

April 5, 2017

President János Áder
Office of the President of the Republic
1536 Budapest, Pf. 227
Hungary

Re: Central European University

Dear President Áder:

We write on behalf of the Université du Québec à Montréal to express our profound shock and dismay over the legislative changes to Hungary's National Higher Education Act of 2011 and their impact on the Central European University (CEU). These changes threaten CEU's ability to continue operating and is a frontal attack on academic freedom. CEU is one of the most reputable universities in the world and such a veiled attempt at having it closed does not reflect well on your government.

The proposed legislative measures seem to be aimed directly at CEU and would undeniably have a disparate impact on that specific institution. But such a strike against academic freedom and the institutional autonomy required for any university to fulfil its scholarly missions also sends a threatening signal to all other Hungarian higher education institutions. The chilling effect of such measures would undermine the capacity of Hungarian universities to promote the sincere search for truth and advancement of knowledge.

We may not possess all the relevant information to fully assess the situation. We therefore invite you to provide us with any additional information that may clarify our understanding. In the meantime, we respectfully urge you not to sign the proposed legislation into law and to send it back to the Országgyűlés for reconsideration to avoid the proposed legislation damaging impacts on CEU and other institutions of higher education in Hungary.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Robert Proulx, Rector

Le recteur

René Côté, Vice-Rector, Academic Affairs
André Dorion, Vice-Rector, Human Resources, Administration and Finance
Catherine Mounier, Vice-Rector, Research and Creation
Magda Fusaro, Vice-Rector, Information Systems
Normand Petitchere, General Secretary
Monique Brodeur, Dean, Faculty of Education
Hugo Cyr, Dean, Faculty of Political Science and Law
Luc-Alain Giraldeau, Dean, Faculty of Science
Josée Lafond, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences
Pierre Mongeau, Dean, Faculty of Communication
Stéphane Pallage, Dean, School of Management
Jean-Christian Pleau, Dean, Faculty of Arts

c.c.: Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary; Central European University;
MEP Petra Kammerevert, Culture and Education Committee Chairman, European
Parliament;
Frans Timmermans, Vice President, European Commission;
Tibor Navracsics, European Commissioner;
Rt Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada;
Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada;
Hon. Navdeep Singh Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic
Development;
Premier Philippe Couillard;
Hélène David, Minister responsible for Higher Education (Québec);
Christine Saint-Pierre, Minister of International Relations (Québec)