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United Kingdom

Dr. Janos Ader,
President of the Republic of Hungary
Office of the President of the Republic
1536 Budapest, Pf. 227
Hungary

6 April 2017

Dear President Ader,

We are writing as members of the Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex. As concerned members of the academic and human rights community, we write to express solidarity with the Central European University (CEU) and to register our concern at the modifications to the Higher Education Law, which was approved by the Hungarian Parliament on Monday 4 April 2017.

The introduction of such a bill threatens the existence of one of your country's most respected institutions of higher education and will undermine academic freedom, which is intimately linked to freedom of thought and expression, as protected by human rights treaties, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of which Hungary is a party. These rights are of the utmost importance, and must be vigorously defended throughout Europe and globally. A paragon of critical thinking, diversity, and human rights, CEU has left an indelible footprint in the region and beyond. The quality of the CEU's faculty and alumni is, indisputably, of the very highest calibre.

CEU is an American and Hungarian institution, and it has conformed to all relevant laws in Hungary and the United States. Although chartered in the US as well as in Hungary, its home is in Budapest. It is a venerable institution that has enriched Hungarian intellectual life and enhanced the global reputation of your country.

CEU has played a significant role in educating a new generation of people in Hungary and elsewhere. Indeed, faculty and students of CEU have circulated through the halls of our very own institution as guest lecturers, students, and advisors, enriching our research and learning environment. We proudly share CEU's ethos: many of the key areas of research and teaching at the CEU complement the work of the more than 100 members of our Human Rights Centre including drug policy reform, human rights, cultural diversity, and refugees and migration.

We respectfully urge you not to sign this piece of legislation. The departure of CEU from academic life would undoubtedly adversely affect Hungary's academic reputation, risk undermining vital human rights, and likely damage relations with its global partners.

Yours sincerely,

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