



Le Président

Paris, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017

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

Dear Minister Balog,

It is with great concern that the EHESS community has learnt that the Hungarian government has suddenly proposed changes to its regulations on National Higher Education. These changes may force Central European University (CEU) to end its activities in Budapest after 25 years. This assault is of course petrifying in itself, as far as it tries to shut down one of the most dynamic and prolific university in the region, one of our academic partners in Hungary for many years. This would deeply impact national and European academic lives and put a end to many collaborations developed all over Europe with Hungary, not because CEU is our only Hungarian partner, but because academic collaboration should be based on trust, and trust is broken as soon as a political institution undermines academic freedom.

Anyhow, the attack is even scarier if put in a broader perspective: in the last weeks, European University St. Petersburg has been under similar attacks of the Russian authorities. 2017 has been as well an *annus horribilis* for academics in Turkey that had to face continuous attack from their government. As academics, but first of all as European fellow citizens, we cannot stay in silence in front of such a transnational frontline against freedom of thought. We firmly react to a measure that put Hungary more and more far from the values of the European Union, and getting closer to increasingly authoritarian countries such as Russia and Turkey. Hungary has significantly contributed to research and innovation in Europe, especially in the humanities and social sciences. CEU is the product of this legacy and honors Hungarian academic history. We can barely imagine European academia without Hungary but the proposed amendments on high-education regulation generate a climate of defiance that affects the reputation of all Hungarian academic institutions and de facto build a new wall between Hungarian and its European partners.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge, in the name of the entire scientific community of EHESS, the hungarian 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 and to its relationships with its European partners.

Sincerely yours

Pierre-Cyrille HAUTCOEUR  
President