

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

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

31st March 2017

Dear Minister Balog,

As Chair of the Oxford University's Philosophy Faculty Board, I am writing to express solidarity with Central European University and to express my and the Faculty's concern at certain proposed legislative changes which will, I am reliably assured, affect CEU's status and thereby endanger the academic freedom vital for CEU's continued operation in Hungary.

In twenty-five years, Central European University has established itself as a university with a global reputation for teaching and research in the social sciences and humanities. 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. From my own personal experience and from that of my colleagues I am aware of the outstanding quality of research produced in its Philosophy department, and of the calibre of its students, which include some former students of my own at Oxford.

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 proposed legislation to alter CEU's statute of operation in Hungary would compromise its academic freedom and set a dangerous precedent for academic life in other countries. It would also needlessly damage an institution which, in its present state, is a brilliant advertisement on the international stage for Hungary and for what can be achieved there.

We respectfully urge the government to withdraw the proposed legislation and enter consultation with CEU.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dr Edward Harcourt'.

Dr Edward Harcourt
Chair of the Philosophy Faculty Board

CC:

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