



HELŚIŃSKA FUNDACJA PRAW CZŁOWIEKA HELSINKI FOUNDATION for HUMAN RIGHTS

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Warsaw, 4 April 2017

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

Dear Minister Balog,

As concerned civil society representatives, we are writing to express solidarity with Central European University and express concern at proposed legislative changes to CEU's status in Hungary. These changes would endanger the academic freedom vital for CEU's continued operation in Budapest and would strike a blow against the academic freedom that enables all universities, including those in Hungary, to flourish. Numerous of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights lawyers, are alumni of the CEU. They prove a deepen knowledge of human rights and are outstanding. One of them, was the long lasting Vice-President of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, dr Adam Bodnar, the current Ombudsman of Poland.

In twenty-five years, Central European University 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.

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. It would also have a negative impact on the world's human rights movement, where many of the human rights defenders are graduate of the University.

The Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights respectfully urge the government to withdraw the proposed legislation and enter consultation with CEU, bearing in mind the damage such legislation might do to Hungary's well-founded international academic reputation, to its relationships with its European partners and with the United States.

Yours sincerely,

Danuta Przywara
President of the Board

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