March 31, 2017

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

Dear Minister Balog:

We are writing to express our deep concern about proposed legislative changes to the status of Central European University (CEU) in Hungary. These changes could threaten the academic freedom in teaching and research that is vital for CEU’s continued operation in Budapest and as an institution of higher education.

The American Political Science Association is a scholarly association that represents more than 13,000 U.S. and internationally based professors and students of political science, including scholars in Hungary. The Central European University includes graduate-level degree programs in political science.

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 40. 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. In short, CEU as an institution that supports and nurtures scholars who are regularly recognized by their peers as outstanding in their field of study.

We understand the proposed legislation in Hungary would affect CEU’s statute of operation in Hungary, with serious implications for the functioning of the university and for academic freedom on campus. Such measures would violate Hungary’s legal obligations to protect academic freedom, including under international covenants that Hungary has ratified.

Absent any further information, we respectfully urge the government to ensure that students and scholars at CEU are able to pursue their teaching, research, studies and scholarship with the full support for protection of academic freedom that the university has historically experienced, including considering the withdrawal of any legislation that would undermine such academic freedom.

Yours sincerely,

David A. Lake, President
Jennifer Hochschild, Past-President
Kathleen Thelen, President-Elect
Steven Rathgeb Smith, Executive Director

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