

CEU students, alumni and professors from Croatia, who support their alma mater

Zagreb, April 2, 2017

Dear Madam/Sir,

We are Croatian citizens, alumni and alumnae, professors and students of CEU, working in more than 20 academic institutions as well as across the civil and business sector in Croatia and abroad. We are writing to express solidarity with the Central European University and concern at proposed legislative changes to 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.

CEU has played an enormous role in our lives and careers. It offered educational opportunities that exceeded those available in our own country — from well-equipped libraries to seminars and lectures taught by world-leading scholars. For us, CEU was and is the beacon of the humanistic tradition of liberal education. But its importance went beyond academic excellence; what mattered the most was its open and pluralistic academic and social approach. Our political affiliation, nationality, race or religion never had an impact on our treatment as students and colleagues; indeed we are of different nationalities and politically situated alongside the entire spectrum. The influence that CEU has exercised on academic and social life in all the post-communist countries is incomparable to any other academic institution.

But CEU also meant more than a place of study. We lived in Budapest for months or years. We have created strong connections not just with international students and staff at CEU but with Hungarians as well, from academics to those not affiliated with CEU or any other university. Some of us learnt or tried to learn Hungarian language. CEU may have meant more for Croatian-Hungarian academic (and much broader) relations than any other institution in recent history.

We respectfully urge the Government to withdraw the proposed legislative changes and enter consultations with CEU, bearing in mind the damage such legislation might cause to Hungary's international academic reputation and to its standing within the international community of nations.

Yours sincerely,

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