

April 10, 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 H.E. President Ader,

As concerned students and alumni of Central European University (CEU) in Malaysia and Malaysian academics worldwide, we are writing to express solidarity with CEU and express concern regarding Bill T/14686 amending Act CCIV of 2011 on national higher education accepted by the Hungarian Parliament on April 4, 2017. The Bill renders CEU's continued operations in Budapest virtually impossible and strikes a severe blow against the academic freedom that enables all universities, including those in Hungary, to flourish. Further the Bill raises significant legal and constitutional concerns.

As a result, we respectfully urge you to refrain from signing the Bill and to refer it to the Constitutional Court of Hungary on the following grounds, among others:

- The law limits the freedom to academic research, studies and education as well as to the right to culture by requiring foreign higher education institutions to operate in Hungary based on a binding international agreement.
- The law further limits the freedom to academic research, studies and education when it requires from foreign higher education institutions having a campus in Hungary to actually provide higher education programs in their country of origin as well.
- It clearly discriminates against CEU when it requires faculty members from OECD member states employed at higher education institutions whose maintainer is a Hungarian foundation to obtain a work permit in Hungary. Since in Hungary only Andrassy University has a Hungarian maintainer, whose faculty is mainly from EU member states, the law is clearly discriminatory against CEU.
- It breaches law-making procedures. The Bill was adopted in an exceptional procedure and without consultation with the affected parties as entitled under law.

Those of us who are students and alumni are grateful for the opportunities that CEU and Hungary have provided us with. As an academic institution, CEU has prepared, formed, and set us in a rich tradition of intellectual pursuit. CEU is an asset to Hungary, and any attack against its institutional autonomy and academic freedom would be a serious setback for Hungarian higher education.

More importantly, we have found in CEU a family that we are proud to call our own. CEU is more than a community of like-minded intellectuals. We are family. Like the 25 generations of alumni that came before us, we arrived in Budapest as strangers. Welcomed as guest, we slowly grew into a family. This is a family of great differences and challenges, but it underpins the ideals of peaceful coexistence, and strength in diversity. Budapest is our adopted home. This letter of solidarity demonstrates the commitment we hold so dearly. Budapest is our home, and we are no stranger to it. Together, there is strength in diversity.

As concern academics in the region, who appreciate enormous and outstanding contribution of CEU in knowledge advancement and human resource training, we are concern on the recent incident in Turkey where academics were targeted and being ban from academic travel, and in Russia where the European University was forced to cease operation. We believe academic freedom is important to ensure the flourishing of ideas for the betterment of mankind.

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 you to act on your Presidential prerogative and send the Bill to the Constitutional Court of Hungary where the above concerns regarding its legality and constitutionality can be appropriately reviewed to protect the proud tradition of Hungarian academic life and preserve its autonomy and freedom. We, the students and alumni of CEU in Malaysia and Malaysian academics worldwide, strongly urged you to protect and defend this pearl of great value.

Yours sincerely,

CEU Students and Alumni:

Chen Shaua Fui, CEU Student, MPA'18, School of Public Policy

Lau Pin Lean, CEU Student, SJD program, Legal Studies Department

Ch'ng Sin Yi , CEU Alumna, MESPOM'16, Department of Environmental Science

Chuah Ee Chia, CEU Alumna, MPA'16, School of Public Policy

Malaysian Academics:

The Malaysian Academic Movement (Pergerakan Tenaga Akademik Malaysia (GERAK))

Ambrose Poh Teik Huat, Head of Art and Design Department, New Era University College

Azmi Sharom, President, University of Malaya AcademicStaff Union (PKAUM)

Azmil Tayeb, Lecturer, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Dr. Chong Kok Boon, Distinguished Professor, Sunway University; Distinguished Professor, Institute of Physics, Chinese Academy of Science; Visiting Fellow, The Open University UK

Dr. Christopher Chong, Assistant Professor, University Tunku Abdul Rahman

Dr. Hwok-Aun Lee, Senior Fellow, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

Dr. Ian Chai, Principal Lecturer, Multimedia University

Dr. Idlan Zakaria, Lecturer, University of Birmingham

Dr. Khoo Ying Hooi, Senior Lecturer, University of Malaya

Dr. Kua Kia Soong, PhD, Director of SUARAM

Dr. Koay Jun Yi, Postdoc Fellow, Institute of Astronomy and Astrophysics, Academia Sinica

Dr. Ngo Sheau Shi, Lecturer, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Dr. Ong Puay Liu, Professor, National University of Malaysia (UKM)

Dr. Pauline Leong Pooi Yin, Senior Lecturer, Sunway University

Dr. Wong Chin Huat, Fellow, Penang Institute

Zaharom Nain, Professor of Media and Communication Studies; Director, Centre for the Study of Communications and Culture, The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus

CC: Hungarian Ambassador to Malaysia
Central European University
Department of Legal Constitutional and Administrative Law, Hungary
The Malaysian Academic Movement (MOVE/GERAK)