

April 18, 2017

His Excellency, Dr. Janos Ader  
President of the Republic of Hungary  
Office of the President of the Republic of Hungary  
1536 Budapest, Pf. 227  
Hungary

Dear HE President Ader,

As the President of the American University of Beirut (AUB), I am writing to express solidarity with Central European University (CEU) and express concern about the legislative changes made by the Hungarian Parliament on April 4, 2017. These changes will make it nearly impossible for CEU to continue operations in Budapest and will endanger the academic freedom that enables all universities, including AUB, to flourish.

In just twenty-five years, CEU has established itself as a respectable university with a global reputation for teaching and research in the social sciences and humanities. Just like AUB, CEU is accredited by the US Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). This is no easy feat, as it requires consistency, accountability and adherence to some of the top educational standards in the world. Accredited, nonprofit American universities abroad like CEU and AUB are an important and unique part of the international higher education system. We bridge cultures to provide a world class education to the next generation of leaders throughout the world by encouraging openness, equal treatment and access to opportunity. In addition to helping create a more robust and educated society, American universities abroad also provide significant short and long term economic benefits to their host countries. Countries with strong educational institutions have better growth, employment and progress than their competitors. In the information age, a quality education is more important than ever. Hungarians would be wise to see CEU for what it is - an asset worth preserving and protecting.

On a final note, I want to point out how disturbing it is that certain governments and militias have and are continuing to use universities to achieve political ends. It appears that now CEU is a target as a result of this proposed legislation that would essentially shutter this thriving institution. Unfortunately, there will always be those who seek to snuff out the light of education preferring to live and act in darkness. With this thought in mind, I urge you to safeguard the proud tradition of Hungarian academic autonomy and the free exchange of ideas by rejecting this law.

Sincerely,



Fadlo R. Khuri, MD  
President