

To dr Zoltan Balog  
Minister of Human Resources  
etc.

Dear dr Balog,

Our Association, CISUECO (the Inter-University Centre for Hungarian Studies and studies on Central-Oriental Europe), which includes almost every fellow, lecturer and professor of Hungarian Language and Literature and many academics of the History of Eastern Europe and of Eastern European languages and literatures, presently working in Italian Universities, expresses its solidarity to the academics, staff and students at the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest, and declares its deep unease for the new legislation which alters the status of CEU in Hungary. We believe this new legislation would also represent a dangerous precedent for the academic communities of other countries.

Such legislation imperils the academic freedom enjoyed by CEU do far; over the past 25 years, students and staff have benefited from this same freedom. It is this freedom that has allowed CEU to become one of the most appreciated and highest-ranking universities; for teaching and research, it has now reached an international level. The 1500 students currently at CEU come from 117 different countries, and its academics originate from 40 different countries.

CEU is currently accredited by MSCHE in the United States (Middle States Commission on Higher Education); its Master's and doctoral programs are registered by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), as well as being certified the Hungarian authorities.

As an active partner in the international academic community, CEU, has offered a notable contribution to Hungarian academic life, on a national and international level: some of its departments are placed among the top 50 in international rankings. Thanks to CEU, Hungary is now the most competitive country in Central-Eastern Europe as concerns the research and study grants of the European Research Council (ERC); in some of the areas studies in its departments, the University has won prestigious prizes.

We share what has been declared by the National Association of Hungarian Studies (Nemzetközi Magyarstudományi Társaság - NMTT) as concerns the preservation of the critical function of science, of scientific thought and of free research: they are absolutely necessary for the future of science, for the freedom of science, and for the freedom of teaching. As underlined by the NMTT declaration, putting obstacles to research and teaching in CEU and stopping its work in Hungary would mean damaging not only the people directly involved with CEU, its academics and students, but also setting a serious obstacle to Hungarian studies, for which CEU has been pivotal, favouring the exchange and dialogue among different disciplines, among Central European scholars and scholars of other countries, thus becoming a centre for knowledge and reciprocal understanding beyond any ideological barrier.

Best regards.

For all the research units of CISUECO

prof. Roberto Ruspanti

Director of the Italian Inter-University Centre for Hungarian Studies and studies on Central-Oriental Europe

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*Az olaszországi Hungarológiai, Közép- és Kelet-Európai Tanulmányok Egyetemközi Kutatóközpontjának (CISUECO) igazgatója*