

Draft Statement

The Dutch Association of Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands is deeply concerned about the amendments recently adopted by the Hungarian Parliament to its Higher Education Law.

While national governments can legitimately enact norms pertaining to the quality of post-secondary education, the recently adopted amendment imposes requirements that are effectively impossible to meet. These requirements will obstruct the continued operation of the Central European University in Budapest and undermine its ability to function as a center of excellence and innovation in Hungary.

Since its foundation in 1991, the Central European University has offered post-graduate programmes in the social sciences, humanities, law, management and public policy, which have obtained the highest academic recognition globally. The Central European University is internationally known for excellence in teaching and research. Amongst its staff, students and alumni are many Dutch, Hungarian and other nationals. Central European University has obtained a Hungarian accreditation in 2005 and it holds an operational license in Hungary issued by the Hungarian Educational Authority. It plays full part in Hungarian academic life and maintains institutional contacts with other Hungarian and international universities including Dutch universities.

The Dutch Association of Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands recalls the core values and standards of academic freedom which binds the Member States of the European Union and the Council of Europe. In view of these principles, a national government cannot claim the right to terminate the lawful operation of a university on its territory.

The Dutch Association of Universities of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands requests the Hungarian Government and Parliament to refrain from implementing an amendment to its Higher Education Law that imposes administrative and regulatory obstacles to the continued functioning of the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. The application of the voted legislation would effectively force institutions like the Central European University out of Hungary. This state of affairs is deplorable, and must be avoided. We therefore respectfully invite the Hungarian Government to withdraw the amendment and maintain academic freedom.