



Letter of Support for the CEU from Historians of the Communist Period

H2020 COURAGE project

Cultural Opposition - Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in Former
Socialist Countries

Mr. Zoltán Balog

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

April 3, 2017

Dear Minister Balog,

As members of the Horizon 2020 international research consortium “COURAGE – Connecting Collections,” a project that examines cultural opposition under Communism and its heritage all over Central, Southeastern, and Eastern Europe, **we are writing to express solidarity with Central European University** and express deep concern over the proposed legislative changes to CEU’s status in Hungary.

Our project, which involves **12 research institutes and universities** and some **60 historians and sociologists** from all over the region and Western Europe, would not have been possible without CEU’s profound impact on the study of the history of Central, Southeastern, and Eastern Europe. A large number of scholars in the project graduated from CEU, and they acquired knowledge and skills at CEU that enabled the consortium to win a very competitive European research grant, which currently is the only such grant coordinated by a Hungarian academic institution in the field of humanities. CEU has been committed to research on the Communist past, it has and earned a global reputation in this field and others. Without CEU’s substantial and diverse contributions, the former socialist countries of Central, Southeastern, and Eastern Europe, including Hungary, would have far fewer opportunities to present the history and culture of this region to the rest of Europe and the world. The region will also lose the only university library that has a large and expanding collection of books specialising in Eastern European Studies.

The proposed legislative changes to CEU’s status compromise its academic freedom and set a dangerous precedent for academic life in other countries of the region. We therefore respectfully urge the government to withdraw the proposed legislation and enter into consultation with CEU, bearing in mind the damage such legislation would do to Hungary’s well-founded international academic reputation, as well as its relationships with its European partners and the United States.

Yours sincerely,