CEU Expands Award-Winning Ukraine Initiative Into Global Invisible University

VIENNA, AUSTRIA, August 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Building on four years of experience in Ukraine, and with generous support from the Open Society Foundations, CEU is expanding its pioneering educational model to support students and scholars affected by war and authoritarianism across multiple regions.

Vienna and Budapest, August 24, 2026 – Central European University (CEU) today announced the launch of Global Invisible University (GIU), a new permanent non-degree educational program supporting students and scholars living under war, authoritarianism, political repression, and displacement.

"Over the past four years, the Invisible University for Ukraine has shown that academic communities can remain vibrant and resilient even under the most difficult circumstances. GIU builds on this experience to create a truly transnational university community where students and scholars from different regions learn from one another and develop knowledge that is deeply rooted in local realities while addressing global challenges" — Balázs Trencsényi, Academic Director, Global Invisible University.

GIU offers university-level courses, mentoring, research opportunities, and international academic networks for learners whose access to higher education has been disrupted. It builds on the success of the Invisible University for Ukraine (IUFU), launched by CEU in 2022, which has already engaged more than 2,500 students and 450 instructors. GIU combines academic study with mentoring, civic engagement, and leadership development. The goal is not only to sustain education, but to prepare participants to contribute to democratic renewal, civic practice, and institutional reform.

The launch comes at a time when conflicts and restrictions on academic freedom are affecting students and universities in an increasing number of regions, prompting universities to rethink how higher education can be delivered across borders.

"Global Invisible University reflects CEU's founding mission and our commitment to academic freedom, open societies, and educational innovation. Building on the remarkable success of the Invisible University for Ukraine, GIU demonstrates how universities can respond creatively to global challenges by ensuring that talented students and scholars continue to learn, teach, and contribute to society regardless of war, political repression, or displacement. We are proud to

make GIU a permanent part of CEU's educational mission" — Carsten Q. Schneider, CEU Interim President and Rector

How GIU Works

Global Invisible University will operate as a network of interconnected regional programs sharing a common academic framework while adapting teaching to local political and social realities and profiles, aspirations, and needs of potential students. Courses combine online instruction with in-person winter and summer schools, research mobility opportunities, mentoring and civic engagement activities. Academic themes include democracy and authoritarianism, human rights, memory and culture wars, climate justice, media and information warfare, European integration and multilateralism, and the future of higher education. Invisible Graduate School will support a cohort of postgraduate students through international mentoring, training in research design and methods, research and mobility funding, and extensive cross-regional academic networking.

The program will initially strengthen existing regional initiatives in Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, and Western Balkans, as well as integrate CEU's Invisible University for Romani Access and Empowerment and, by 2028 expand into the South Caucasus region and Central Asia, with longer-term plans to build partnerships in other regions of the world with similar initiatives aimed at rebuilding open society and advancing the role of higher education, critical thinking and academic freedom in post-war and post-authoritarian recovery.

"GIU is not simply about preserving access to education. By connecting students, scholars, and institutions across borders, we are investing in the intellectual and civic leadership and knowledge networks that will help rebuild academic life and open societies" — Oleksandr Shtokvych, Managing Director, Global Invisible University.

Applications for Fall 2026 courses are open. More information on courses and eligibility is available at https://www.ceu.edu/academics/non-degree/GIU

About Invisible University for Ukraine and Visible Ukraine

Invisible University for Ukraine (IUFU) is a transnational academic initiative that provides accredited university courses, mentoring, and an international intellectual community for Ukrainian students whose education has been disrupted by war. More than preserving academic continuity, IUFU prepares a new generation of scholars, policymakers, journalists, legal experts, and civic leaders who will help shape Ukraine's recovery and long-term development.

IUFU scholars and participants also form the core editorial and intellectual community behind Visible Ukraine, an open-access online journal that connects academic research with public debate. Together, IUFU and Visible Ukraine counter intellectual isolation and ensure that Ukrainian perspectives are represented. IUFU community also plays a key role in transmitting its

institutional and academic practices to the new hubs of GIU.

About Central European University

Founded in 1991 and based in Vienna since 2019, CEU is a non-profit private university with around 1,500 students from more than 100 countries pursuing bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs accredited both in the United States and Austria. With more than 200 outstanding faculty members and researchers, CEU maintains an excellent student–faculty ratio and consistent external recognition through prestigious research awards and third-party funded projects. CEU is committed to equal opportunity, diversity, open societies, and freedom of expression – exemplified through initiatives such as the Invisible University for Ukraine.

CEU maintains a research and civic engagement presence in Budapest through the CEU Democracy Institute, the Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archivum (OSA), the Roma Graduate Preparation Program (RGPP), the CEU Institute for Advanced Study (IAS), and the Center for Ethics and Law in Biomedicine (CELAB), as well as a wide range of public educational programs, lectures, and cultural events, organized by the Civic Engagement, Arts, and Culture Unit.

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