

Statement of the GRACEH Organizing Committee at the European University Institute in Solidarity with the Students and Faculty of the Central European University

Recently the Hungarian government, led by the ruling party Fidesz of Prime Minister Victor Orbán, has initiated an attack against the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest. The proposed legislation on higher education in Hungary is intended to prevent the CEU from further carrying out its academic activities and ultimately threatens the existence of the institution. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of the CEU and its mission in educating hundreds of students from all over the world and its path-breaking research. Especially for students and scholars from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe this institution represents an incredibly valuable regional academic center that serves them as a springboard on their way to global academic excellence and the international labor market.

Many of us attending the conference this month are either currently students or faculty at the CEU's Department of History or its alumni and former employees. All of us regard this situation to be very troubling and justifiably fear for the future of the CEU in Budapest. In the coming few days the Hungarian Parliament plans to put the hazardous bill targeting the CEU as an academic institution to a vote. As the Organizing Committee of the Graduate Conference in European History 2017, we express our strong support and solidarity with our partners and colleagues at the Central European University in their efforts to find a way to protect itself from this illiberal and politicized assault against academic freedom by the Hungarian government. At the same time we the organizers condemn this unjustified attempt to silence this important academic institution for the sake of everyday ideological appetites and the winning of some petty political points for the right-wing ruling party.

The Graduate Conference in European History is a joint project by researchers and faculty of the European University Institute, Florence, the University of Vienna, and the Central European University, Budapest. We, the organizers, will not stand idly by while our colleagues and partners in Budapest are under attack. We express our full solidarity with them and we demand from the Hungarian government to refrain from implementing this attack on one of the most important academic institutions in the region. We ask all participants to either individually or through their home institutions and other academic networks express their support with CEU and their protest against the Hungarian government's attack.

Organizing Committee of the GRACEH 2017

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Online petition: <https://www.change.org/p/hungarian-national-assembly-save-the-central-european-university>