

MAUT • APBM

McGill Association of University Teachers
Association des professeur(e)s et bibliothécaires de McGill

Professor Michael Ignatieff
Rector
Central European University
Budapest
Hungary

Montreal, March 29, 2017

Dear Professor Ignatieff,

The Executive of the McGill Association of University Teachers was greatly alarmed by the news that the Hungarian government has tabled amendments to Hungary's Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education which appear to threaten the continued operation of the CEU in Hungary. If these amendments are approved by the Hungarian parliament, this could spell the end of one of Hungary's most widely respected academic institutions. This would be a huge loss to both Hungary and the world at large.

In the relatively short period since it was founded in 1991, the CEU has become one of the world's most esteemed graduate institutions in the humanities and social sciences, with many of its programs ranked among the very best in the world. Regionally, the CEU has become the foremost graduate institution in Eastern Europe. Many of its graduates have gone on to become leading scholars, politicians and civil servants in Hungary as well as across the world.

Independent universities like the CEU are an essential part of the institutional foundations on which the political, social and cultural life of any civilized country rest. They provide the independent expertise, the innovative ideas, the critical reflection which are indispensable for a modern forward-looking society to thrive. If the proposed Hungarian legislation were to force the CEU to close this would be a tragedy of major proportions for the world, but far more so for Hungary itself. And such an outcome would be deeply troubling for all independent academic institutions in the region and throughout the world.

We offer you our support and solidarity for your efforts to prevent such a tragic outcome. If successful—and we cannot but hope that it will be—the world, the region and especially Hungary itself will owe you an immense debt of gratitude.

Sincerely,



Terence Hébert
President
MAUT/APBM