



INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC
OLDRICH TUMA, DIRECTOR

Vlaská 9, Praha 1, Malá Strana, 118 40 Czech Republic
Phone: +420 257 286 362; Fax: +420 257 531 121
E-mail: tuma@usd.cas.cz; www.usd.cas.cz

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

Hungary

April 01, 2017, Prague

Dear Minister Balog,

As concerned citizens in the Czech Republic, Europe, and around the world, we are writing to express solidarity with Central European University and express 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.

In twenty-five years, Central European University has established itself as a private international university with a global reputation for teaching and research in the social sciences and humanities. It attracts students from 117 countries and faculty from 40. The University as a whole is accredited by the US Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), and its masters and doctoral programs are registered by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Its programs are also certified by appropriate Hungarian authorities and it has complied in full with all Hungarian laws.

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. Several of its faculty, in fields as various as medieval studies, network and cognitive science, have won the most prestigious awards in their disciplines.

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. We are speaking out of personal experience, since our Institute has a long-standing and mutually beneficial cooperation with CEU and, in particular, its History Department but also other departments, in the field of modern and contemporary history research in Central and Eastern Europe. The government's proposed legislation to alter its statute of operation in Hungary would compromise its academic freedom and set a dangerous precedent for academic life in other countries.

We respectfully urge the government to withdraw the proposed legislation and enter consultation with CEU, bearing in mind the damage such legislation might do to Hungary's well-founded international academic reputation, to its relationships with its European partners and with the United States.

Yours sincerely,