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To: Professor Shalini Randeria
President and Rector
Central European University

Letter of concern regarding the Open Learning Initiative (OLive)

Dear Professor Shalini Randeria,

We address you as the current President and Rector of CEU, and also as a former President of the European Association of Social Anthropologists, of which we are currently in the handover process between two executive committees.

EASA's executive committees are expressing concerns over the sudden and unexplained closure of the CEU Refugee Education Initiative - OLIVE.

With over 1400 students of refugee backgrounds having graduated from OLIVE, the program is a globally acclaimed effort to support refugees and signals a strong opposition to increasingly authoritarian and violent forms of governance of people displaced by invasions, conflicts, and climate disasters. This is particularly important in a country like Hungary, where national politics are renowned for their anti-refugee stance.

The closure of the program is all the more surprising since OLIVE had received a record number of applications this academic year and is in the process of solidifying even more its flagship position through an international conference and subsequent publication. The closure is a major blow for academic involvement in refugee support, and unwittingly contributes to silencing the debate on an urgent topic with earnest implications in terms of human rights violations and human suffering. The decision stands in striking contrast to the CEU's affirmed engagement for academic freedom and to the values of democratic debate

and support for human rights that it aims to embody. This is not the CEU we have defended when it was itself under threat of closure by the Hungarian authorities.

We are very concerned about the lack of transparency regarding the reasons for the program's closure. We urge you to communicate clearly and publicly, in the ethos of anthropology, our association, and academia in these dark years, the rationale for the decision. Without convincing justification for your decision, and without knowledge of a plan to mitigate the reputational, political, and personal damage that this decision has caused to CEU, OLIVE, affected staff members, and ultimately the students from the most vulnerable populations, we cannot but strongly oppose your administration's decision and are decided to lend support to OLIVE, its staff, and its future activity.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Ana Ivasiuc, University of Maynooth

Dr Mariya Ivancheva, University of Strathclyde, CEU Social Anthropology MA & PhD alumna