

CENTRAL Network Expresses its Support for Academic Freedom and Supports Eötvös Loránd University's Statement

Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE)'s partners in the *Central European Network for Teaching and Research in Academic Liaison* (CENTRAL) – University of Warsaw, University of Vienna, Charles University, and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin – support [the statement that was published by ELTE on April 3, 2017 regarding the Central European University](#).

CENTRAL strongly advocates the protection of plurality and academic freedom. Academia must have no borders if it is to continue to move forward. International cooperation and perspectives constitute a crucial condition for progress in research. The CENTRAL network promotes joint teaching and research, which arise from international dialogue and require collaboration based on mutual recognition and respect across national borders. In light of the aforementioned amendment, the member universities of the CENTRAL network wish to declare their solidarity with the prestigious Central European University in Budapest. They emphasise that the CEU is an indispensable member of the academic community whose diversity is testament to the thriving academic landscape in Central Europe, developed over a period of many centuries. This must continue to be safeguarded and managed constructively.

Universities are places of free and independent academic exchange. The willingness to engage in dialogue is at the heart of the self-conception of universities. It therefore seems all the more incomprehensible that the activities of an exceptional European university like the CEU, and academic autonomy in Hungary generally, should be severely inhibited and threatened by the amendment of the Higher Education Act passed by the Hungarian Parliament. University of Warsaw, University of Vienna, Charles University, and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin thus support the statement published by their strategic partner ELTE regarding the Central European University and declare themselves resolutely opposed to this threatening of academic freedom – hoping to contribute to the preservation of an independent and collaborative academic culture in Central Europe.

CENTRAL is an interdisciplinary teaching and research network, uniting leading universities in central European higher education. Its members include Charles University in Prague, University of Warsaw, University of Vienna, ELTE Budapest as well as Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. The multilateral network of partnerships is founded on a principle of close academic and institutional cooperation between the CENTRAL universities. It reinforces the interests of its partners and supports intensive and strategic collaboration in research, teaching and higher education governance. One of the network's aims is to promote Central Europe as a hub for academic excellence. Since 2015, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) has been supporting the CENTRAL network within the framework of its "Strategic Partnerships" funding initiative.