

Hungary's PM bans gender study at colleges saying 'people are born either male or female, and they must decide their sexual identity with only their genitalia, not with their mind'



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán waves prior to a swearing-in ceremony for members of the new Hungarian parliament on May 8, 2018 during the constituent assembly of the Hungarian Parliament in Budapest.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is facing a strong backlash from universities this week after banning gender studies programs.

"The Government's standpoint is that people are born either male or female," a spokesman for the prime minister told CNN, "and we do not consider it acceptable for us to talk about socially-constructed genders, rather than biological sexes."

The Hungarian government issued a decree last Friday to revoke accreditation and funding for gender studies programs at the two universities that offer them in Hungary.

According to Budapest's prestigious Central European University, the government offered [no public explanation](#) for removing accreditation for their gender studies Master's and PhD programs.

"In solidarity with Hungarian colleagues, we oppose this latest infringement on academic autonomy in the country," said the university's Department of Gender Studies in a statement.

"In the face of political moves such as this recent decision that mischaracterize and question the academic legitimacy of Gender Studies, we stress that the concept of gender, as a fundamental component of the human experience, has proven its importance in and across many areas of academic research."

But the ban may not fully succeed: Central European University's degrees are also accredited in the United States and the programs will continue to accept applicants.

Some see it as the latest attack

Even still, the ban is seen by many as the latest attack on personal freedom and democracy in Hungary. Last month, [the European Parliament voted to punish Prime Minister Orbán](#) for cracking down on democratic institutions in Hungary, including the press and academia.

In a statement released before the gender studies ban went into effect, the Political Studies Association, an organization supporting social science research, said the decree "calls into question the Hungarian government's commitment to the principles of freedom + democracy which are the bedrock of European states."

The Political Studies Association added, "Gender Studies is an integral part of understanding the complexities of social interaction, the impact of policy, the dynamics of the economy and the extent of abuse of personal and political power."

Hungarian students who have already begun gender studies degrees will be allowed to complete them, according to the prime minister's office.