

April 26, 2017

Derek Vaughan MEP,
Vernon House,
41 Rhosddu Road,
Wrexham,
LL11 2 NS

To: contact@derekvaughanmep.org.uk
Cc: Support_for_CEU@ceu.edu

Dear Mr Vaughan,

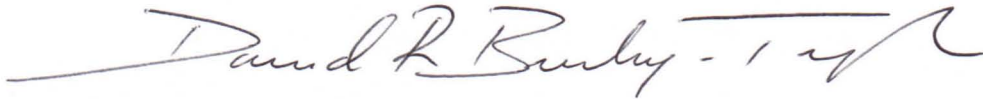
On behalf of the [Global Drug Policy Observatory](#) (GDPO), based at your alma mater, Swansea University, I am writing to express my concern about recent modifications to the National Higher Education Act passed by the Hungarian Parliament on April 4, 2017 and signed into law by the President of Hungary on April 10, 2017. The new legislation makes the continued operation of Central European University (CEU) in Budapest nearly impossible and is an extraordinary violation of the integrity and freedom of an institution of higher education. These modifications are discriminatory, as several of its passages target only CEU, and it was passed without regard to [due procedure](#) thereby threatening not only academic freedom but also the rule of law in Hungary and the European Union.

CEU was founded in 1991 by a distinguished group of Europeans – including then President of Hungary Arpad Goncz; then President of Czechoslovakia Vaclav Havel; Polish historian Bronislaw Geremek, who later became Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Hungarian-American philanthropist George Soros – to support the transition from Communism to freedom through education. In the past 25 years CEU has become an internationally esteemed private university, whose reputation in teaching and research in the social sciences and humanities is incontestable. With students from 117 countries and faculty from 40 – the largest portion of whom are from European Union member states – CEU is both a European and an American institution with a truly global reach. The GDPO itself has developed a close working relationship with CEU over the past four years, in terms of both high-calibre research and teaching relating to drug policy and human rights.

CEU strongly contests the new legislation and has received support and expressions of solidarity from all over the world, including 20 Nobel Laureates, EU Commissioners, the president of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier, former U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, top American universities, including Harvard, Princeton, Yale and MIT, as well as Oxford and Cambridge. Further, CEU has garnered significant local support in Hungary including the President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the major Hungarian universities and largest student organizations. On April 9, 2017, tens of thousands of concerned citizens marched through Budapest in a peaceful protest of the government's actions.

While CEU is seeking all possible legal remedies, the appeals process will take time, and this legislation must be stopped immediately for CEU to continue operating in Budapest. Leaders of European countries, the European Commission, and the European Parliament can and must defend academic freedom and the integrity of universities operating within the European Union. I consequently ask you to act now to do everything in your power to stop this legislation and defend the academic freedom of EU citizens.

Sincerely,



David R. Bewley-Taylor,
Professor of International Relations and Public Policy | Athro
Cysylltiadau Rhyngwladol a Polisi Cyhoeddus
Director | Cyfarwyddwr
Global Drug Policy Observatory | Arsyllfa Polisi Cyffuriau Byd-eang
Research Institute for Arts and Humanities | Sefydliad Ymchwil y Celfyddydau a'r Dyniaethau
Room 202 James Callaghan Building | Ystafell 202 Adeilad James Callaghan
Swansea University | Prifysgol Abertawe
Singleton Park | Parc Singleton
Swansea | Abertawe
SA2 8PP | SA2 8PP

Tel | Ffôn: +44 (0) 1792 604291
E-mail | E-bost: d.r.taylor@swansea.ac.uk
www.swansea.ac.uk/gdpo