

April 5, 2017

**Dr. János Áder, President of the Republic**

Office of the President of the Republic

Mailing address: 1536 Budapest, Pf. 227

Dear President Áder,

As concerned citizens, and researchers of the Marie Curie ITN RegPol<sup>2</sup> research project - *Socio-economic and Political Responses to Regional Polarisation in Central and Eastern Europe*, we are writing to express solidarity with the Central European University and to express concern about how legislative changes adopted by the Hungarian Parliament on the 4th of April will affect 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.

In twenty-six years, the 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 members 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 freshly accepted legislation aiming to alter its statute of operation in Hungary would compromise its academic freedom and set a dangerous precedent for academic life in other countries.

Moreover, this new piece of legislation conveys the message that the operation of established academic institutions can be made impossible in Hungary with startling speed and without acceptable academic or professional reasons. This message will surely make the participation of Hungarian academic institutions more difficult in

international exchanges and research projects (such as the one we are members of) in the future.

We respectfully urge the Government to withdraw this piece of legislation and to enter into 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,

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