

**This year, the summary of our activities will not be compiled by various HCLU programs, but we will assess the human rights situations through the most important national trends concerning civil liberties. Our goals and achievements are thus identified within trends described below. This way our Annual Report can, at the same time, introduce the situation of human rights in Hungary and the work of HCLU.**

# 2016

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This year, we have defended the freedom of citizens in more cases than ever before. In two years, the number of citizens requesting our help through our legal aid service rose by a third. Compared to 2014, the number of cases we have represented has increased by 40%. In 2016, our 11 lawyers represented a total of 118 clients. Our clients include people disadvantaged due to their lack of available financial resources, people living with disabilities, journalists, demonstrators, parents unable to attend to their hospitalized children, and Roma people who have suffered discrimination. Almost every working day in 2016, we attended a police or court hearing.

A significant part of the world events in the year 2016, to put it mildly, did not favor a political view promoting the importance of individual liberty enjoyed equally by everyone. Populist leaders and parties either came to power or strengthened their majorities. In Europe and the Americas exclusionary political views that deny the achievements of the enlightened West became more popular. In stable democracies, constitutional institutions may be able to resist these changes, and trust may be placed in institutions that advocate democracy that is based on the protection of equal dignity, such as in France, the Netherlands, Great Britain and the United States. In Hungary, a strong institutional framework is no longer available. In countries where constitutional institutions are not able to share and limit political powers, the role of civil society and watchdog organizations lose importance. It is these parts of society which will still hold that everyone's life and fate deserves equal respect and attention, even when it is not politically rewarding.

We are one such part of society. We are not happy about the developments of 2016, and feel the need for our work now more than ever. We also need You: in 2017 we will only be able to act effectively on every rights violation if you support our work. The HCLU is one of the few independent organizations which works to prevent the infringement of our civil rights. Be part of our work by supporting us.

Stefánia Kapronczay, Máté Dániel Szabó

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# DEMOCRACY WITHOUT CRITICAL VOICES

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Since before the democratic transformation in Hungary people haven't needed as much courage to criticize a politician as they need today.

Maria Sandor, Gergo Komáromy (G Ras) and Norbert Farkas. Conscious citizens, and exercising their constitutional rights: this is the Hungarian government's nightmare. State institutions and the economy are relatively easy to occupy, as we have seen in the last half decade, but autonomous persons are not so easy to control. The government, both at a national and local level, does everything to ensure that these autonomous citizens do not exist anywhere. Every effort is made in order to discourage these people from tackling issues small or large in their communities.

Since before the democratic transformation in Hungary people haven't needed as much courage to criticize a politician as they need today. Journalists, bloggers and environmentalists expose themselves by going to court if they take the government to task. This problem is particularly acute for rural citizens where local authorities often use legal means and abuse their power to respond to criticism. Critics face lawsuits, and often have to litigate accusations of slander, libel, or defamation. The goal of legal pressure is to silence criticism: the majority of people can be discouraged from forming political opinions or revealing corruption if they may be obliged to pay hundreds of thousands of forints in compensation. If they face criminal prosecution, they may even have their fingerprints and photographs taken and registered as a serious offender. In 2016, we defended 48 cases representing journalists and citizens related to public affairs.

Our response to the legal pressure being applied to citizens is to provide legal assistance. We created a nationwide network of attorneys to improve our civil activities. With the help of these lawyers we were able to protect the rights of citizens, who have demanded to be included in the shaping of public discussions. **In 2016, we litigated a number of successful cases in criminal court on behalf of those prosecuted due to political speeches. We were able to win an acquittal for our client in Gyongyos, who during the election campaign used his own measures to**

**urge citizens to vote against the far-right party, Jobbik. The client spray-painted the sidewalk with 'No Vona, no cry' and even handed out flyers. The criminal proceedings were initiated on the basis of defamation and vandalism.**

Another client, Dopeman, was found to have not committed a breach of peace during a demonstration when he kicked a toppled statue of Orbán's head, according to the judgment of the court of first instance.



## No Vona, no cry

Robert Nagy lives in Gyöngyös. Gabor Vona, the party leader of Jobbik, is also from Gyöngyös and the presence of the far-right party is strong in the local community. Robert campaigned during the 2014 parliamentary elections against Jobbik. Political messages were spray-painted on the sidewalks of Gyöngyös: "No Vona, no cry," said one slogan, and the other was a drawing of a man throwing a swastika into a trash can.

Due to vandalism, criminal proceedings were initiated against him. We represented him in court and argued that Robert did not commit a crime. On the contrary, he expressed his political opinion during an election campaign by encouraging the population of Gyöngyös to vote against extremist ideologies.

The final judgement of the General Court of Eger ruled that Robert's messages and paintings were not a crime. Partially, this was because the pavement did not incur any permanent damage, as the paintings can be removed with bleach and a brush. What's more, by the time of the court trial the painting had faded. The court also ruled that the signage does not exceed the bounds of constitutionally protected expression and were not dangerous to society. We believe that similar political statements can only benefit our society.

It is essential for citizens to have their say in public affairs and to have access to information on the workings of the state. Freedom of information suffered further restrictions this year, with the government establishing new legislation to try to keep public spending in obscurity. It achieves this by direct public restriction which keeps the data secret, and also by creating hefty reimbursement schemes with unnecessary time limits and extra steps. People may also face unnecessarily high fees to acquire data of public interest: it is not uncommon to ask for hundreds of thousands of forints to photocopy a few contracts. According to a regulation, fees for public data include the hourly wages for data clerks and those civil servants carrying out photocopying services. The hourly wage charged is HUF 4400, as if these officials are earning a monthly wage of HUF 739 200. While the data relates to the spending of public money or the rights exercised by the government, the acquisition of this information by a member of the public may cost a fortune. **In the coming year, we will do everything in our power to ensure that this regulation should not remain in force, so that the currently existing reimbursement scheme cannot block citizens from obtaining public information.**

Requests for data of public interest almost always end up in court, as part of the tactics used to keep information from the public. Instead of sharing public data by the requested target date, public authorities conceal it, prompting the person or organization requesting the information to pursue their claim through legal processes. In order to keep the data secret, the bodies administering it exhaust all possible options of legal remedy, and eventually lose the trial. The data is disclosed but on average it is two years after the expiry of the fifteen-day deadline set by the law. It is rare that a piece of data is worth two years of litigation. The price of the unjustified litigation is also covered by citizens, the very same people from whom the government attempts to hide public data. **The Government Control Office's (KEHI) legal representative accepted a commission fee of one million HUF in order to extend the legal proceedings surrounding the disclosure of information about the Norway Grants as far as possible. The fee was of little use, since as a result of our successful trial, the data was eventually disclosed, revealing that it was Prime Minister Viktor Orbán himself who ordered the exasperation of all the legal process.**



## The Prime Minister's Campaign Against Civil Organizations

We petitioned the Government Control Office (KEHI) for two years in connection with the Norway Grants litigation in 2014. Our aim was to discover who and in what way ordered the Office's president to carry out the enquiry. During the trial, the Office's main reasoning was that its reports – together with the instruction to inspect civil engineering projects - were data-gathering for a governmental decision, and hence were to be shrouded in secrecy for 10 years. Furthermore, the office argued that as simple executers they could not be considered controllers of data. Both arguments are gravely flawed. Fortunately, the Court did not accept the reasoning during the review, and stated that besides the persons ordering the inspection, the Office also controls the data. Otherwise, it would not know what to do with it. Based on a decision made by the Constitutional Court this year, the official order for the inspection cannot be held in secret. This is because the Office's reports cannot be concealed from the public, which the Court extended to the documents regarding the order for the inspection. Finally, in the autumn of 2016 we received an answer: the inspection was ordered by the Prime Minister himself – and as it was later revealed – by no one else. His sedulity in this case is remarkable, alongside his political responsibility and hypocritical involvement in the campaign.

Protest is one of the strongest tools of expression. Someone demonstrating today can expect that their event will be banned in a manner infringing on the law, for vague reasons. It is foreseeable that this offensive practice will be legalized by the Parliament: based on a decision by the Constitutional Court this summer, we expect the options for a preliminary ban in this area to broaden. Legal procedures against protesters based on supposed vandalism or disobedience are increasingly frequent, and participants risk a great deal by having their voices heard on the street.

**Legal aid organizations have much work to do in order to protect the right to protest: to overturn the illegitimate limits of assembly through legal proceedings, help protesters to hold their events in line with their original intentions, and to counterbalance the intimidation of participants by providing legal representation in proceedings against them. We are always there to support protesters, whether it be through legal counselling by telephone or representation in proceedings.** For those who cannot be discouraged by legal proceedings from contributing a critical voice to a democratic republic, intimidating surveillance is envisaged in support of the government.

This year, one of the ministers supervising secret services and the pro-government vice-president of the Committee for National Security both expressed the idea that the surveillance of civil organizations supported by George Soros's foundations would be justified. Even though there was an organization that did find a bug in its office, it is unknown how much of this idea has become reality. The possibility of constant surveillance is enough to induce self-censorship in those who may be affected.

**We are striving to enforce legal safeguards against intimidating surveillance.** In the beginning of 2016, the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg established that it violates the Convention that the right to authorise the collection of classified information lies not with an independent court of justice, but with a member of government.

**In a legal procedure initiated in 2016, we intended to prove that the lack of judicial remedy in cases of secret surveillance is a breach of international conventions. Under the present circumstances, the secret services can easily be used to political ends or even for intimidation.**

The press organs traditionally controlling those in power suffered losses as well. Two weeks after having published a comprehensive analysis of the studies conducted by the Századvég Foundation, the news site VS.hu was practically discontinued. The newspapers based outside of Budapest were passed on to players loyal to the government. A 60-year-old newspaper, Népszabadság, was shut down amid outrageous circumstances.



## A Cynical Attack on the Freedom of Press

On October 8th, a courier delivered a letter to all employees of the longstanding newspaper Népszabadság, notifying them of their suspension: they were not fired but not allowed to work either. They are not allowed in the offices, cannot access their emails or the articles they were working on. The paper has not been published since and the website [nol.hu] and the complete archives are inaccessible. The paper's owner, Mediaworks, has answered with a wall of silence. The employees were not told of the owner's long term plans, the length of their suspensions, or the future of the paper.

HCLU supported the employees of Népszabadság: our experts accompanied them to meetings with the employer and made sure they were not forced into even worse positions than what they'd already found themselves in. **We started two legal processes, one of which has already been decided in our favour as of October.** The court ruled (as was our viewpoint) that Mediaworks had acted unlawfully when they introduced measures gravely affecting a large number of employees without consulting the workers' council first. The court also ruled that Mediaworks is to comply with the principles of good faith, fair dealing and cooperation laid down in the Labour Code.



Real press, especially oppositional press, is virtually nonexistent in Hungary. Its place has been taken by propaganda published by the government and camouflaged as newspapers. The few surviving critical media outlets have extremely limited possibilities: they hardly ever get the chance to ask government politicians about current issues. State institutions and bodies are often annoyed by the media uncovering their excesses. Lately, however, instead of addressing these issues, the answer was to impede further media coverage by simply blocking the journalists' access. **HCLU represented journalists this year in their fight to carry on publishing. We provided legal representation to the journalists of Népszabadság, too, obtaining a court ruling that their suspension was unlawful.**

### **In Defense of the Freedom of Press**

Illés Szurovecz, a journalist with abcug.hu, wanted to write about the situation in Hungarian refugee camps. However, his numerous requests to enter the camps were refused. We filed a report with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg: by denying access to the Hungarian refugee camps to all journalists, Hungarian authorities infringed upon the freedom of press.

In another case, the Speaker of Parliament banned six journalists from Parliament for six months. They had made film recordings in sections of the Parliament corridors where this had been prohibited by the draconian measures of the Speaker. We turned to the Court of Human Rights in this case, too: we argued that the ban was arbitrary. There is no acceptable reason to restrict recording in the corridor sections in question, and the state should justify restrictions of the freedom of press in all cases.







“I am Illés Szurovecz, a journalist at abcug.hu. I contacted HCLU in 2015 because the Office of Immigration and Nationality refused all my requests to gain entry to refugee camps. The camps are state-funded open facilities where asylum seekers freely come and go. Last year, partly due to government propaganda, the issue of migration received a lot of attention. Worrying rumors circulated about the state of the camps. State practice, however, obstructed reporting on how taxpayers’ money was spent and how the state was fulfilling its duties towards asylum seekers. In the end, the photos of a member of the Parliament opposition were published and so the public was able to gain insight into the state of the camps in Körmend and Vámoszabadi. This, however, does not compensate for the lack of reports providing detailed and exact information. I therefore sued the Hungarian state. The procedure is at present before the Strasbourg Court of Human Rights.”



Illés Szurovecz

# SIDESTEPPING LAW – ABUSING POWER

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Our main goal as a human rights organization is to monitor this function of the state and to defend the citizens (you too, dear Reader) from the excesses of those in power.

One of the duties of the state is to promote the rights of all its citizens by creating equal opportunities, e.g. in regards to freedom of expression and access to public education. Our main goal as a human rights organization is to monitor this function of the state and to defend the citizens (you too, dear Reader) from the excesses of those in power. Our experience this year was that private organizations or citizens acting on behalf of the government increasingly operated as if they themselves had a mandate to wield public power. Whatever the situation, we shall always stand up to those infringing upon our basic human rights, even if those in power hide in the garb of civil organizations.

Two forms of abuse of power have become more frequent in 2016. Government activity was defined by the political (and often private) interests of the leaders of the ruling Fidesz party, as opposed to citizens' rights and state duties. The government also employed security firms and thugs to take care of the dirty work, employing tactics which involved miscarriages of justice. The police made the situation even graver by standing idly by. The surreal scene that unfolded at the National Election Office in February 2016 illustrates this perfectly. István Nyakó, a politician of the opposition MSZP Party, wanted to submit a referendum question regarding the obligatory closing of shops on Sundays. Time was a factor: if an issue is submitted for referendum twice by two different persons, the first submission is to be accepted. Collecting signatures to initiate a referendum is a good opportunity for the parties and citizens to express their views. The thugs appearing at the National Election Office expertly positioned themselves so that the question supporting the (then) law to close shops on Sunday was registered.

They thus impeded the opposition from collecting signatures and the citizens from expressing their views. **The events at the National Election Office were but forerunners of those in Városliget (City Park), where the perfectly legal demonstration was suppressed by employees of a private security company while the police passively looked on.** While security guards were physically removing demonstrators from inside the fence and thus actively impeding their right of association, the police sided with the private interests of the contractor and not the fundamental freedoms of the citizens. **HCLU filed a report against the policemen who were present but did not take action while the security personnel confronted the demonstrators aggressively, unlawfully and to an unnecessary extent, over the span of three days.**

Péter Juhász's access to the official celebrations on the national holiday, October 23rd, was also denied by a private firm while the police idly looked on. (Juhász is now a politician of the opposition Együtt Party. Juhász was the employee of the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union between 2008 and 2012.) By denying relevant citizens entry to public state celebrations, the country is deprived of an irreplaceable form of self-expression. Leaders of the state are expected to cope with peaceful criticism of their performance. Again, due to police indifference, physical abuse of several demonstrators also occurred at this time. The security firm employed to uphold the peace did not protect these citizens and the police did not ensure their right to express their opinion without risking physical harm. **The HCLU took this case to the Commissioner of Fundamental Rights, who we expect to declare that peaceful demonstrators have the right to be protected from abuse by the police, who cannot use a private firm as an excuse to ignore their duties towards them.**

## Protecting the Park Protectors

A protection movement organized last spring has been demonstrating against the government decision regarding a Városliget (City Park) development project entirely lacking in professional and social preparations. The activists, calling themselves the Park Protectors, successfully ended the destruction of trees in the park and provided an example of the democratic practice of civil disobedience. The government employed security companies with suspicious backgrounds to secure the project and stop the demonstration and non-violent resistance. The demonstrators' freedom of assembly was violated on a number of occasions with the assistance of the police. Their continuous demonstration was broken up unlawfully by the police through the application of disproportionate force. This was followed by criminal proceedings against the demonstrators, and a conspicuous lack of investigation into the overreach of the security guards. All in all, the police do not care about the responsibility to protect fundamental rights. They only cleared the way for a commercial company (and the security companies that it employs, to be able to enforce their financial and commercial interests. **HCLU has been providing free legal support for the Park Protectors since the very beginning. We provided four people with full legal representation and provided other forms of legal assistance to about sixty people in civil disobedience lawsuits.**



The state and its government must represent all citizens, and cannot work for only a small group. It can have social goals, but it cannot discriminate against certain groups, and cannot exclude certain citizens from the political community. The local government of Miskolc, lead by mayor Ákos Kriza of Fidesz, violates this responsibility by leading an openly anti-Roma policy in the past years. Raids are aimed directly at Roma slums enforcing policies which expel Roma from the city. This gravely violates the Hungarian Roma's rights who live in Miskolc. **Since the local government still continues the discrimination despite numerous legal challenges, we initiated a legal proceeding against them together with the Legal Defence Bureau for National and Ethnic Minorities to compel them to stop their ongoing harassment of the Roma.**

### **I'm not at home in my home country – remembering the raids in Miskolc**

"Once they barged into somebody's house and looked through the bathroom to see if they had toilet paper, they even checked the fridge. They come here quite often, 40 people come from the bureau who enter the homes in pairs or groups of three, but sometimes even more."

"A group of forty uniformed men came. Of course, I was afraid. Can't I feel safe at home in my home country? There is nothing more atrocious."

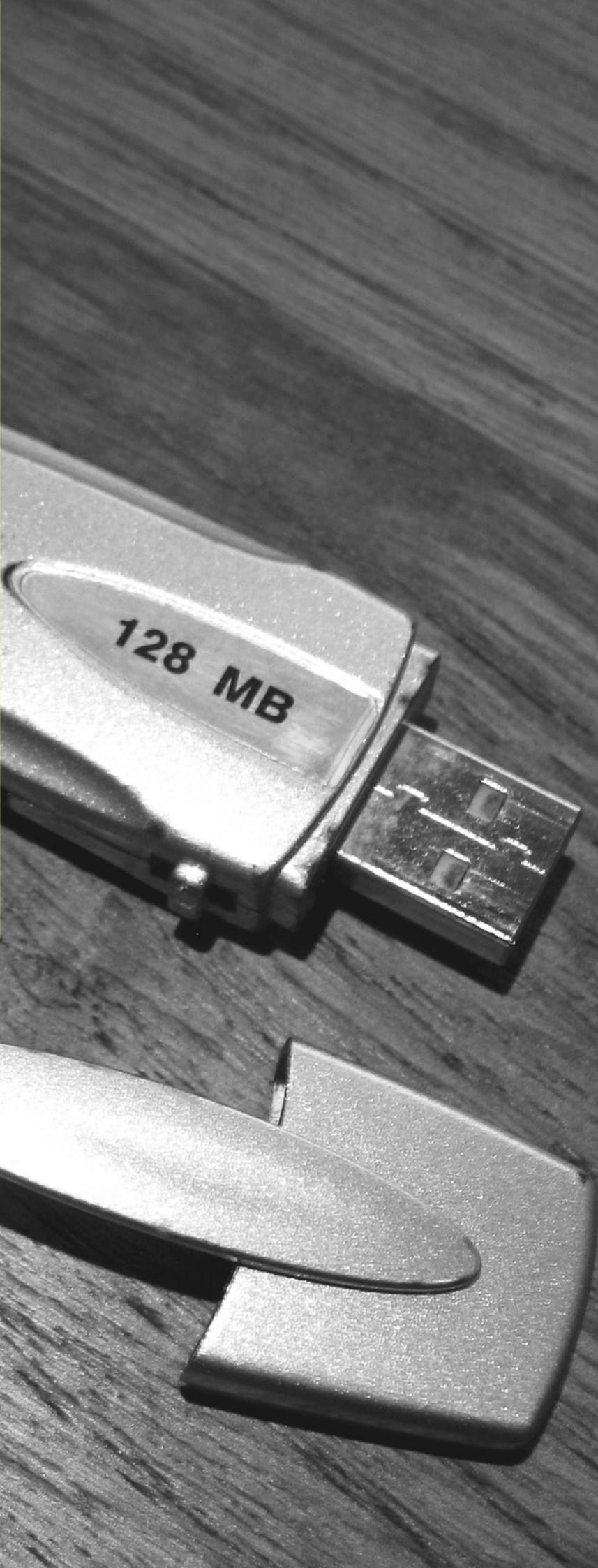
"I was working in my girlfriend's garden when they came. They asked me what I was doing there. Don't I have the right to plant something in a friend's garden? They told me I must pay a 10000 Forint fine. When I went to the local government I expressed that I don't agree with this, that I might have some rights as well, me, who spent a lifetime with work. They replied that the decision is final, I should regard this as a lesson learned."

The local government of Miskolc is not the only authority that treats the Roma as secondary citizens. The radical right-wing mayor of **Tiszavasvári** appointed the League of Honour to control law enforcement. The League was founded by Mihály Zoltán Orosz and Gyula Zagyva, both notorious for their extremist views. The Érpatak of Mihály Zoltán Orosz is based on arbitrary policies that entirely disregard fundamental human rights. Those "vandals" who don't agree with the mayor's orders can expect lawsuits, raids, removal of their children, the withdrawal of social aid, disqualification from public work, and constant harassment and humiliation. **We reported their behavior to the Equal Treatment Authority.**

## **OMG OMZ**

Tiszavasvári is a town in Szabolcs county, where the deteriorating situation of the segregated Roma population has been a constant problem since the fall of communism. The town is known as the capital of Jobbik, and its mayor has decided not to solve local social problems with programs that promote equal opportunities. In 2016, he invited the extremist mayor of Érpatak and his organisation as integration specialists to "sort things out" in the local Roma slums by implementing the "Érpatak Model". Mihály Zoltán Orosz and his men, including Gyula Zagyva, leader of the radical Sixty-Four Counties Youth Movement, completed "slum inspections" (sometimes at night) for two months in collaboration with the local government. The "inspections" consisted of reporting electricity theft, threatening to take children away from families and making social workers clean up garbage. Many of the local Roma community panicked when they heard about the cooperation between the extremists and the local government and they did not let their children go to school. HCLU reported the local government to the Equal Treatment Authority, to stop the "Érpatak model" from spreading in the country. We hope that the ETA will state that the real reason for this cooperation is not to help the Roma, but to intimidate them.

Public authority has also been abused in the area of fiscal transparency. This year's biggest scandal concerns foundations connected to the **Central Bank of Hungary (MNB)**. MNB, governed by György Matolcsy, created foundations and intended to cover up the use of public funds. **Before a law legalizing this cover up entered into force (helped by our amicus curie contribution) the Constitutional Court stated that all funds and monetary assets in the property of the foundations still qualify as public funds.** During this process, it was revealed that the foundations and the circle around György Matolcsy handled public funds as if it was their own money.



## 4 billion spent on 7 pen drives

In 2011 the government commissioned the Századvég Group for a series of public studies worth almost four billion forints. **Our client Hajnalka Joó (previously a journalist for Origó and later for VS.hu) was interested in what information these expensive studies gathered that justified the cost.** We needed to file a series of lawsuits over the course of three years, but in the end, **we were able to oblige the Prime Minister's Office to publish the data.** The process took this long because the government did everything in its power to hide the study results. The Ministry of National Development, although it paid for the studies, claimed they did not handle the data, while the Prime Minister's Office argued the studies were under copyright protection and could serve as information for decisions on new legislation. The government fought so hard to justify their claim that they modified the Act on Information. The court found that the Office did not come up with valid reasons that would justify the studies being withheld and obliged the Office to fulfil the request. The Prime Minister's Office played for time until the very last stage of the decision, and only handed the data over when everything was finalized. This happened on 4 February 2016, 1128 days after the 15-day deadline to hand the studies over. Better late than never.

# THE SNEAKY REGIME

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The state of the health care system, inequalities in education, increasing poverty and the measures taken against the poor all make everyday life more difficult for a growing number of people.

The government is not doing its job: we are living in an on-going campaign, while there is almost no substantive governance. There are many areas, however, that need considerable governmental intervention, as the current situation might lead to catastrophe. The state of the health care system, inequalities in education, increasing poverty and the measures taken against the poor all make everyday life more difficult for a growing number of people. Meanwhile, the government is characterized by enormous corruption scandals. It is assisted by the idleness of prosecutors and the seemingly conscious sabotage of lawsuits. These two phenomena can lead to conflicts that helps extremist political powers gain strength through oversimplified answers.

Due to the political defenselessness in the healthcare system and the horrid state of its resources and equipment, we will soon reach a point where we must admit that there is no access to adequate healthcare in Hungary. Both nurses and residents regularly speak up about the hopeless situation they have been forced into. People cannot be sure that if they suffer an accident or fall ill that they will get proper healthcare. The HCLU has been warning the public about this issue for years. Recently, the dire straits of healthcare in Hungary has been illustrated by a burst of hospital-acquired infections.

## Pursuing hospital-acquired infections

“In Hungary, more people die in hospital-acquired infections than in car accidents.” This was the claim that attracted attention to the case of hospital-acquired infections. It soon came to light that almost all families are affected; the HCLU was receiving a stream of tragic stories. The protagonists many times went to the hospital for a routine procedure, then had to fight a life and death battle with an aggressive infection that they acquired in the hospital. Hospital-acquired infections are responsible for a great number of deaths, and therefore it was obvious that we had to do something to counteract the phenomenon. The hospitals report infections to the National Public Health and Medical Offer Service (ÁNTSZ), which creates a database. In theory, perhaps. The reporting system is not compulsory and it seems like the ÁNTSZ tries to make their public records impossible to understand. Because of this, **we filed a lawsuit against the ÁNTSZ, during the course of which it turned out that they are not willing to communicate even the most basic facts, such as the number of deaths in a year and the number of infection cases in a specific hospital.**

It is very difficult to enact measures to prevent hospital-acquired infections because they are the result of many factors, such as the lack of money and professionals, the state of the infrastructure, and unprofessional healthcare. It is the ÁNTSZ's responsibility to achieve lawful and professional functioning, but it does not do so. Therefore, **we consider it our mission to convince the ÁNTSZ to do its job.**

## No disabled children please!

There are 3500 children with multiple disabilities living in Hungary today. They receive special care in accordance with the act on public education. This is a special category of education, created directly for them with the purpose of providing the children with flexible hours to complete their compulsory education. The children in question receive 20 hours of education a week, in theory. According to the law, the hours can only be reduced if the parents ask for it, but in practice this is different; we can usually see difficulties in transportation, lack of specialized staff, a lack of space in the institutions, and the sense of being locked up as a reason to ask for fewer hours. Many of them receive only a portion of the compulsory hours. The law also states that if according to a professional a child cannot go to school; their individual education can be organized at home or in a specialized institution. This leads to further problems, still only one in three disabled children receives education in a school. The main reason for the exclusion from the school system is the separate category of education itself; we suggested its abolition in a petition to the ombudsman.

The state office responsible for the operating license of hospitals and for monitoring the quality of healthcare does not do its job properly; they extend operating licenses regardless of the insufficiencies that the inspections reveal. Apart from comprehensive healthcare reform, the ministry also needs to establish medical guidelines to regulate medical attendance. Much of the current medical guidelines are out-of-date, which potentially means that healthcare services are based on outdated information. Only the determination of hospital staff keeps the system together. **The situation is illustrated by the fact that our legal aid service received the most requests in the area of rights' infringement in healthcare; in 2016 we answered more than 70 of these requests.**

The idleness of the ministry is also illustrated by the fact that we haven't received a reply since we sent them the suggestions created during our "I'm with a child campaign" 18 months ago. **We have been monitoring how hospitals treat children's rights for two years. These rights include allowing parents to stay beside their children.** Apart from a few examples, our surveys show that there are serious infringements on these rights. Still, our suggestions are falling on deaf ears. **To increase pressure for change, we still collect the stories of parents and families on the webpage [gyerekkelvagyok.tasz.hu](http://gyerekkelvagyok.tasz.hu).**

In education, a movement started in 2016 that has demanded great changes and has directed public attention to the biggest problems. One of the most important foundations for reform is to make education more inclusive. There are still serious problems in the education of children with disabilities; children attending integrated schools many times don't get the additional attention they need to become a true part of the community. Some of the disabled children and their parents still cannot decide freely; either they send their children to a special school, or they receive education in a much lower number of classes than children without disabilities. **We provide legal help for many parents to help their children receive the education that everybody deserves: good quality public education.** The level of segregation has not decreased in education in recent times. In fact, the ministry responsible has many times supported segregation.



## **Zsolt Csaplár – father of Gellért Csaplár**

“We waited 10 years for Gellért to be born but every second of waiting was worth it, we are very happy with him! Gellért is a wonderful, exceptionally talented boy, an excellent student. After he was born we soon saw that his movement did not develop as it naturally should. Since then we have done our best to get to know all kinds of medical, physiological, and special education fields, and we are searching for a way to help Gellért blossom. Because of his talent, it was obvious for us to send him to an integrated kindergarten and school, segregation was not an option. At school, we realized very early that public education was not prepared for integration, it systematically violates human rights and shows no empathy towards children with special educational needs. We are not dealing with positive discrimination, the whole system handles integration as nuisance, the only positive factor it sees is the additional money. It can be seen clearly that the quality of integration depends solely on the attitude and humanity of the teachers directly working with the children.

Our rights had been violated countless times in the public education system, some situations were very bad. **The most extreme case was probably when the teacher left Gellért, in the classroom, locked up for a whole afternoon, while she accompanied the other children to the school grounds to play. Gellért cannot walk alone and never speaks at school, so he cannot ask for help if he needs it.** During the past years, we had to fight in vain on many occasions and we many times stopped, saying there is no point in fighting. Many times, we felt so vulnerable, that in complete hopelessness we started thinking about sending Gellért to a different school, or maybe home-schooling him, but we found HCLU. They stood by us when we were about to give up, but we understood that with emotional and professional support we can continue fighting. **HCLU gave us hope back, gave us strength to carry on with the fight, that we will never give up.”**



The problems in healthcare and education affect the poorest the most; this results in frightening health indicators and a decreased chance of breaking out of poverty. In addition to this, poor people are generally represented in state policies and communication as if they were the ones responsible for the situation they are in. This attitude is even more drastic at the local government level: **in 2016 we challenged 4 policies that were aimed at punishing the poor and the Roma for their circumstances.** The most typical example was the linking of housing aid to a number of conditions, which leads to the violation of the rights of those living in poverty. As a part of the government's anti-poor policy, local governments have discretion whether or not to provide aid to households that have problems maintaining their property. The previous housing aid guaranteed by law was especially important because of its universality and because of the great number of people who can barely keep up their household from their monthly salary. By giving the discretion to local governments this aid became uncertain, which in most cases affects those that most desperately need it.

## Missing Memories

In Hungary, there are an increasing number of children living away from their family in foster care. The primary reason for breaking up families is still (directly or indirectly) the extreme poverty of families, although this is prohibited by law. Roma families are overrepresented among marginalized social classes, and there is a disproportionate number of Roma families who have been ripped apart. Furthermore, social workers are often affected by their own prejudices, which contributes to more Roma children being unlawfully taken from their parents. In the case of jeopardy due to financial reasons (such as child starvation, housing problems) the task of the state is not to break families apart, but to provide opportunities that would help them escape poverty, stop child hunger, and solve problems with housing. This is why we represent such families, with great success. **In 2016 we were able to return 7 children back to their families.**



EGY ÉVRE RÁ  
TERHES LETTEM  
JAZMINKÁVAL.

ÖRÜLTÜNK NEKI  
NAGYON. TERVEZETTÜK  
HOGY ÉS MINT LESZ  
KÖZÖSEN. MOST MÁR  
HÁRMAN LESZÜNK,  
MI EGYÜTT EGY IGAZI  
=CSALÁD=



NAGY VOLT AHAJA, KIS MASNIT TETTEK BELE AZ ORVOSOK.

2010. MÁRCIUS 13-ÉN  
MEGSZÜLETETT AZ  
ÉN KICSIM, JÁZMIN  
ANDREA, 2 KILO  
7 DEKAVAL.



## Don't Take Our Children Away

“They took my children away from me in 2011. They said it was because of poverty. I didn't get help from anyone. They made us go to the local council, two cars and policemen escorted them to the foster parents. I tried to get them back but it was very hard. I got a year to sort the house out. It took one and a half years for us to move to a more comfortable house. I was asking to get my children back in vain, it was too late by then. Only a parent can understand how painful this is for a mother. I did everything I could, I fought until I could to get my children back. **I asked the HCLU for help and after two years of lawsuits my children could finally come back home this year. The court declared that a child's place is at home. With four children, we are going to be a big, happy family again.**” - Barbara Takács. The speech was delivered in front of the Ministry of Human Capacities on Universal Children's Day on 20 September 2016.



One of the most flagrant examples of the government's ambivalence is the field of drug policy: although they promise a drug-free society in high-sounding statements, they have in fact created a public health emergency by disabling harm reduction, and they are nothing more than passive observers to the spread of designer drugs. The use of the “drug user” label as a negative attribute is part of the government's communication strategy: government communications tried to discredit a group of activists called Ligetvédők (Park Protectors) based on some herbal tea found in their camp, and the label is also often attached to Péter Juhász, who relentlessly reveals corruption cases. (Péter Juhász was a HCLU staff member between 2008 to 2012.)

## No drug use without a stigma

In the midst of their scapegoating campaign, the government rediscovered drug users and reintroduced the practice of maligning them by attaching the ‘junkie’ label to them. This practice has been applied on several occasions this year. Without any factual evidence, it spread through the media that new, dangerous drugs were making their way around the country due to the entrance of refugees and immigrants. In order to weaken their critics in the public eye, the government also played the ‘junkie card’ against an opposition politician, as well as against the Ligetvédők (Park Protectors), a group of activists who oppose the execution of the Városliget (City Park) project. This practice further aggravates public opinion of drug users, who are excluded from society more than any other group, according to a survey conducted in 2016. A flagrant example of this is the story of two pregnant drug users, who were deeply condemned by all sides. Only a few expert opinions shed light on the fact that there might have been other factors that played a role in these cases besides personal responsibility. The stigma on drug users has even spread over to organizations aiming to help them, which makes it increasingly difficult to provide care and support for one of the most vulnerable groups in society.

In the meantime, designer drugs that pose serious health-threats to users are spreading around the country. However, the government's actions don't reach further than updating the list of prohibited drugs, while stopping the spread of these drugs and protecting the health of users is not among their priorities.

## Designer drugs are at their peak

Police seizures, studies conducted in small towns, and the experiences of relief organizations all indicate that cheap designer drugs with unknown chemical compositions and unpredictable effects have become widespread in disadvantaged rural regions, although they are found in large cities as well. Their penetration is the most alarming in poor villages where illegal drugs had a marginal presence before, and many users belong to the age group of 10-14 years. The government's number one weapon, the blacklisting of every new substance, has failed to stop the spread of these designer drugs. Even worse, it has resulted in the weekly or monthly appearance of new substances with an unknown chemical composition and strength. This new challenge requires a multi-faceted approach and more resources for prevention, harm reduction, treatment and research, but the national budget for 2016 did not allocate sufficient subsidies for carrying out these tasks. Prevention reaches only a fraction of schools, the largest harm reducers are forced to redefine their profiles, while treatment facilities struggle with a lack of resources and a shortage of professionals. The government is not willing to listen to the opinion of experts and terminates essential services like the needle exchange program, one of the most useful initiatives for preventing infections.

However ineffective the government has been when solving problems in health care, education, or poverty alleviation, it has been roundly successful in avoiding being called to account for misusing public money. According to two-third of Hungarians, financial misconduct characterizes the Hungarian government to a large or a very large extent. However, there has been no effective answer to the corruption scandals that unfold on a weekly basis. The prosecution either sees no reasonable basis to initiate the investigation or they conduct a superficial investigation that ends without filing formal charges. The misuse of public money and the non-transparent allocation of subsidies show that the Hungarian government is a bad manager of the money we have entrusted to them.

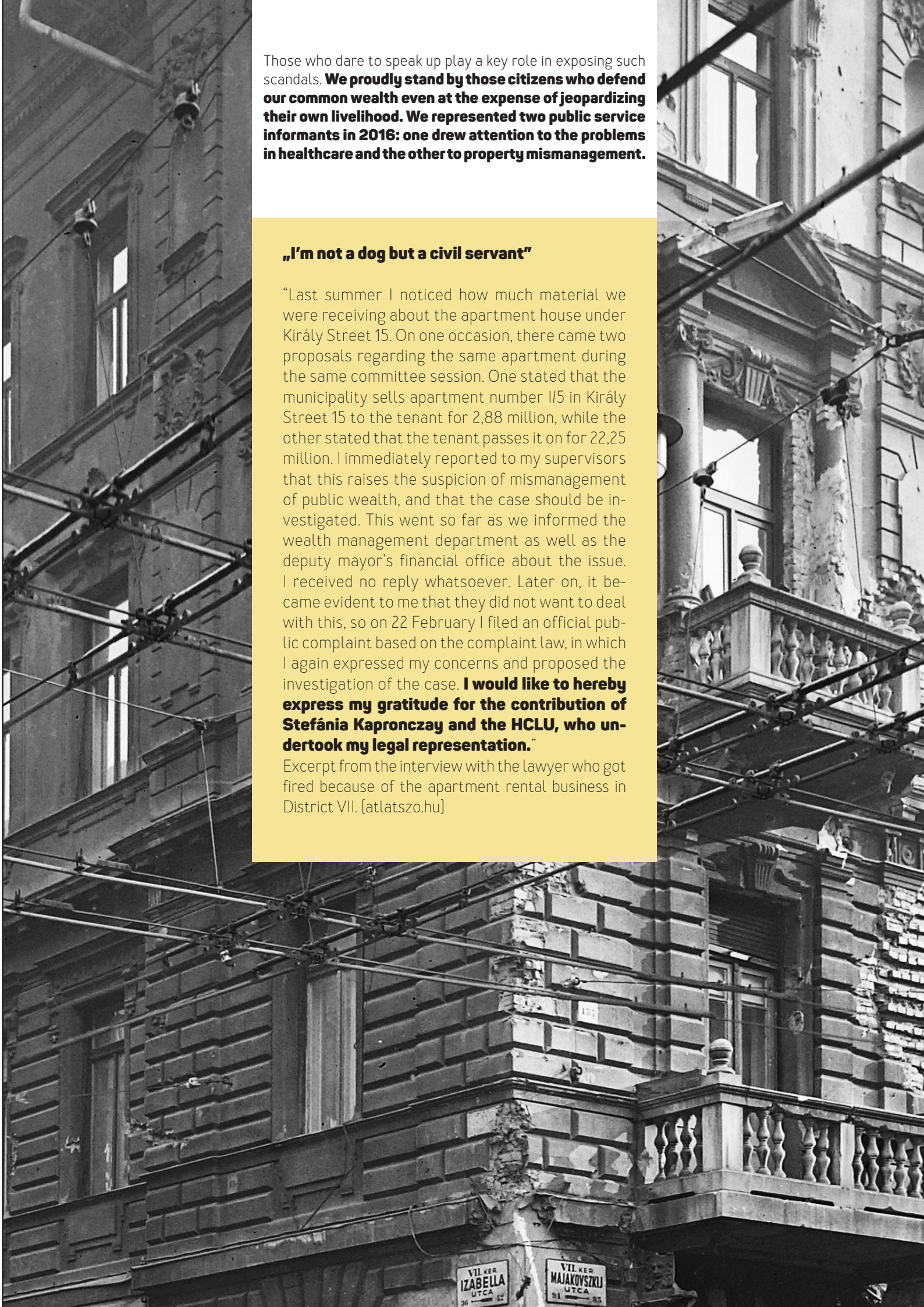


## Does the government openly turn against the policy of deinstitutionalization?

There are 23,000 disabled people in Hungary who live in isolation in large facilities, often against their will. These people have the right to live in smaller communities, and it is our obligation to facilitate this, based on international conventions. The government has shown a commitment to abolish large facilities in recent years: they cooperated in the development of a successful strategy to close down 6 facilities. In autumn, a call for an EU tender of 35 billion forints came for further deinstitutionalization, with the intent to make 8-10,000 people's life more livable. But the tender contains serious professional errors: it does not permit the closure of facilities, and enables the setup of facilities for 25 people. It is also possible to spend 9 million to vacate one person, but this kind of money wastage takes away the opportunity from others to leave the facility. These decisions are made without taking the professionals' opinion into account. In the meantime, there came another call for a tender, which revealed that they will in fact not close the existing facilities. On the contrary, they will renovate them for 3,8 billion forints! On top of the make-believe solutions and the misinterpretation of the concept of subsidized housing, this tender openly turns away from the former policy of deinstitutionalization. HCLU, similarly to other organizations, warned the government to rewrite their tenders.

„My name is Gábor Binder and I will turn 30 this year. I am of sound mind but I was pronounced mentally disabled. I spend my days under full guardianship in a social facility in a rural city, and I fight. I fight for the recognition that I am not different from others, and that I have just as much right to decide about my life as you do, who are now reading these few lines. And yes, I say it out loud that this system is inhumane. Inhumane are the facilities, where the person, the individual vanishes and where you should be glad if they don't humiliate you completely under the banner of care and treatment. Inhumane is the guardianship system you are thrown into without a proper examination whether such action is necessary. And that only causes more suffering. It is inhumane that all my decisions depend on a stranger, when I am already restrained by my illness. It is inhumane that they don't consider me the same as a human being. Luckily, there are still some who try to help. I'd have no chance to get out of this system without the help of Márk Pető, a lawyer at HCLU. This is what we are working on now, so that I can live with the help of a social worker instead of the full guardianship, and handle those areas of my life that were unduly taken away from me back then. I bring a suit to retrieve my capacity to exercise my rights.”





Those who dare to speak up play a key role in exposing such scandals. **We proudly stand by those citizens who defend our common wealth even at the expense of jeopardizing their own livelihood. We represented two public service informants in 2016: one drew attention to the problems in healthcare and the other to property mismanagement.**

### **„I’m not a dog but a civil servant”**

“Last summer I noticed how much material we were receiving about the apartment house under Király Street 15. On one occasion, there came two proposals regarding the same apartment during the same committee session. One stated that the municipality sells apartment number 1/5 in Király Street 15 to the tenant for 2,88 million, while the other stated that the tenant passes it on for 22,25 million. I immediately reported to my supervisors that this raises the suspicion of mismanagement of public wealth, and that the case should be investigated. This went so far as we informed the wealth management department as well as the deputy mayor’s financial office about the issue. I received no reply whatsoever. Later on, it became evident to me that they did not want to deal with this, so on 22 February I filed an official public complaint based on the complaint law, in which I again expressed my concerns and proposed the investigation of the case. **I would like to hereby express my gratitude for the contribution of Stefánia Kapronczay and the HCLU, who undertook my legal representation.**”

Excerpt from the interview with the lawyer who got fired because of the apartment rental business in District VII. [atlatzo.hu]

Even though the European Court of Human Rights has ruled that the Hungarian Church Act violates the EU agreement, the government still has not introduced a bill that would address the problem. The Court's decision, according to which the church act violates fundamental rights and requiring the state to pay compensation, has been definitive for two years as of 2016. There is still no new act, and the state still prefers to use our money to pay the costs of the infringement.

### **Forbears, bans, supports**

Since 2010 the government has restricted freedom of conscience more substantially. Church policy is part of this process: with the 2011 church act that empowered the National Assembly to recognize religious communities as churches, and deprived hundreds of churches of their legal status, the state monopolized Hungarian citizens' religious life. Although the act was considered to be unlawful both by the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights following the complaints of the religious communities we represent, the government has still not provided appropriate moral, legal and financial amends to the religious communities who had been deprived of their rights. The unlawful act is shamefully still in force, and the government brazenly refuses to modify it in accordance with the standards of the constitution and European human rights. The government supports the religious life of privileged churches more generously and with more privileges than ever before – for example, in public education only churches that are recognized by the National Assembly can teach religious studies, which is an elective course-unit; also, the number of schools that have been taken over by churches recognized by the National Assembly has significantly increased. Thus, they continuously and increasingly violate the requirement of the state's ideological neutrality in regards to its citizens.



# “IT IS OVER WHEN WE SAY IT IS OVER”

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There is civil activity despite all the efforts of the people in power.

There is civil activity despite all the efforts of the people in power. In spite of the fact that in Hungary there is a general aloofness from politics, an increasing number of citizens have begun – alone or with others – to deal with political matters that interest them. Movements are organized, rise and often disappear, but continue their lives in the next generation of activism. Breakthrough success has not yet been achieved. Still, they provide more basis for hope than the activities of those whose profession is politics. **In order to protect the rights of citizens who take action in public affairs more actively and to develop active citizenship, we have established our network of attorneys, which offer legal representation to those who have been harmed due to the exercising of their liberties.**

In the first half of the year we witnessed the plaid-shirted movement, which was organized in reaction to the untenable state of public education. Teachers, students, parents and sympathizers voiced their opinions –undertaking huge personal risks at the same time. They formulated demands, organized demonstrations, mobilized large crowds, and introduced many students to their first experience of political involvement. In the middle of the year, organizations in Budapest protesting against logging were in the spotlight, among them Ligetvédők – an organization protecting Városliget, the biggest green area in Budapest. Thanks to their street operations many citizens learned that these organizations find the authenticity of official data on park investments doubtful, and they were able to generate a debate about investments involving logging. The issue of logging made many previously passive citizens in Budapest actively participate in public life. This year, groups that deal with the affairs of people with disabilities and parents’ rights have experienced phenomenal empowerment this year. They are gaining more experience expressing and asserting their own interests, and at the same time the number of their members is increasing. **We support the demonstrators and outbound movements with counselling. We give them advice on how to enforce their demands, what their rights are and what they need to take care of while exercising them.**

“My name is Komáromy Gergő (G Ras), I’m a musician. Because of the ‘creative rethinking’ of some anti-refugee posters, it was last year that I first got into a situation where I needed reliable legal help, then also when I participated in the movement of Ligetvédők this year. Of course, I’m not a successful oligarch or a politician who is a member of the currently ‘strong’ team, that’s why I do not have an own mercenary army of lawyers, and/or I am still amenable to law. The support of HCLU has meant a lot, they gave me advice and helped with administration or anything necessary. Obviously, it saddens me that in our country the current response of the people in power to the civil guts – which is extremely peaceful and non-violent; not a real threat to society but serves the interests of the community, humanity, compassion, constructive cooperation, responsibility, encouragement of the basic human and civil rights, as well as justice; and also, keeps a sustainable present and future in mind – is the severest possible punishment. There is a series of attacks which does not stop at cynical and continuous nastiness, severe lawlessness, and even physical violence. Besides, it ruthlessly uses state bodies and the police for selfish political and economic purposes against the population. However, in return it gave us strength and hope that in spite of all these facts, beside the inspiringly powerful public support there were for example many legal professionals who immediately felt the moral duty to advocate for the activists. **It is comforting and hopeful that even in the present situation, even if one gets into a risky situation in a politically sensitive topic merely for following his or her conscience, one can still count on the service of enthusiastic, committed, idealistic, yet authentic and professional helpers free of charge, who offer their help in the field of law and legality simply based on their principles.**”





Civil action is only able to encourage more citizens to take part in political activity if it has tangible success, because such actions bring a sense of achievement to the participants. **In 2016 such a successful civil action was a protest against the government's intentions to make the institution of registered partnership meaningless. In one day, two thousand people joined the protest organized – among others – by us, which convinced the supporters of the amendment to withdraw their proposal.** The strength of the joint action helped to turn back the government.



In autumn, civil opinion again became prominent during the anti-refugee referendum campaign. In 2016, we saw not only the government's massive propaganda campaign in regards to this issue (which cost billions of Forints) but also the Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party's posters. These posters flooded the streets and were financed by private donations and put out by volunteers. They campaigned together with twenty-five non-governmental organizations for the invalidation of the referendum. The largest demonstration against the referendum were also organized by civilians in the campaign.

**Before the 2016 anti-refugee referendum, the HCLU has never taken a stance on a matter up for popular vote. However, during the "hate campaign" we argued for casting invalid ballots.** We have not campaigned before because as a legal aid and watchdog organization, our mission is to provide legal assistance for the exercise of fundamental rights, e.g. voting rights, if the process complies with constitutional principles and human rights. The referendum of 2 October, met these special circumstances: it was inconsistent with human dignity. It was an unlawful referendum that did not give real decision-making rights to the public, made a mockery of institutions that declare popular will, and deceived voters. For these reasons, we took part in the campaign.



## Send a message to the government: Vote invalidly!

The high number of invalid votes in the referendum was unprecedented, which suggests that it should be considered as a clear message. In the EU referendum of 2004 barely 0.49% of the votes – only every 200th vote- were found to be invalid. From the NATO referendum of 1997 to the invalid referendum of 2004, which sought to make it easier for ethnic Hungarians beyond the border to naturalize, this number has always been at or around 1% and has never exceeded about 2%. Hungarian voters can vote validly - if they want to. In this year's referendum, however, 6.17% of the votes were found to be invalid, meaning every 16th voter declared their vote invalid. So, there is reason to believe that with these votes, voters are sending the message that they respect democracy, and value participation even if they do not support the available options.

One of the most important lessons of the referendum is that there are many people in Hungary who think that we should not contribute to inhuman and hypocritical referendums. **The number of those not participating or casting invalid votes was higher than ever, therefore it is safe to say that there are still people in this country who find human rights important.** They still pay attention when non-governmental organizations pointing out that a referendum is inhuman. To these people, it still matters that a referendum is the chance for the people to exercise their power. They are the ones who raise their voice when a government ridicules the institution of the constitution.

A Hungary that respects equal human rights can only be born if there are more of these people. We are working with all our resources to make that happen.



# ABOUT HCLU

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**Without whom there would have been less freedom in 2016. Thanks to our colleagues we stand up for freedom every day in courtrooms, training courses, conferences, professional consultations, in the press, in urban universities and small villages.**

## OUR COLLEAGUES IN 2016:

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Márton Asbóth, Levente Baltay, Balázs Bartakovics, Zoltán Bognár, Róbert Bordás, Ilona Borros, Dalma Dojcsák, Péter Erdey, Éva Médea Ferencz, Zoltán József Fazekas, Tünde Fekete, Borbála Fernezelyi, Gabriella Harmat, Szabolcs Hegyi, Fanny Hidvégi, dr. Tivadar Hüttl, Andrea Jokán, Eszter Jovánovics, Gábor Juhász, Stefánia Kapronczay, Tamás Kardos, Mátyás Kálmán, Anna Kertész, Anita Koncsik, János Mécs, Dominika Milanovich, Attila Mráz, Kata Nehéz-Posonyi, Gábor Nónay, Márk Pető, Nóra Perlik, Norbert Schmidt, Ádám Surányi, Máté Dánie Szabó, Zsolt Szegedi, András Szeles, Anita Tóth, Judit Torma, Réka Várkonyi, Réka Velényi, Tamás Verdes, Beatrix Vissy, Rita Zágoni, Judit Zeller

**The daily tasks of HCLU are carried out by colleagues, mandate lawyers and volunteers. The Management Board and the Supervisory Board support the fieldwork behind articles published in the press, arguments at the court and signatures collected in the street. We are proud to have a varied Management Board, Supervisory Board, and experts from various fields who contribute to the development of TASZ strategy and sustainability. The work detailed in this report could not have been done without them.**

## MANAGEMENT BOARD:

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**Ágota Bíró, trainer, organizational development consultant, facilitator, coach**

Ágota has experience in education, learning, organizational development, training, coaching, mentoring and projects related to all the above. She started her career as a teacher of Art and English in an alternative school. She has worked as a facilitator, trainer, consultant and project manager for international projects since 2008. She became interested in executive coaching in 2013. All activities are related to learning, but not within the traditional school framework: she has coached young executives, worked with executives of multinational companies and civil activists in Hungary and many countries in Europe. She developed training programs for secondary school students in 20 European countries with the intent of making their schools more receptive, and also organized conferences and other events. Methodologically she is most interested in facilitating cooperation between people of very different backgrounds, i.e. enabling the voice of the public to be heard at the decision-making level. She has been conducting self-awareness programs in various forms (individual therapy, movement groups, group self-reflection) in order to be able to work with people in the most efficient way possible or to understand the obstacles hindering individual and community development.



**Ernő Kállai, social researcher**

He was born in Budapest in 1969. He has studied history, sociology, politology, journalism, and law. He has worked as a piano accompanist and music teacher in primary and secondary schools, and as a secondary dormitory educator. He has worked as a journalist and in a civil organization doing legal work. He is a founding member of the Institute for Ethnic and National Minority Studies at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and head of the Romology Research Group. In recent years, he has worked as a university lecturer, and was the head of department as a college professor. Between 2007 and 2013 (when the post was terminated), he worked as a parliamentary commissioner for national and ethnic minority rights. In the last decade, he has published more than 120 different scientific studies and several hundreds of scientific presentations as a member and leader of numerous research programs. During his work as a lecturer he supervised several dozens of theses, he conducted several thousand exams and lectured on a dozen subjects, and has received accreditation in several educational programs.



**Judit Sándor, lawyer, bioethicist, professor at the CEU**

She completed her legal studies in Budapest, at the Faculty of Law of the Loránd Eötvös University. She passed the bar exam in 1988 in Budapest, and in 1991 she worked for the London-based Simmons & Simmons firm. In 1993 she studied comparative constitutional law and acquired an LL.M. degree. She continued her studies in 1993 and 2013 in New York, in 1996 in Paris, and conducted research in 1998 at Stanford University, California. She is the author and editor of eight books related to law and health care law, and has published numerous studies in English, Hungarian and French. She received her Ph.D. degree in 1996. She has been lecturing at Central European University since 1993. She is currently teaching courses at the University's Department of Legal Studies, Department of Political Sciences and Department of Gender Studies. She was the head of the UNESCO Bioethical Program in 2004-2005. She cooperated in numerous domestic and international legislative projects. In Autumn of 2005, she established The Center for Ethics and Law in Biomedicine at CEU (CELAB). She participated in about fifteen projects supported by the European Committee. She has worked as a lawyer, researcher, lecturer and consultant in numerous areas of human rights and bioethics in Hungarian, French and English.



**Tamás Szigeti, researcher**

He received his law degree in 2009 from ELTE, and found his place in the Hungarian civil sector. He has worked for Transparency International Hungary, and after that for HCLU, and has also participated in several research projects at the Eötvös Károly Institute. At HCLU he was first an intern (Informational Rights Program), later a colleague (Freedom of Expression Program), and finally head of program until 2011. After HCLU he had the opportunity to study at Oxford University as a Weidenfeld Fellow. There he became Magister Juris in 2012, after which he received his Master of Philosophy degree in 2013 with a dissertation on the dissolution of political parties. He is currently continuing his PhD research in political freedom of speech at the same institution. His publications about human rights have been mainly published on Szuverén.hu, and professional publications in the Fundamentum journal. Tamás is HCLU's legal consultant in areas of freedom of information, freedom of political rights and anti-discrimination.

## SUPERVISORY BOARD:

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### **Gábor Békés, economist**

Senior research fellow at the Centre for Economic and Regional Studies, Institute of Economics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Bólyai Fellow at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Guest Lecturer at CEU and member of the London-based CEPR European economic network. His research topics include international economics, corporate site selection and productivity and regional economics. He received his master's degree in economics from London School of Economics in 2000. He worked for the Lehman Brothers bank between 2000 and 2002. He received his PhD degree in 2007 from CEU. In recent years, he has worked for the research programs of the European Committee and the European Central Bank. He has publications in leading international journals, and has blogged for VOXEU.org and Defacto. He is currently teaching data analysis and regional and urban economics at the Central European University. In 2016 he published a book about European competitiveness.



### **Barna Baráth, economist**

A member of the Green School in Bali's Board of Trustees and former Chief Strategy Officer and member of the Board of Directors of Vertis Environmental Financial Zrt. The aim of Green School is to educate green leaders who wish to take measures in the present and in the future to attain a sustainable world. Before Green School, Barna was the CEO of Vertis for 12 years, a pioneer company in the emissions trading market. Vertis has always considered its responsibility to be to educate and inform the public on climate change. Within this framework it organized the "Take Back" secondary school educational program, the Hungarian premiere of the movie "The Age of Stupid", as well as the Hungarian publication of the bestseller "Sustainable Energy - without the hot air". Barna has previously worked for international companies in Central Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States, in strategic, financial and information technology areas. Barna received his degree in Economics from UCLA, Los Angeles and also studied corporate finance at the London Business School.



### **Márta Nagy, Vice President of the Hungarian Competition Authority**

She was born in Sárszentmiklós in 1947. After graduating from Karl Marx University of Economics she taught corporate economics and inventory management there for seven years. In the state administration, she was first involved in inventory management in the National Office of Material and Price and from mid-80s in preparing competition regulation. From 1991 she was the head of the Competition Policy Office of the Hungarian Competition Authority, and from 1997-2009 she was its Vice President. From 2011 to 2014 she was first a member and later the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Budapest City Management Holding. She is currently a member of the Alternative Secondary School of Economics Foundation's Board of Trustees, president and member of the Supervisory Board of the Association for Human Rights, vice president of the Volt Istvánosok Baráti Kör, and president of the Hungarian Trade-mark Association's audit committee.

# STATISTICS

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**44 volunteers** took part in our work  
they have spent **659 hours** with us and they offered help in the following:  
demonstration observation, photography, data recording, organization of conferences, professional consulting, translation, proofreading, press conference organization, banner painting, event management, brainstorming, video recording and editing, collecting signatures, workshop management, online research, video subtitling, voice digitization, festival, campaign organization

APeople who helped us a lot: Zoltán Csernatony, Laura Hajdu, Joseph Foss, Géza Makay, Krisztián Molnár, Zsuzska Molnár, Márton Rác, Andi Simándi, Balu Simics, Fanni Török.

**Thank you for your work!**

**IN 2016 WE PROVIDED REPRESENTATION IN 118 INDIVIDUAL CASES,  
AND  
IN 181 CASES WE ATTENDED THE COURT HEARINGS AND TRIALS.**

THIS MEANS THAT ON ALMOST EVERY DAY OUT OF **199 WORKDAYS** WE WERE THERE TO SUPPORT A CITIZEN WHO NEEDED OUR HELP.

**WE ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE LEGAL REPRESENTATION AT EVERY CITY, TOWN AND VILLAGE OF HUNGARY. AMONG OTHERS, OUR ATTORNEYS REPRESENT CLIENTS** IN BUDAPEST, CSÖRNYEFÖLDE, VÖRÖSTÓ, ÖKÖRITÓFÜLPÖS, MOHÁCS, BÉKÉSCSABA, GYÖNGYÖS, NYÍREGYHÁZA.

OUR PETITION FOR THE MISSING MEMORIES CAMPAIGN WAS SIGNED BY **2176** PEOPLE

OUR PETITION FOR THE RIGHT TO LOVE FREELY CAMPAIGN WAS SIGNED BY **2372** PEOPLE

**3483** NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS  
**14709** PEOPLE READ OUR 2016 MOST SUCCESSFUL BLOG POST ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION

### **Quotes from our most read writings:**

“We are working against children being taken away from their families, which is illegal and largely concerns Roma families, since even the biggest and rarest success, family integration, cannot substitute for the lost period of time, for the parent and child trauma caused by taking a child away from its family.” (Ilona Boros: Lives ruined for nothing)

“It seems almost everybody has a personal story about death caused by infection in hospital. I cannot even begin to imagine how many people there are in the country who lost their loved one due to an infection they got in a hospital. And their family and relatives have to cope with these completely incomprehensible deaths on their own, while nobody has the courage to say: we made a mistake. And we are sorry.” (Márton Asbóth: Hospital infections: stories about family tragedies pour in)

It is important therefore that we never forget that we are fighting for operational health care, let us not give up on the ones who are most in need. Namely, it is not only a general human norm to represent the interests of those who are not in a position to represent themselves, but it is the norm of the society, too, to keep their citizens as healthy as possible.” (Borbála Fernezelyi: Keeping your head down at the doctor’s II.)

Is it our right to protect our conversations, messages and files from unauthorized people the same way as we have the right to close our flat’s or car’s door? Would we be safer if we did not close the door of our house or car? Would it be safe if we had not encrypted our more sensitive messages? No, what is more, it would make us even more vulnerable. (Máté Dániel Szabó: The government would like to ban a lock on your door)



# MEDIA APPEARANCES

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TV APPEARANCES:

**117**

RADIO APPEARANCES:

**94**

PRESS:

**235**

NUMBER OF BLOG POSTS:

**77**

OUR FB POST WITH THE HIGHEST REACH:

**185 000**

"School leaving exam application opportunities getting narrower only 24 hours before the application deadline"

## VIDEOS:

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### **OUR MOST POPULAR VIDEO:**

4 BILLION ON 7 PENDRIVES - WE HAVE ACQUIRED  
THE SZÁZADVÉG STUDIES

**78.000**

"There are documents for which it is worth starting a three-year long trial, a document like this has been published by the Office of the Prime Minister. The studies were handed over 1335 days after the first data demand and 1128 days after the 15-day legal deadline for answering the data demand happened. This is 75 times the deadline."

### **3 HIGHLIGHTED VIDEOS FROM 2016**

#### NORBERT FARKAS' STORY: IF YOU STAND UP FOR YOURSELF, YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF IN COURT! **37.000**

"Norbert Farkas had been in state care as a child and raised his voice against the atrocities he had experienced, but due to his outspokenness found himself in court. He received help through our network of lawyers. We presented the activity of our network of lawyers through clients whose story goes beyond their personal experience and who fight against problems appearing on a systemic level together with HCLU."

#### MISSING MEMORIES: ANDREA JÁZMIN'S STORY **7.600**

"Within the frame of the "Missing memories" campaign we have prepared an animation movie and several documentaries about the Roma Program. Luca Markó's animation presents Jázmin's story, who grew up in a loving family until she was 4, when a minibus came from the child protection services and the girl was taken into foster care. The time she spent away from family cannot be replaced. Gergő Matos compiled the audio and music for the animation based on real life stories."

#### NO WORRIES! CAMPAIGN VIDEOS **248.000 TOTAL VIEWS**

"Our videos call attention to the dangers of mobile phone use, email use and browsing on the Internet. We have collected apps ensuring the safe use of telecommunication devices on nopara.org website; Edward Snowden's personal message can also be found here, as well as comprehensive textual and multimedia content."

## **In 2016 we have worked together with:**

Anti-Defamation League,  
The City is For All Group,  
Alternative Foundation,  
Amnesty International Hungary,  
Art Era Foundation,  
Artemisszió Foundation,  
atlatszo.hu,  
Autonomy Foundation,  
With the power of humanity Foundation,  
Hungarian Baptist Aid Street Front,  
Gypsy Social and Cultural Methodological Centre  
Cirko-Geysér Cinema,  
Civil College Foundation  
Civil Media,  
CSEVE Group (Together We Stand a Chance),  
Csillagház Primary School,  
Demnet Foundation,  
Dialogue Association,  
Drug Prevention Association (DPA),  
Energy Club,  
European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC),  
Eötvös Károly Policy Institute (EKINT),  
Chance for Children Foundation (CFCF),  
Northern Stronghold Association,  
Faág Baráti Kör (Branch Circle of Friends),  
FÉSZAK ((Inn) North Abaúj Community Development Association),  
Editor-in-Chief's Forum Hungary  
Independent Media Centre,  
Greenpeace Hungary,  
Habitat for Humanity Foundation,  
Association of the Multiply Disadvantaged in Heves County,  
Háttér Society,  
Human Platform,  
Integrated Drug Therapy Institute (INDIT),  
Igazgyöngy Foundation,  
Jogriporter Foundation,  
K-Monitor,  
Kárpátok Foundation,  
Blue Point Foundation,  
Blue Line Child Crisis Foundation,  
Khetanipe Association (for Roma Unity),  
School of Public Life,  
Hungarian Helsinki Committee,  
Media Legal Defence Initiative,  
Mental Disability Advocacy Centre,  
Asylum Association,  
Shelter Foundation,  
NANE Women's Rights Association,  
Office for National and Ethnic Minority Rights Protection  
NIOK Foundation,  
Nógrád County Roma Minority Representatives and Advocates Association  
Women's Lobby Foundation,  
Hungarian Environmental Partnership Foundation,

Patent Association,  
PILnet Hungary,  
Political Capital,  
Republikon Institute,  
Roma Education Fund,  
Roma Press Centre,  
Soteria Foundation,  
SOS Children's Villages Hungary,  
Sex-workers' Advocacy Association,  
Women's Association for Birth Rights in Hungary,  
Social Research Institute,  
Transparency International Hungary,  
UNICEF Hungary,  
Streetlawyer Association

## **Civil networks, associations we are members of:**

Hungarian Harm Reduction Association,  
Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN),  
European Liberties Platform,  
IFEX,  
International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC),  
International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations (INCLO),  
Hungarian Association of NGOs for Drug Prevention and Harm Reduction,  
Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC)

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Thank you for your donations!

## HOW ARE WE FUNDED?

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The mission of TASZ is to protect basic human rights from abuses of state power. We do not accept support from the Hungarian State or Hungarian political parties. Our budget is exclusively covered by grants and donations by individuals to which ethical regulations apply.

The financial support necessary for the effective operation of TASZ is ensured by individuals, companies and private foundations who are supporting our work in the form of donations, free services and allocation of 1% of their tax payments. In order to preserve our independence and power, we only accept financial support from individuals and companies. Although the largest part of our operational costs are provided by institutional financial support, we are determined to increase the proportion of private donations.

It is especially important to us to make our finances transparent to everybody, this is why we publish a summary on our webpage every year.

**BE A PARTICIPANT OF FREEDOM! SUPPORT OUR WORK ON  
A REGULAR BASIS!**

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Read more about how you can support our work:

[tasz.hu/tamogatas](https://tasz.hu/tamogatas)