

The CEU Higher Education Research Group (HERG)
cordially invites you to a discussion on

Do Universities Have a Future: The Radicalisation of Yehuda Elkana

Date: March 1, 2017

Time: 4:00-5:30pm

Venue: Nador 15, room 103



by **Prof. Marvin Lazerson**

Discussants:

Prof. Éva Fodor, Department of Gender Studies and Pro-Rector for Social Sciences and Humanities at CEU

Prof. György Gergely, Department of Cognitive Sciences and co-director of the Cognitive Development Center at CEU

Abstract: The central thesis of Yehuda Elkana's (former President and Rector of CEU) and Hannes Klöpper's (Co-founder of iversity) book *The University in the Twenty-first Century: Teaching the New Enlightenment in the Digital Age* (Central European Press, 2016) is that the nature of knowledge has been fundamentally transformed in ways that make it imperative for universities to undergo radical changes. They argue that the Western Enlightenment cluster of values that emerged in the late 17th and 18th centuries assumed that knowledge was rational and all-embracing, that it evolved in orderly, linear and predictable ways and that it could be measured and was context-free and thus was applicable anywhere at any time. This cluster of values has now exhausted itself and its collapse threatens the very existence of universities. Today's world is uncertain, messy, unpredictable, non-linear, context-dependent and dangerous. Traditional dichotomies between theoretical/basic research and technical/applied research, between professional education and liberal/academic education have to be replaced by overlapping and shared engagements in which the goals are to find resolutions to shared intellectual, social, economic, technological and political problems. If universities do not recognize this and then dramatically alter what they are currently doing, they will either disappear or become insignificant certificate givers competing with alternative certificates that are likely to have much more value. But what does radically altering universities mean? The discussion will pursue this question by looking at mission, curriculum and teaching, the iconic position of research and the use of technology in learning.

Marvin Lazerson is professor of higher education policy in the School of Public Policy, CEU and professor emeritus, University of Pennsylvania. Educated at Columbia University and Harvard University, where he received a PhD in history, he has published widely in the areas of educational history, higher education, and social policy. A member of the National Academy of Education (U.S.), before coming to CEU he taught at Harvard University, Stanford University, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Pennsylvania, where he also served as dean of the Graduate School of Education and the university's interim provost. In 2009 he received the CEU President's award for outstanding service. He chairs the European Teacher of Year Award committee, the International Advisory Board of the Yehuda Elkana Center for Higher Education and serves on the editorial board of CEU Press.