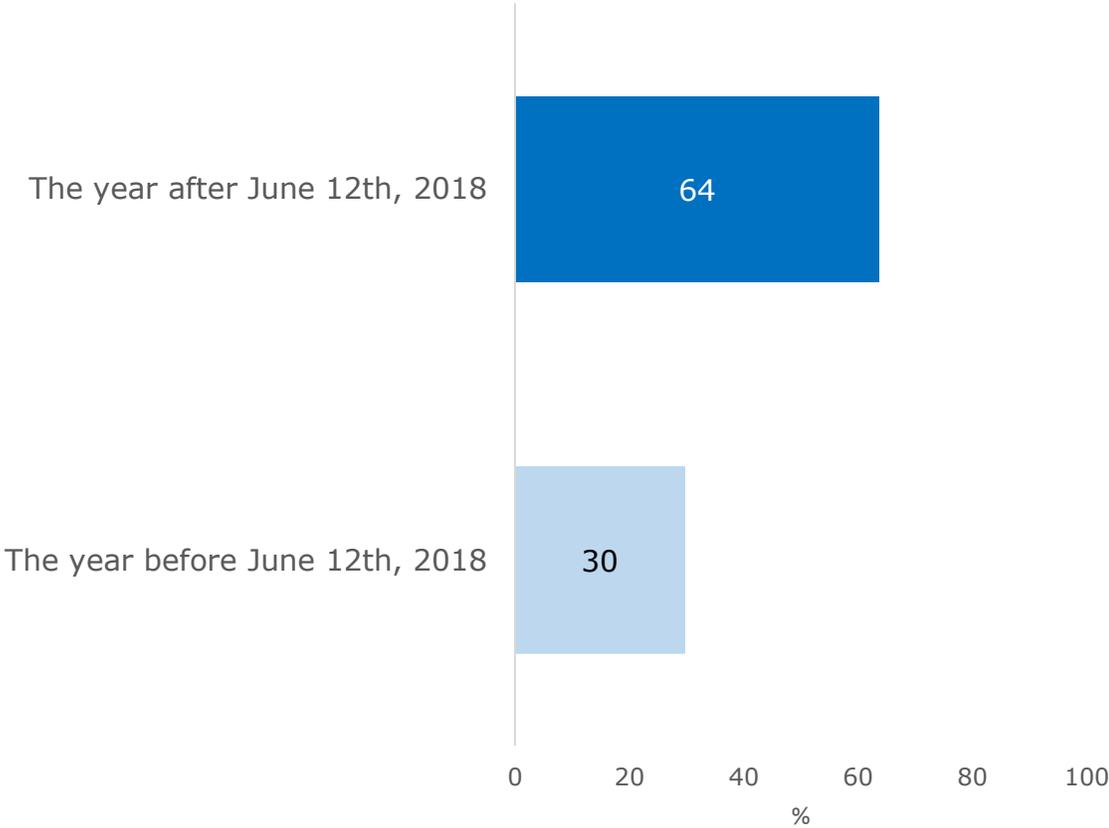
Figure 2: The share of researchers of the HAS taking the given step to find a new job during the year before and after June 12th 2018, per cent



Note: On June 12, 2018, the president of the HAS received a proposed amendment to Act XL of 1994 on the HAS and inviting the HAS to comment on the draft legislation that will allocate nearly half of its budget, HUF 23 billion, to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. See <https://www.parlament.hu/irom41/00503/00503.pdf>. The Orban’s government gave the HAS only 54 minutes to comment on the draft bill. The figure compares the one-year period preceding this date (June 12, 2018) with the following one-year period.

Figure 2 shows, for instance, that from June 2018 to July 2019 10 per cent of researchers of the HAS was interviewed for a job while only 6 per cent of them was from June 2017 to May 2019.

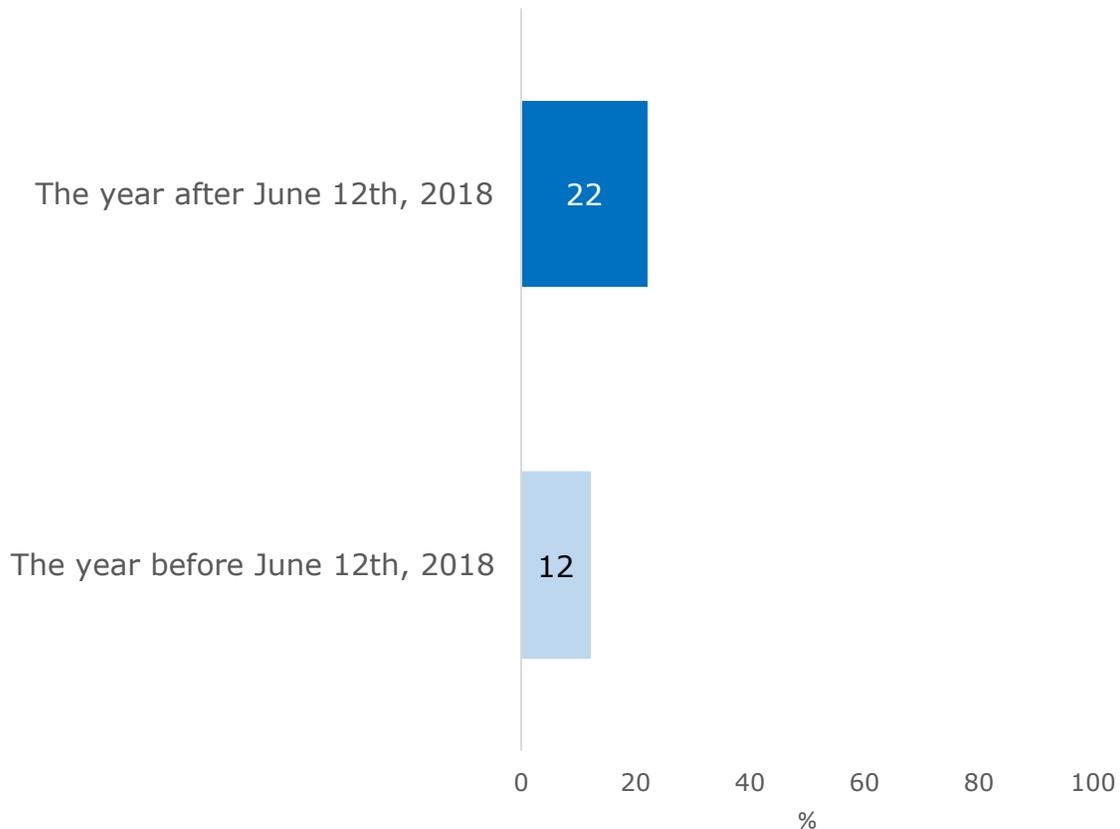
Figure 3: The share of researchers of the HAS taking any steps to find a new job mentioned in Figure 2 during the year before and after June 12th 2018, per cent



Note: On June 12, 2018, the president of the HAS received a proposed amendment to Act XL of 1994 on the HAS and inviting the HAS to comment on the draft legislation that will allocate nearly half of its budget, HUF 23 billion, to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. See <https://www.parlament.hu/irom41/00503/00503.pdf>. The Orban’s government gave the HAS only 54 minutes to comment on the draft bill. The figure compares the one-year period preceding this date (June 12, 2018) with the following one-year period.

Figure 3 shows that from June 2018 to July 2019 64 per cent of researchers of the HAS took any steps mentioned in Figure 2 while only 30 per cent did the same from June 2017 to May 2018.

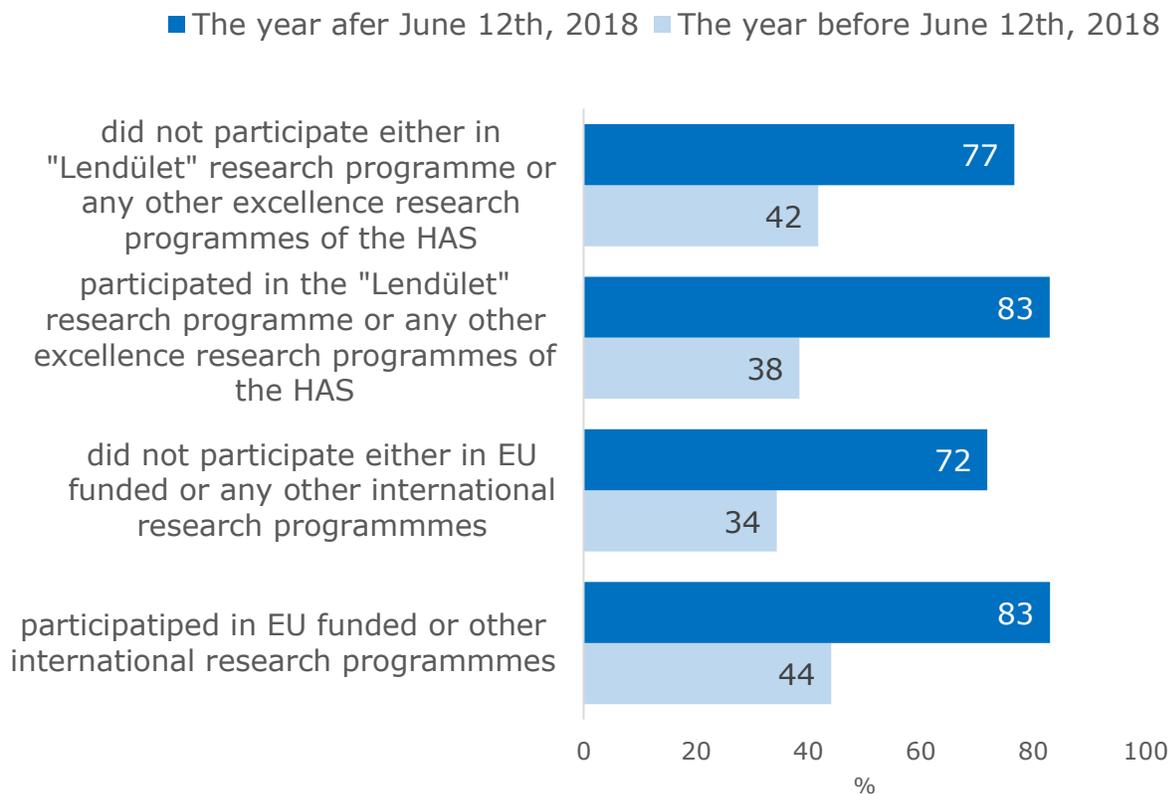
Figure 4: The share of researchers of the HAS taking major steps to find a new job (the rate of those who e applied for a job, was interviewed for a job or accepted a job offer) during the year before and after June 12th 2018, per cent



Note: On June 12, 2018, the president of the HAS received a proposed amendment to Act XL of 1994 on the HAS and inviting the HAS to comment on the draft legislation that will allocate nearly half of its budget, HUF 23 billion, to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. See <https://www.parlament.hu/irom41/00503/00503.pdf>. The Orban's government gave the HAS only 54 minutes to comment on the draft bill. The figure compares the one-year period preceding this date (June 12, 2018) with the following one-year period.

Figure 4 shows that from June 2018 to July 2019 22 per cent of researchers of the HAS took at least one major step to find a new job (applied for a job or was interviewed for a job or accepted a job offer) while only 12 per cent did the same from June 2017 to May 2018.

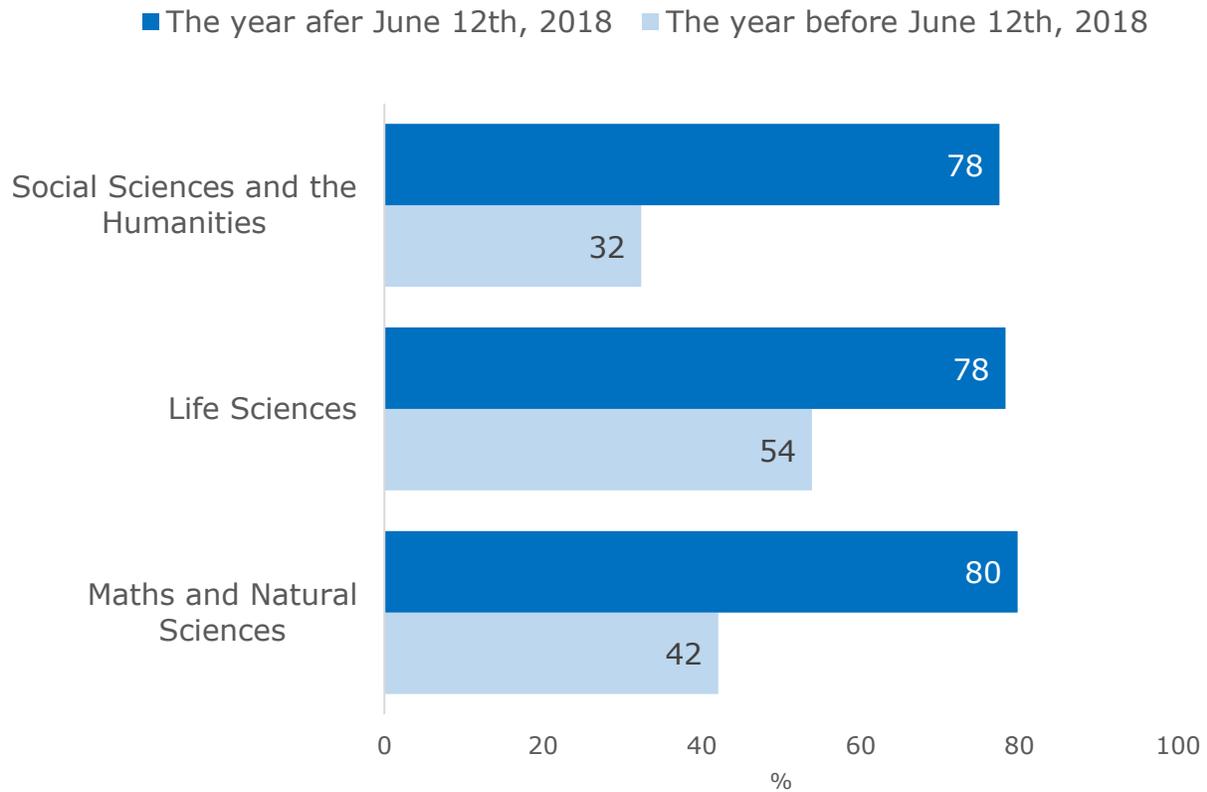
Figure 5: The share of researchers of the HAS who intend to change their job (going abroad for a scientific or non-scientific position or moving in Hungary for non-scientific position) in the years before and after June 12, 2018 by participating in the „Lendület” (Momentum) or other excellence research programmes financed by the HAS or research programmes financed by the EU or other international research programmes, per cent



Note: On June 12, 2018, the president of the HAS received a proposed amendment to Act XL of 1994 on the HAS and inviting the HAS to comment on the draft legislation that will allocate nearly half of its budget, HUF 23 billion, to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. See <https://www.parlament.hu/irom41/00503/00503.pdf>. The Orban’s government gave the HAS only 54 minutes to comment on the draft bill. The figure compares the one-year period preceding this date (June 12, 2018) with the following one-year period.

Figure 5 shows, for instance, that from June 2018 to July 2019 83 per cent of researchers of the HAS that participated in the “Lendület” (Momentum) research programme or other excellency research programmes financed by the HAS started thinking about leaving the HAS research network and changing their job (going abroad for scientific or non-scientific positions or moving in Hungary for non-scientific positions) while only 38 per cent of them thought the same way from June 2017 to May 2018.

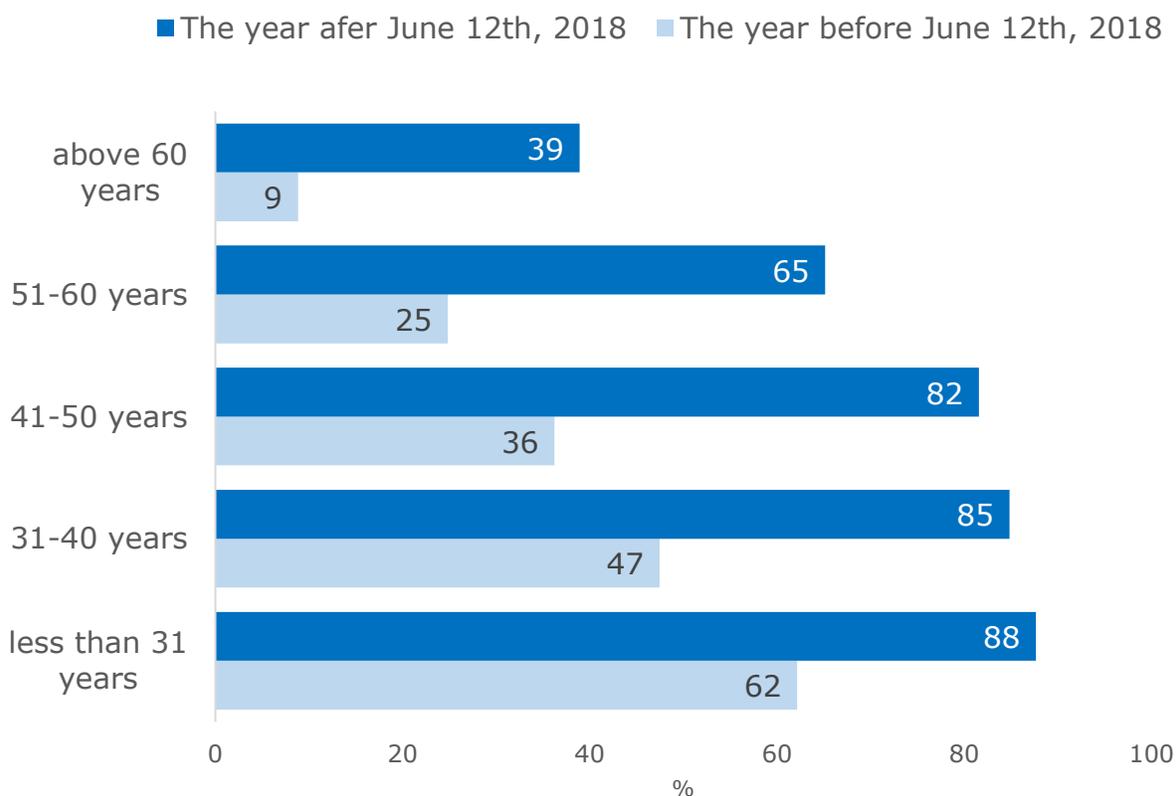
Figure 6: The share of researchers of the HAS who intend to change their job (going abroad for a scientific or non-scientific position or moving in Hungary for non-scientific position) in the years before and after June 12, 2018 by disciplines, per cent



Note: On June 12, 2018, the president of the HAS received a proposed amendment to Act XL of 1994 on the HAS and inviting the HAS to comment on the draft legislation that will allocate nearly half of its budget, HUF 23 billion, to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. See <https://www.parlament.hu/irom41/00503/00503.pdf>. The Orban’s government gave the HAS only 54 minutes to comment on the draft bill. The figure compares the one-year period preceding this date (June 12, 2018) with the following one-year period.

Figure 6 shows, for instance, that from June 2018 to July 2019 78 per cent of researchers of the HAS working in social sciences and the humanities started thinking about that leaving the HAS research network and changing their job (going abroad for scientific or non-scientific positions or moving in Hungary for non-scientific positions) while only 32 per cent of them thought the same way from June 2017 to May 2018.

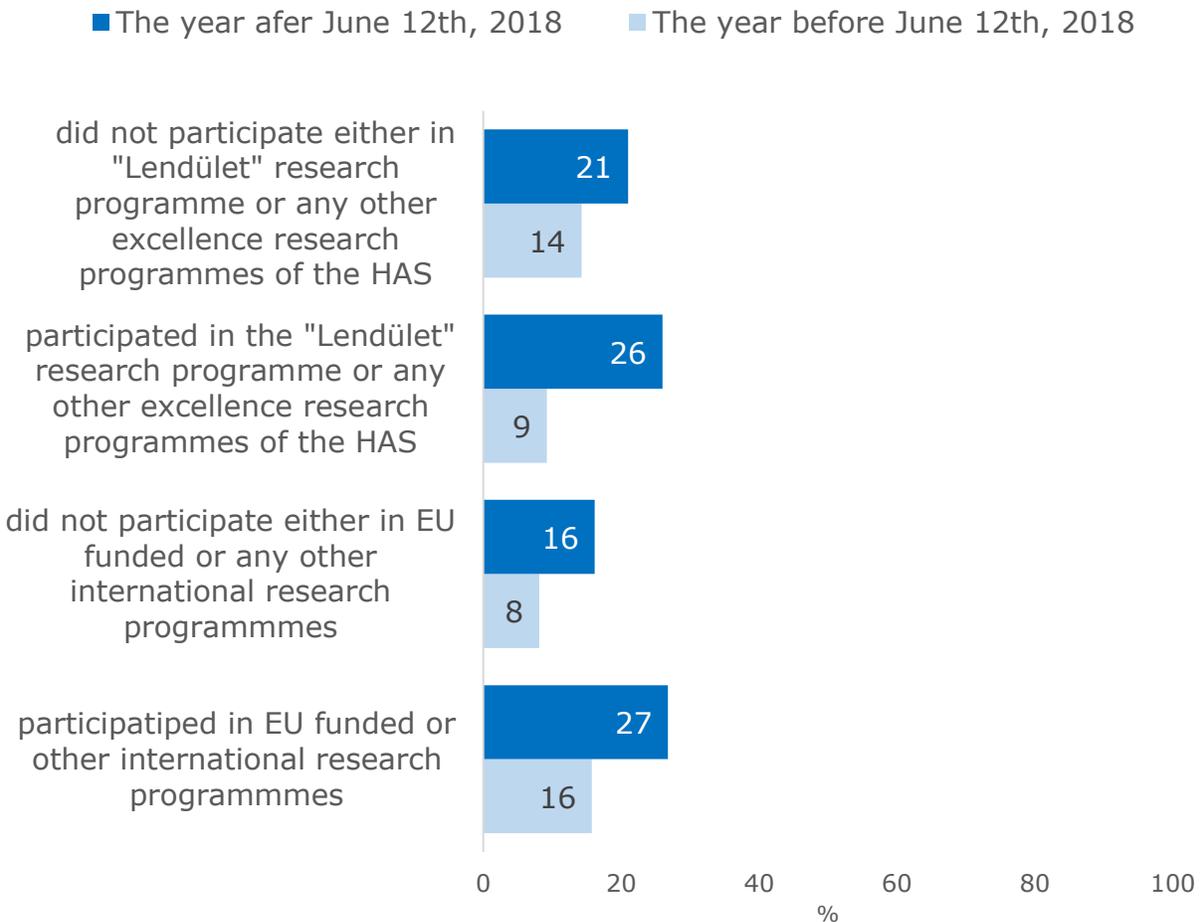
Figure 7: The share of researchers of the HAS who intend to change their job (going abroad for a scientific or non-scientific position or moving in Hungary for non-scientific position) in the years before and after June 12, 2018 by age group, per cent



Note: On June 12, 2018, the president of the HAS received a proposed amendment to Act XL of 1994 on the HAS and inviting the HAS to comment on the draft legislation that will allocate nearly half of its budget, HUF 23 billion, to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. See <https://www.parlament.hu/irom41/00503/00503.pdf>. The Orban's government gave the HAS only 54 minutes to comment on the draft bill. The figure compares the one-year period preceding this date (June 12, 2018) with the following one-year period.

Figure 7 shows, for instance, that from June 2018 to July 2019 85 per cent of researchers of the HAS who are 31-40 years old started thinking about that leaving the HAS research network and changing their job (going abroad for scientific or non-scientific positions or moving in Hungary for non-scientific positions) while only 47 per cent of them thought the same way from June 2017 to May 2018.

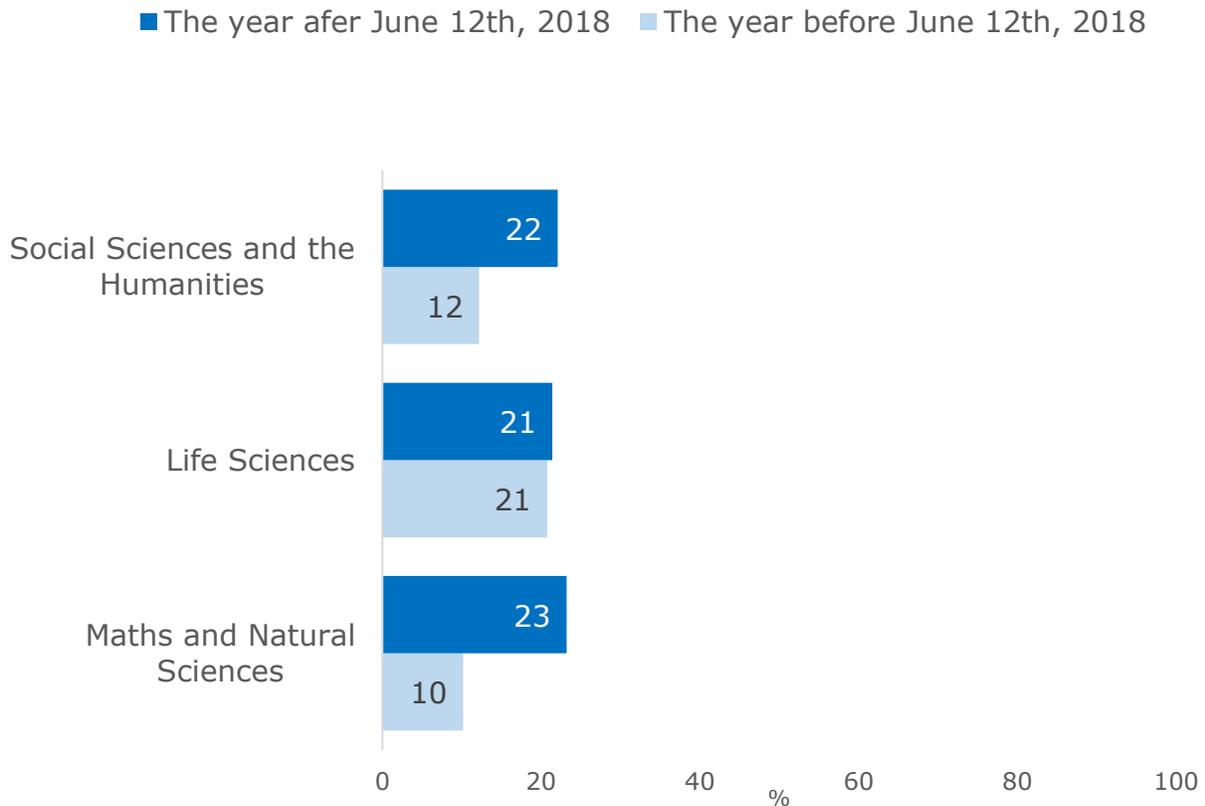
Figure 8: The share of researchers of the HAS taking any major steps to find a new job (the rate of those who have applied for a job, interviewed for a job or accepted a job offer) in the years before and after June 12, 2018 by participating in the „Lendület” (Momentum) research programme (<https://bit.ly/335wZHN>) or other excellence research programmes of HAS or any research programmes financed by the EU or other international research programmes, per cent



Note: On June 12, 2018, the president of the HAS received a proposed amendment to Act XL of 1994 on the HAS and inviting the HAS to comment on the draft legislation that will allocate nearly half of its budget, HUF 23 billion, to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. See <https://www.parlament.hu/irom41/00503/00503.pdf>. The Orban’s government gave the HAS only 54 minutes to comment on the draft bill. The figure compares the one-year period preceding this date (June 12, 2018) with the following one-year period.

Figure 8 shows, for instance, that from June 2018 to July 2019 26 per cent of researchers of the HAS that participated in the “Lendület” (Momentum) research programme or other excellence research programmes financed by the HAS took at least one major step to find a new job (applied for a job or interviewed for a job or accepted a job offer) while only 9 per cent did the same from June 2017 to May 2018.

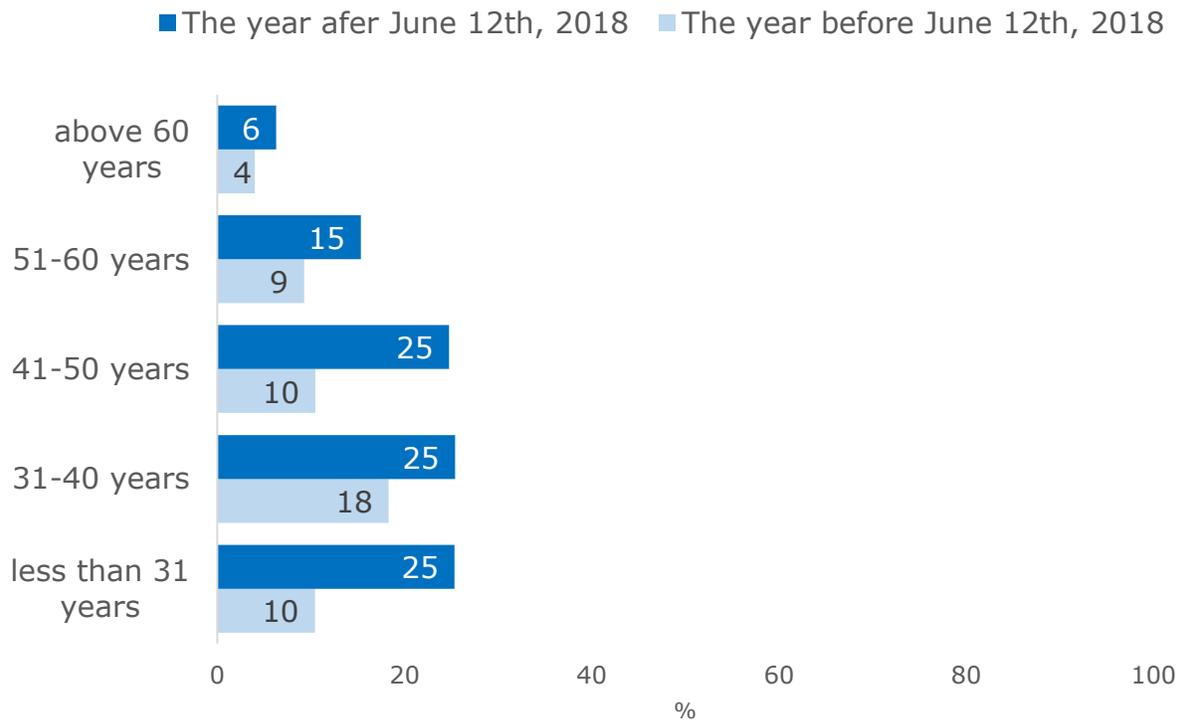
Figure 9: The share of researchers of the HAS taking any major steps to find a new job (the rate of those who have applied for a job, interviewed for a job or accepted a job offer) in the years before and after June 12, 2018 by disciplines, per cent



Note: On June 12, 2018, the president of the HAS received a proposed amendment to Act XL of 1994 on the HAS and inviting the HAS to comment on the draft legislation that will allocate nearly half of its budget, HUF 23 billion, to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. See <https://www.parlament.hu/irom41/00503/00503.pdf>. The Orban's government gave the HAS only 54 minutes to comment on the draft bill. The figure compares the one-year period preceding this date (June 12, 2018) with the following one-year period.

Figure 9 shows, for instance, that from June 2018 to July 2019 22 per cent of researchers of the HAS working in social sciences and the humanities took at least one major step to find a new job (applied for a job or interviewed for a job or accepted a job offer) while only 12 per cent did the same from June 2017 to May 2018.

Figure 10: The share of researchers of the HAS taking any major steps to find a new job (the rate of those who have applied for a job, interviewed for a job or accepted a job offer) in the years before and after June 12, 2018 by age groups, per cent



Note: On June 12, 2018, the president of the HAS received a proposed amendment to Act XL of 1994 on the HAS and inviting the HAS to comment on the draft legislation that will allocate nearly half of its budget, HUF 23 billion, to the Ministry of Innovation and Technology. See <https://www.parlament.hu/irom41/00503/00503.pdf>. The Orban's government gave the HAS only 54 minutes to comment on the draft bill. The figure compares the one-year period preceding this date (June 12, 2018) with the following one-year period.

Figure 10 shows, for instance, that from June 2018 to July 2019 25 per cent of researchers of the HAS less than 31 years old took at least one major step to find a new job (applied for a job or interviewed for a job or accepted a job offer) while only 10 per cent did the same from June 2017 to May 2018.