



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

April 1, 2017

Dear Minister Balog,

As concerned educators in Europe we, the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the European University Institute are writing to express our concern at proposed legislative changes to the Central European University's status in Hungary. These changes would endanger the academic freedom vital for the CEU's continued operation in Budapest and would strike a blow against the academic freedom that enables all of our universities, including those in Hungary, to flourish.

In the last twenty-five years, the Central European University has established itself as an international university with a global reputation for teaching and research in the social sciences and humanities. The appropriate Hungarian authorities have certified its programs and the CEU complies fully with all Hungarian laws. The University is also accredited by the United States Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), and its masters and doctoral programs are registered by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). It attracts students from 117 countries and faculty from 40.

In international rankings, some of the CEU's departments are rated among the top 50 in the world. The CEU makes Hungary a regional leader in winning highly competitive European Research Council grants. Several of the CEU faculty, in fields as various as medieval studies, network and cognitive science, have won prestigious awards in their disciplines.

We at the European University Institute consider CEU to be a valued member of the international academic community. We often host professors and Ph.D. students from the CEU—among them many Hungarian citizens—at the European University Institute, and we value our ongoing collaboration with them. We believe that the presence of the CEU in Hungary has added greatly to the international reputation of Hungarian academic life. 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 to enter into consultation with the CEU, bearing in mind the permanent damage that such legislation might do to Hungary's well-founded international academic reputation, and to its relationships with its European partners.

Yours sincerely,

Fabrizio Bernardi, Chair and Professor of Sociology

Stefano Bartolini, Peter Mair Chair in Comparative Politics

Rainer Bauböck, Professor of Social and Political Theory

Hans-Peter Blossfeld, Professor of Sociology

Dorothee Bohle, Professor of Social and Political Change

Diego Gambetta, Professor of Social Theory

Philipp Genschel, Joint Chair RSCAS, Professor of Comparative and European Public Policy

Klarita Gerxhani, Professor of Sociology

Anton Hemerijk, Professor of Political Sciences

Olivier Roy, Joint Chair RSCAS, Professor in Mediterranean Studies

Hanspeter Kriesi, Stein Rokkan Chair of Comparative Politics

Ulrich Krotz, Joint Chair in International Relations

Jennifer Welsh, Professor in International Relations, Dean of Graduate Studies