

To:

Viktor Orbán, Prime Minister

Prime Minister's Office, 1357 Budapest, Pf. 6.

Zoltán Balog, Minister of Human Capacities

1054 Budapest, Akadémia utca 3.

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Statement in Support of the Central European University in Budapest

The Hungarian government lead by Viktor Orbán is currently preparing an amendment to the National Higher Education Act which would threaten the further activities of international academic institutions in Hungary. One of them is the Central European University (CEU), which was founded in Prague in 1991 and has been carrying out its activities in Hungary since 1996, completely in accordance with Hungarian law.

The aim of the amendment which is being prepared at the moment is to hinder or even prevent further activities of the Central European University in Budapest. Such discriminatory abuse of law is one of the characteristics of non-democratic, authoritarian regimes which we have never expected to see in Europe again. The action of the Hungarian government is on par with the recent political and nationalist cleansings at Turkish universities and with efforts on part of the Russian regime to close the European University in St Petersburg.

Since the Middle Ages through the classical universities, as imagined by Newman and Humboldt, to the present-day forms, European approach to education and the academic world has been characterised by openness, freedom of research, and international cooperation with the aim to develop human knowledge and society. Current steps of the Hungarian government, deliberately aimed against CEU and other international educational institutions, are going directly against the tradition of European culture and education.

CEU is one of the best academic institutions in Central Europe and has been for a long time building up a reputation of an excellent international university. By its openness towards other universities, it significantly contributes towards the quality of university education both in Hungary and in other countries of our region. CEU intensively cooperates with academic institutions in Central Europe by means of joint research projects, summer schools, and conferences.

We appeal on the Hungarian government not to introduce the amendment of the National Higher Education Act in its current form. Should such an attack on academic institutions really take place, we want to express our profound disagreement and determination to help CEU to find another suitable home and to renew its academic mission.

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