

Civic Education Project
Oktober 6 Utca, Budapest
c/o CCE, PO Box 5000
Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504

31 March 2017

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

Dear Minister Balog:

The Civic Education Project (CEP) was a non-profit affiliated with the Central European University (CEU) and Yale University that sent volunteer lecturer/fellows to teach throughout Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia after the fall of the Berlin Wall. From 1991 through the mid 2000s, CEP supported more than 1,000 fellows, both international and returning local scholars, who taught in universities throughout the region. These fellows in turn taught literally hundreds of thousands of students in twenty-two throughout the region.

CEP had a significant presence in Hungary. For years, CEP fellows taught at numerous Hungarian universities, including: Budapest University of Economics, Corvinus University, Eötvös Loránd University, Pazmany Peter Catholic University, Szent Istvan University, University of Debrecen, University of Miskolc, University of Pecs, and University of Szeged. These fellows taught Hungarian students, collaborated with Hungarian faculty, developed innovative curriculums, initiated research projects, and hosted regional and international conferences having an impact that has lasted through today.

CEU hosted CEP's main administrative offices in Budapest, provided materials to support instruction, gave innovative teaching workshops, and hosted faculty and student conferences. It was a center of educational information and helped establish Hungary as an educational leader in the post-Communist space.

The decision by the Hungarian government to impose rules and regulations that knowingly will force CEU to close can be interpreted as nothing but an assault on academic freedom and the free exchange of ideas. It does not represent the values or spirit of Hungary or the warm hospitality that so many of us have felt over the years working in Budapest. CEU is an outstanding institution recognized across the globe and a valued member of the international academic community: its presence in Hungary has added to the reputation of Hungarian academic life on the international stage.

We, the leaders and senior officers of the Civic Education Project, respectfully urge the government to withdraw the proposed legislation and immediately enter into consultations with CEU to resolve any potential conflicts and allow CEU to continue to prosper.

Signed:

Paige Alexander, former USAID Assistant Administrator, Europe and Eurasia
Bill Antholis, Director & CEO, Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia
Jonathan Becker, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Bard College
Anne Clunan, Associate Professor, Naval Postgraduate School
Stephen R. Grand, Senior Fellow, The Atlantic Council
Philip Henderson, President, Surdna Foundation
Rogan Kersh, Provost and Professor of Politics & International Affairs, Wake Forrester University
Mills Kelly, Professor, Department of History and Art History, George Mason University
Nandini Ramanujam, Associate Professor, McGill University

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