

A press release of the Freeszfe Society

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European universities expected to save degrees of Theatre Arts University students

Emergency Exit scheme organized by Freeszfe Society

Students of the University of Theatre and Film Arts will not have to resign to losing their education and degree, even if they do not wish to continue their studies at the university due to the method it has been reorganized last summer. Five European universities have offered to take over altogether 150 students, recognizing the courses they have completed and the work they will conduct with their teachers in future. An internal survey has shown intense interest in the opportunity, and talks are ongoing with other universities to enroll even more students.

The Freeszfe Society has been working on its Emergency Exit diploma-saving programme for months. Within that programme, the association has concluded agreements with the Salzburg Mozarteum University, the Academy of Performing Arts Baden-Wuerttemberg in Ludwigsburg, Germany, the Warsaw Theatre Arts University and its puppetry faculty in Bialystok and Switzerland's Accademia Teatro Dimitri to take over 14 former SZFE classes. The exact number of transferring students will be known once all individual student contracts have been signed.

Although the universities employ various administrative solutions, the aim is the same: they want to offer an escape route to students who doubt freedom of education and autonomy of the creative process are ensured at SZFE, in view of the method the university was reorganized in 2020. They mostly offer a special status to these students, by registering the Freeszfe Society, which is not accredited for educational activities, as a partner institution conducting education-related activities and by recognizing its courses and exams in their credit system. The results of the courses – films, performances and final theses – will be mostly evaluated by a joint committee of the university and teachers of the association. Most of the classes carry on with their studies within the Emergency Exit programme starting in the 2021 spring semester. During the semester, nearly 70 students from outside Budapest and across the borders will be housed with the help of the Central European University (CEU).

As the pandemic situation deteriorated in Hungary, the association converted to digital education: the courses are held online, and projects are being developed without personal contact. When the restrictions are lifted, they will return to temporary rehearsal rooms and studios, as the association is still looking for a building it could use as a base. Donations received during the university's blockade last autumn and since are being used to rent buildings, equipment and to produce productions for exams. Teachers' salaries and the students' social benefits or grants will be disbursed once the association's revenues and the members' sponsorship make it possible.

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