

Mr. Zoltán Balog

Minister of Human Capacities
1054 Budapest, Akadémia utca 3.
Hungary
via e-mail

3rd April, 2017

Dear Minister Balog,

We are writing to express our deep concern about the Government of Hungary's proposed legislative changes to the status of the Central European University (CEU) in Hungary. As the CEU itself has objected, these proposals threaten the academic independence, freedom and excellence of the University as an institution of higher education.

The UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies, the Harvard University Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, the LSE European Institute, and the LSE Institute of Global Affairs are among the world's leading institutions in the social sciences and humanities; the fields in which the CEU also leads. As institutions with strong ties to Hungarian scholars and scholarship we urge you in the most respectful but strongest possible terms to reconsider the proposed legislation. As it stands this legislation constitutes a discriminatory and potentially terminal action against a University which has consistently justified Hungary's reputation for educational and research excellence to the very highest degree.

We share the view of the American Political Science Association that the CEU has established itself as a private international university with a global reputation that should be protected as a magnet of the highest quality students and scholars from Central Europe and beyond, and as an engine of innovation in Hungary. We believe that for a Government to undermine it as you propose would constitute an act of extraordinary national self-harm. We also remind you that such an act would violate Hungary's legal obligations to protect academic freedom, including under international covenants that Hungary has ratified.

We respectfully urge the Government to ensure that students and scholars at CEU are able to pursue their teaching, research, studies and scholarship with the full protection of academic freedom that the university has historically experienced, including considering the withdrawal of any legislation that would undermine such academic freedom.

Yours sincerely,



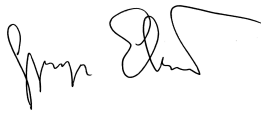
Jan Kubik

Professor of Slavonic and East European Studies

UCL SSEES Director

UCL Pro-Vice Provost International (Europe)

Director of the School of East European and Slavonic Studies, UCL



Grzegorz Ekiert

Laurence A. Tisch Professor of Government

Harvard University Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies Director



Kevin Featherstone, AcSS

Eleftherios Venizelos Professor of Contemporary Greek Studies

and Professor of European Politics

Head of the European Institute



Erik Berglof

Professor

LSE Institute of Global Affairs Director

CC:

Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary

Tibor Navracsics, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky, Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Hungary in London

Michael Ignatieff, Rector of the Central European University