



VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

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

April 3, 2017

No. 10000-SR-663

Dear Minister Balog,

We, the undersigned governing authorities of Vilnius University, would like to convey our solidarity with Central European University (CEU) and express our concern at the proposed legal changes to CEU's status in Hungary. These changes would endanger CEU's continued operation in Budapest as free and autonomous university and open a precedent for the restriction of academic freedom across the higher education sector.

The CEU has always been a valued member of the international academic community and is worldwide known as an important centre of excellence shaping the landscape of higher education in Humanities and Social Sciences in Central and Eastern Europe. CEU's Hungarian and foreign lecturers, researchers and students have been active members of the national and international professional endeavours. The university had a crucial impact on the minds of individuals in the post-Soviet era by training a new generation of visionary scholars and academics. Many of the presently active Lithuanian academics have studied at CEU, while Lithuanian universities have drawn from its experience and still maintain close ties based on mutual trust and respect.

Restriction on operational conditions of the CEU or, even worse, its closure, would be a loss not only for lecturers, researchers and students of CEU, but for the whole professional scientific and academic community of the region and Europe.

Keeping in mind the possible serious consequences of the proposed legislation, we respectfully urge the Hungarian government to reconsider the proposed set of actions and enter into the dialogue with CEU to find mutually acceptable solutions in order to preserve former achievements and give grounds for future developments. We take the liberty to draw Your attention that currently proposed legislation might seriously damage Hungary's well founded international academic reputation, as well as hamper the relationship of Hungarian higher education with its European and international partners.

Yours sincerely,

Rector of Vilnius University
prof. Artūras Žukauskas

Head of the Council of Vilnius University
prof. Rimantas Kraujalis

Deputy Head of the Senate of Vilnius University
prof. Romas Baronas

President of Vilnius University Students' Representation
Egidijus Kinderis

CC: Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary;
Office of the Prime Minister
Central European University