

April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Mr. Zoltán Balog  
Minister of Human Capacities  
1054 Budapest, Akadémia utca 3.  
Hungary

Dear Minister Balog,

I am writing to express solidarity with Central European University and express concern at proposed legislative changes to CEU's status in Hungary. 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.

The International Institute for Industrial Environmental Economics at Lund University has been closely cooperation with the Department of Environmental Sciences and Policy of CEU. Since 2004 we have jointly operated the Erasmus Mundus Masters Course in Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management (MESPOM) which has educated over 320 students from over 80 countries. MESPOM has been accredited by the Hungarian Accreditation Board from 2012. Since that time all MESPOM graduates received fully accredited Swedish, Hungarian and British degrees. MESPOM has brought some of the brightest and most committed environmental students to our Institute and to Hungary. It has also stimulated productive exchange of pedagogic practices which has resulted in further research collaboration. Many of our faculty and staff visited Budapest and were introduced to Hungary through CEU.

In twenty-five years, Central European University has established itself as a private international university with a global reputation for 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.

We 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'W. N. J.', is written over the printed name of the Director.

Director  
The International Institute for Industrial  
Environmental Economics

CC: Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary;

Office of the Prime Minister;

Central European University