



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR
THIRD-SECTOR RESEARCH

5801 Smith Avenue
McAuley Hall, Suite 245
Baltimore, MD 21209, USA
Phone: 410-735-4221
Fax: 410-735-4201
E-mail: istr@jhu.edu
www.istr.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Steven Rathgeb Smith
United States

President-Elect

Ruth Phillips
Australia

Secretary

Kin-man Chan
Hong Kong

Treasurer

Paula Chies Schommer
Brazil

Nana Asantewa Afadzinu
Ghana

Oonagh Breen
Ireland

Anna Domaradzka
Poland

Lesley Hustinx
Belgium

Hagai Katz
Israel

Bhekinkosi Moyo
South Africa

Maria R. Nindita Radyati
Indonesia

Ola Segnestam Larsson
Sweden

Theo Schuyt
The Netherlands

Stefan Toepler
United States

Jiangang Zhu
China

Ex Officio:

Annette Zimmer
Germany

Donald Steinwachs
Host Institution, USA

Taco Brandsen
Editor, Voluntas

Ruth Simsa
Editor, Voluntas

Margery Daniels
Executive Director

April 20, 2017

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

Dear Minister Balog,

The International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR) is writing to express our deep concern at the new higher education law which changes the status of the Central European University in Hungary. The Society is committed to academic freedom of inquiry and research and to international cooperation in fostering knowledge, and we are deeply worried that the legislative changes endangers both.

CEU has a stellar reputation internationally, and is among the most prominent Hungarian institutions on the international stage. The school, founded and funded by philanthropist and financier George Soros, was established in 1991 at the collapse of communism to train scholars and others in the building of open societies that respect human rights and adhere to the rule of law. It 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. Its programs are both internationally accredited and certified by appropriate Hungarian authorities and it has complied in full with all Hungarian laws.

The new law not only endangers the standing a prominent and valued member of the international academic community, but may very well damage Hungary's well-founded international academic reputation, and its relationships to European and North American partners.

We respectfully urge the government to ensure that students and scholars at CEU are able to pursue their teaching, research, studies and scholarship with the full support for protection of academic freedom that the university has historically experienced. We urge for the withdrawal of the new law and enter into consultation with CEU.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Rathgeb Smith, President
Ruth Phillips, President-Elect
Annette Zimmer, Past-President
Margery B. Daniels, Executive Director

cc: Viktor Orban, Prime
Minister of Hungary