

Central European University

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April 3rd 2017

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

Dear Minister Balog,

On behalf of the **Bureau of the International Association of Byzantine Studies**, which represents scholars from 38 countries across Europe and internationally, I am writing to express our great concern at the current threat to the scientific and educational activities of Central European University and at the legislative changes to CEU's status in Hungary. As many others will have already noted, these changes will endanger the academic freedom vital for CEU's continued operation in Budapest and will compromise the conditions that enable all universities, including those in Hungary, to flourish.

Central European University has established itself over the last 25 years as a private international university with a global reputation for teaching and research in the social sciences and humanities. I and a number of colleagues internationally have been guests of the university and have benefited enormously from the atmosphere of collegiality and intellectual exchange for which it is justly renowned. CEU attracts students from 117 countries and faculty from 40. It 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 deeply regret the passing of the proposed legislation and we urge the government of Hungary to reconsider and to enter consultation with CEU, bearing in mind the damage such legislation will almost certainly do to Hungary's well-founded international academic reputation, to its relationships with its European partners and with the United States.

Yours sincerely,

John Haldon
President, International Association of Byzantine Studies
Professor of Byzantine History & Hellenic Studies, Princeton University

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