



**Institut für Ost- und
Südosteuropaforschung**

Institute for East and
Southeast European Studies

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Mr. Zoltán Balog
Minister of Human Capacities
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Via Email

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Regensburg, March 30, 2017

Letter of Solidarity with the CEU

Dear Minister Balog,

The Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, with great concern, has followed the news about the planned changes to the Hungarian Law on National Higher Education, to be debated in the parliament. These changes would endanger the academic freedom vital for CEU's continued operation in Budapest and would strike a blow against the academic freedom that enables all universities, including those in Hungary, to flourish. It would be a terrible blow for Hungary as a place of excellent research and jeopardize with a stroke the great work which CEU has done for the development of research and training on a national and international scale.

Our Institute closely cooperates with CEU on many levels (from students to joint research publications); IOS is also fully committed to the principles of academic freedom and international collaboration. Therefore, we want to express our deepest concern about the proposed legislative changes, which clearly discriminate against the CEU and endanger its status in Hungary. With all due respect, we urge you to withdraw the planned legislation.

In twenty-five years, Central European University has established itself as a private international university with a global reputation for excellent teaching and research in the social sciences and humanities. It attracts students from 117 countries and faculty from 40. The University as a whole is accredited by the US Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), and its masters and doctoral programs are registered by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Its programs are also certified by appropriate Hungarian authorities and it has complied in full with all Hungarian laws.

In international rankings, some of CEU's departments are rated among the top 50 in the world. CEU also makes Hungary a regional leader in winning highly competitive European Research Council grants. Several of its faculty, in fields as various as medieval studies, network and cognitive science, have won the most prestigious awards in their disciplines.

CEU is a valued member of the international academic community and its presence in Hungary has added to the reputation of Hungarian academic life on the international stage. The

government's proposed legislation to alter its statute of operation in Hungary would compromise its academic freedom and set a dangerous precedent for academic life in other countries.

Excellent research can only develop under conditions of academic freedom and internationality. The CEU stands for both of it and for many years has served as a model, which was followed by other institutions – state-run and private alike. Your government should be proud of the fact that such a renowned university is located in Budapest. The whole academic life in Hungary benefits from that.

We, therefore, respectfully urge the government to withdraw the proposed legislation and enter consultation with CEU, bearing in mind the damage such legislation might do to Hungary's well-founded international academic reputation, to its relationships with its European partners and with the United States.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Dr. Ulf Brunnbauer
Director

CC: Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary;
Office of the Prime Minister;
Central European University