

# THE MEDIEVAL ACADEMY OF AMERICA

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

2 April 2017

Dear Minister Balog,

As the governing body of the Medieval Academy of America, the largest organization in the world devoted to supporting the study of the European Middle Ages, 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.

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 forty. The University as a whole is accredited by the US Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), and its masters and doctoral programs are registered by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Its programs are also certified by appropriate Hungarian authorities and it has complied in full with all Hungarian laws.

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

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.

We support and value our CEU colleagues and respectfully urge the government to withdraw the proposed legislation and enter into negotiations 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 to its collaborations with institutions of higher learning in the United States.

Yours sincerely,

Carmela Franklin (Columbia University), President  
Margot Fassler (University of Notre Dame), 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President  
David Wallace (University of Pennsylvania), 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President  
Lisa Fagin Davis, Executive Director

CC: Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary;  
Office of the Prime Minister;  
Central European University