

Sustaining Trust, Higher Education, Quality Assurance and the Political Environment

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One case study– four lessons

1. Accreditation in higher education is a good tool for building and sustaining trust for a multitude of constituencies and stakeholders.
2. An international university faces more challenges in this regard (accreditation and trust building).
3. Universities need a state around them, even international universities.
4. In undemocratic regimes, nothing may help to build trust, not even multiple accreditation.



Central European University

A university for Central Europe



... now going global



CEU: an unusual model

- ▶ Research intensive
- ▶ Mission driven (open society and democracy)
- ▶ Niche institution: graduate only; social sciences and humanities



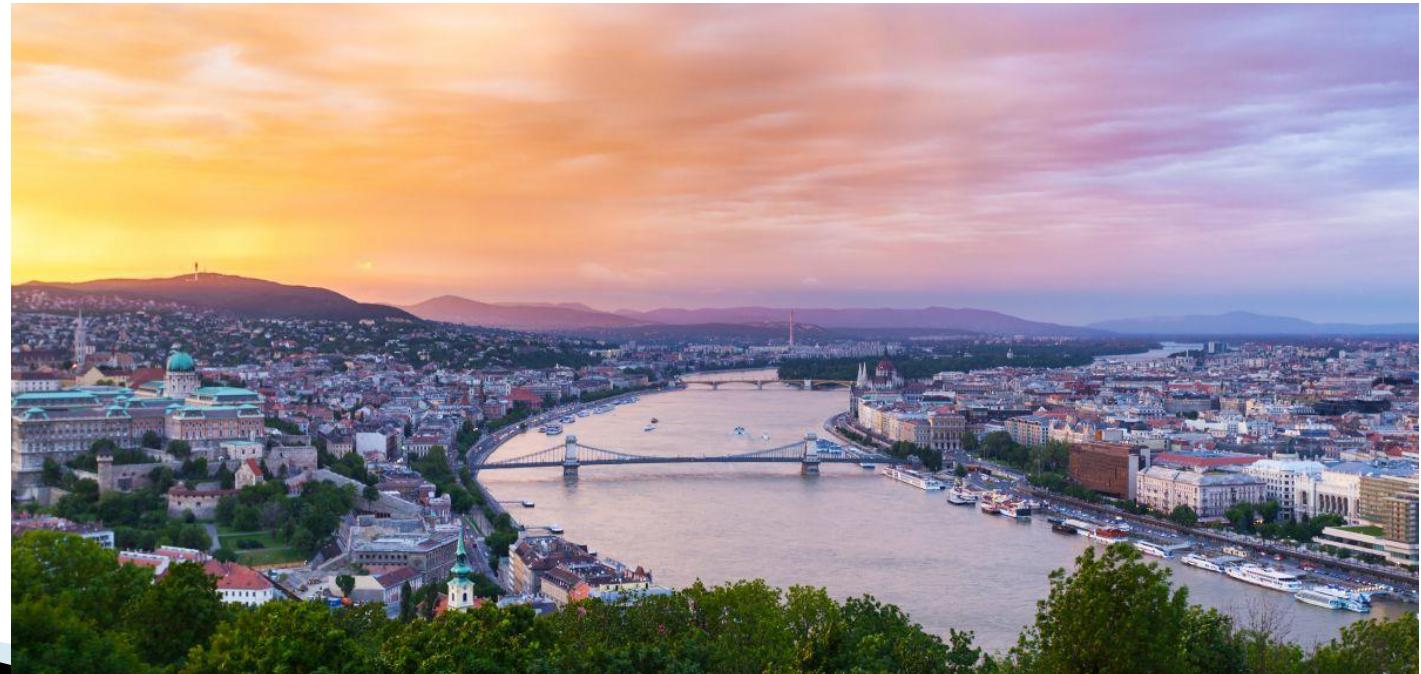
CEU: an unusual model

- ▶ International by design; densely international (1500 students from 110 countries; staff from 40 countries)
- ▶ No national agenda
- ▶ Private not-for-profit; financial aid for all students (full or partial)
- ▶ Funding model:
 - 60% endowment
 - 15% EU
 - 15% fundraising
 - 5% tuition
 - 5% other.



CEU: an unusual model and experience

- An experiment in HE in Central and Eastern Europe (graduate school, international, mission driven, etc.)
- Highly ranked (in the first 50, 100 or 150 in most disciplines)
- “Uncomfortable” (idea) for nationalist and populist regimes.
- **Forced to leave its home in Budapest.**



CEU: one of the “most accredited” universities in the world

- ▶ Institutional accreditation
- ▶ Program accreditation
in the US (MSCHE, NYSED), Hungary, Austria
- ▶ Professional accreditation (AMBA)

European accreditation?

Accreditation of HEIs: a tool for building trust for a multitude of constituencies and stakeholders

- ▶ **Students:** recognition of diplomas around the world
- ▶ **Staff:** recognition/acceptance; self-confidence; even pride.
- ▶ **Employers**
- ▶ **Government(s) and government agencies (e.g.: visas)**
- ▶ **Funding agencies (e.g.: Erasmus, ERC)**
- ▶ **Peers ("art 26" in Austria, accreditation in Hungary).**

Multiple accreditation: an answer to challenging political environments

- ▶ Initial accreditation: why in the US for a Central European University?
- ▶ Why “European” accreditation and how to get it?

Recent developments: possibility of accreditation for master's programs in gender studies abolished by government decree in Hungary

Political environment for HE in Central and Eastern Europe

- **Changing policy narratives** (away from knowledge society, Europeanisation, democratization).
- **Populism and nationalism:** impact on HE (e.g. Hungary: Constitution, regulations, funding, enrollment)
- **The European Higher Education Area still matters –** including in accreditation, internationalization
- **Universities are “pathologically pro-European”;** some governments are anti-European
- **Severe demographic trends**
- **Impact of economic crisis/recovery**

Lessons learned.

Multiple accreditation and the State: virtues and challenges

- ▶ International universities face more challenges with regard to accreditation and in using accreditation as a tool for building trust. But it is a good tool.
- ▶ Accreditation matters. It helps build and sustain trust.
- ▶ All universities need a state in order to be able to function.
- ▶ The State may decide to consider or disregard accreditation (in undemocratic regimes only?)

Public trust and support in difficult political times



