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March 31, 2017

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

Dear Minister Balog,

In my capacity as President of the International Federation for Research in Women's History, an affiliate of the International Committee of Historical Sciences in some 40 nations, I am writing to convey support of Central European University and express concern at proposed legislative changes to CEU's status in Hungary. These proposed 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. As historians, we rank CEU in the forefront of promoting reflective thinking and original empirical research in the practice of our field. Its innovative program and first-rate faculty and students is world renown. Their presence at international conferences has enriched us all, including conveying the significance of Hungarian history and scholarship to worldwide audiences.

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. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eileen Boris". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Eileen" and last name "Boris" clearly legible.

Eileen Boris  
President, International Federation for Research in Women's History  
Hull Professor and Distinguished Professor  
Departments of History, Feminist Studies, Black Studies, and Global Studies  
University of California, Santa Barbara

CC: Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary;

Office of the Prime Minister;

Central European University