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Closure of CEU a dark day for Hungary and Europe

Hungary

Today, the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest, Hungary has announced that it will relocated to Vienna after a protracted dispute with the Hungarian government. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has made his disdain for the university know for a long time and has brought about a series of laws designed to make it difficult for the CEU to continue operating in Hungary. The governing Fidesz party, which is a part of the European Peoples' Party (EPP) in the European Parliament, is also targeting independent media and civil society organisations, as part of Hungary's slide into authoritarianism.

Judith Sargentini, Greens/EFA rapporteur on the rule of law in Hungary report, comments:

"This is a dark day for Hungary and for Europe. Strong and independent academia is the cornerstone of a functioning democracy. Forcing the Central European University to close shatters the last illusions that Hungary is anything other than an autocracy. So long as the EPP continues to keep Fidesz within their ranks, they are endorsing and supporting Orbán's assault on the rule of law. This was a supposedly a red line for the EPP, now Manfred Weber must clarify how he expects to reconcile the actions of the Hungarian government with Fidesz's role in the group.

"The rest of Europe must not just stand by as Viktor Orbán strips away at the very fabric of democracy in Hungary. The European Council must debate our recent rule of law in Hungary report, which was supported by an overwhelming majority of the European Parliament, and stand up to Orbán's autocratic methods. It is the Hungarian people who lose the most from Orbán's ever-tightening grip on power and they look to Europe to help, which is why the Council must show that the EU is willing to stand up for European values."

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Responsible MEPs



Judith Sargentini

Member

Contact person



Alex Johnson

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