



Center for East European and Russian/Eurasian Studies
University of Chicago

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Protest letter about CEU

24 April 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

The faculty at the Center for East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at the University of Chicago write to protest the recent amendments to the Hungarian National Higher Education Act because these pose an existential threat to the Central European University in Budapest.

We join the vigorous protest from observers around the world: academic, intellectual and political leaders in Europe, the US and other regions who most vehemently object to this assault on the CEU. This legislation constitutes a violation of freedom of speech and academic freedom of inquiry. It is unwarranted interference in a private educational institution that has been operating productively and with careful observance of Hungarian law for over 25 years.

We respect and admire the academic excellence of the CEU, the great contributions that it has made to Hungarian, European and global scholarship. The CEU is a valued member of the international academic community. It has nourished cooperation across countries through the training of young people from Hungary and the entire east European region. As an English-language university accredited in New York State as well as in Hungary it has enabled young people from Hungary and other parts of the region to more effectively participate in business, governance, scholarship and law both nationally and internationally. It has complemented and enhanced other institutions of higher education across the region.

The CEU has added to Hungary's status on the international stage, supporting Budapest's and Hungary's artistic, scholarly and economic growth, furthering the city's and country's powerful heritage of intellectual life. This attack goes against Hungary's long-term interests and its tradition of excellence in higher education. It damages Hungary's strong academic reputation and its relationships with European partners and the United States.

We call on the Hungarian government to rescind the law and to create a stable legal environment in which independent thought and inquiry can flourish. We call on the Hungarian government to publicly recognize the CEU and enable the continuation of the productive cooperation that has been beneficial to the young people of the region for a quarter century.

We stand in solidarity with the students and faculty of the Central European University.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Gal". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Susan Gal (Anthropology and Linguistics)

Director of the Center for East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, University of Chicago

Eugene Raikhel (Comparative Human Development)
Konstantin Sonin (Harris School of Public Policy)
Angelina Ilieva (Slavic Languages & Literatures)
Helga Anetshofer-Karateke (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations)
Kinga Kosmala (Slavic Languages & Literatures)
Jason Merchant (Linguistics)
Bozena Shallcross (Slavic Languages & Literatures)
Olga Solovieva (Comparative Literature)
Thomas Ginsburg (Law School)
Faith Hillis (History)
Hakan Karateke (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations)
Victor Friedman (Linguistics, Emeritus)
Tara Zahra (History)
Larisa Jasarevic (International Studies)
Leah Feldman (Comparative Literature)
Eleonora Gilburd (History)
Esther Peters (Slavic Languages & Literatures)
Meredith Clason (Center for East European and Russian/Eurasian Studies)
Andreas Glaeser (Sociology)
Martha Roth (Oriental Institute, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations)
Lenore Grenoble (Linguistics)
Michael Silverstein (Anthropology and Linguistics)

