

Romanian students show solidarity towards CEU's academic community

The National Alliance of Romanian Students' Associations (ANOSR) expresses its support towards Budapest's Central European University's (CEU/KEE) academic community, during a time in which the very cornerstones of education, key concepts such as a university's autonomy and academic freedom, are in peril in one of Romania's neighbouring countries, Hungary. This dire situation arose during an attempt to censure the opinions of a particular group from Hungarian society.

A proposal to amend Hungary's National Education Law specifically targets the rendering of CEU's academic activity illegal, due to the fact that absurd operational terms have been brought up for discussion. The proposed requirements cannot be fulfilled by this university, due to the enormous financial and logistic efforts that they entail. This legislative initiative will mostly likely discourage any other university with an international dimension from opening its gates in Hungary.

ANOSR believes that academic freedom is a *sine qua non* prerequisite for the proper functioning of a higher education institution. The fact that, through their public statements and the studies conducted by several members of CEU's academic staff, certain unpleasant affairs of the Hungarian state's administration have been highlighted should not lead to a brutal repression of those voices.

A university's autonomy, including autonomy in the fields of resource management and financial management, is a fundamental principle in any healthy and well developed educational system. The measures that are currently being planned and could be imposed on CEU will thus simplify one of the foundation stones of Hungary's higher education system and will render it hollow and void of any real substance.

Furthermore, ANOSR expresses its support for the Romanian students and researchers that are currently active at the Central European University, as well as those that are working in any of CEU's subordinate institutions. Throughout the years, Romanians that have graduated and worked at CEU have brought an invaluable contribution to the development of an open and democratic society in Romania, thus playing a key part in the creation and consolidation of Romania's civil society. 73 young Romanians are currently studying at CEU and

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are in danger of not being able to graduate from their respective programs if the aforementioned amendment will be approved by the Hungarian Parliament.

ANOSR firmly condemns the Hungarian state's legislative initiative, which evidently targets and has the desired outcome of terminating CEU's academic programs, as we strongly uphold key concepts such as university autonomy and academic freedom, which are, in the eyes of Romanian students, foundation blocks without which we cannot even begin to talk about an authentic university system. We therefore express our concern that such measures might be applied in a neighbouring country, which is also a member of the European Union, through a special parliamentary procedure that does not permit any kind of real debate, at a time when voices deeply rooted in extremist nationalist rhetoric are growing in number, and those that promote cooperation and international solidarity are exceedingly losing ground.

Furthermore, **ANOSR requests that the Romanian Government and Parliament reaffirm their support and guarantees towards the fundamental principles that guide the proper course of higher education**, namely principles such as academic freedom, university autonomy and the upholding of the student statute that stipulates the fact that students are rightful partners in the university decision making process. **We also request a firm reaction from the Romanian academic community in any future instances where initiatives and statements that might jeopardize the commitment towards such principles, either in Romania or other states, are brought up for discussion in the public sphere.**

The National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania (ANOSR) is the national union of students, non-governmental organization and non-partisan entity which, for more than 17 years, has as main purpose the representation of the common interests of students in Romania, defending and promoting their rights and obligations and stimulating their participation in the educational, social, economic and cultural life.

ANOSR brings together students from 17 cities across the country, from 31 universities, reaching a total of 91 member unions, fighting together to keep alive the voice of the student movement in Romania.

On the national level, ANOSR is member of the Alliance for a Clean Romania and member of the Romanian Youth Council, which in turn is a member of the European Youth Forum and the World Assembly of Youth, which legitimizes ANOSR's international representativeness. Also, the federation is a legitimate representative of students from Romania at European level, being a member with full rights of **ESU – European Students' Union**, the only European Structure representing students.

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