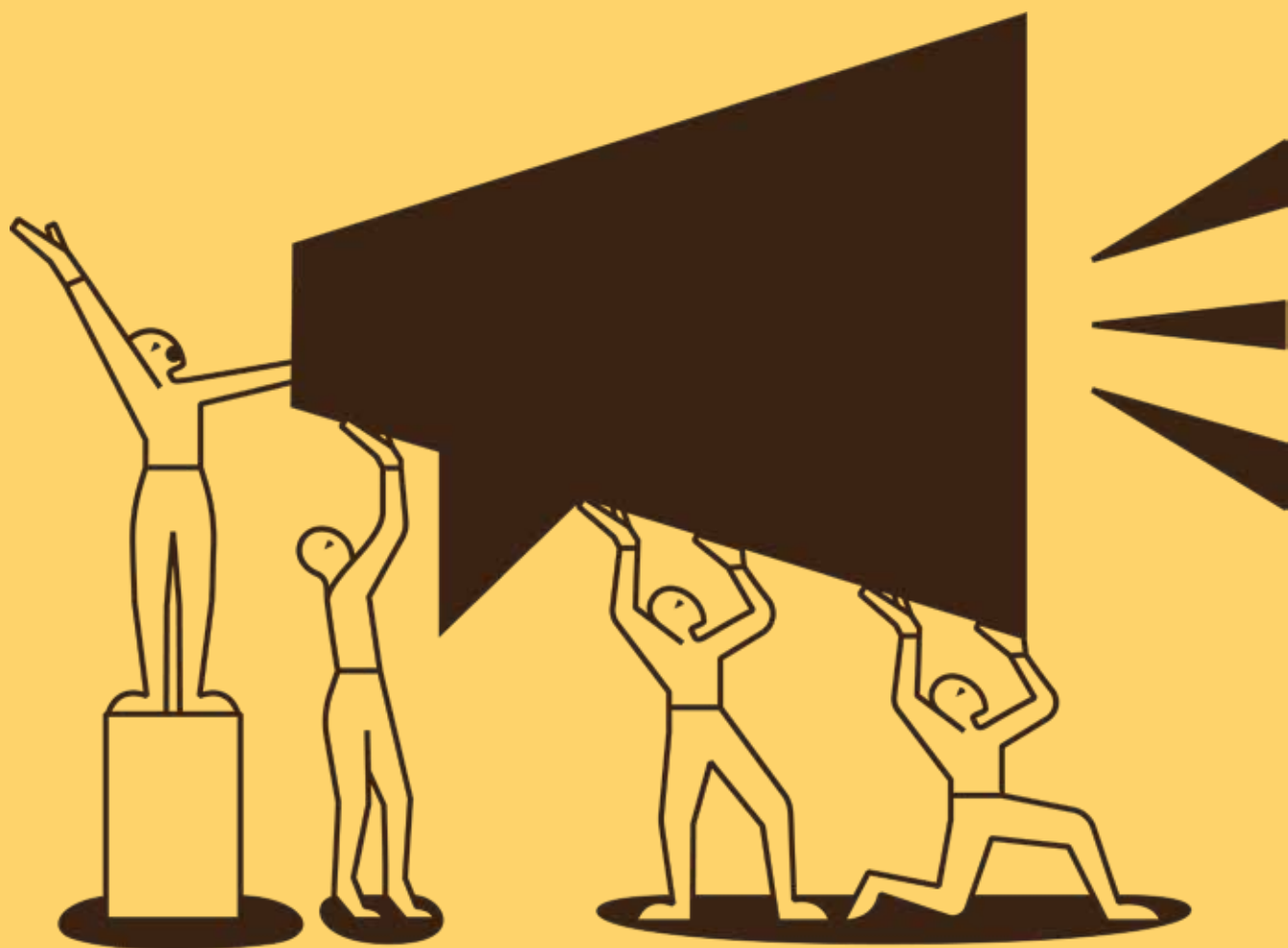


annual report

THE HCLU IN 2025



We are working for an equal, brave and free Hungary



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those who are abandoned or
attacked by the authorities?**

**Adopt the legal aid of
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Growing stronger in a time of crisis

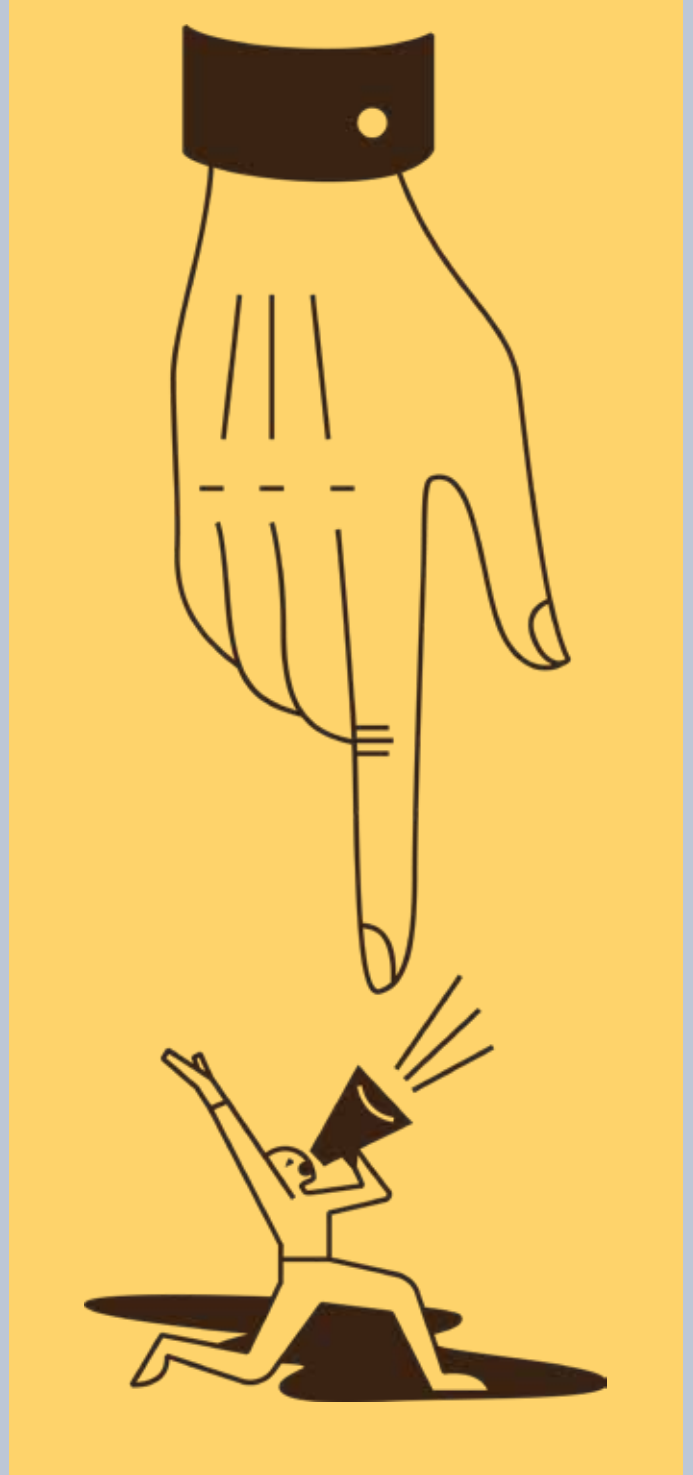
The year 2025 showed not merely gradual deterioration but clear signs of crisis in the area of the fundamental freedoms that define the relationship between the state and its citizens. This crisis affected the conditions for freedom of expression, assembly, privacy, and equal treatment simultaneously – the very fundamental rights that ensure citizens stand before the state as equals rather than subjects. The restriction of these rights did not occur through isolated measures, but through legislative and administrative tools mutually reinforcing each other.

Restrictions on the right to assembly were facilitated by constitutional amendments, and a questionable reference to child protection provided the legal basis for banning LGBTQ-themed protests advocating primarily for legal equality. This ban, considered unique even by European standards, was to be enforced by the courts. This was supplemented by enabling biometric surveillance of participants and initiating criminal proceedings, making participation in public life risky on a personal level.

At the same time, the government kept the civil sector in a state of persistent uncertainty with the introduction of the so-called “Transparency Bill.” This proposal aimed to stigmatize organizations and independent media outlets inconvenient for the government, subject them to administrative control, render their operations financially and logistically impossible, and arbitrarily restrict their freedom of action in public life. The proposal would have granted state bodies broad, politically motivated

mandates to intervene under the guise of countering foreign influence and protecting national interests, including blocking funding, obstructing activities, and suspending operations. Although the bill was ultimately not passed, it loomed over human rights organizations and editorial offices as a real legal and financial risk for months, exerting a chilling effect on both their operations and supporters.

A similar approach underlies the government’s disingenuous “war on drugs,” which utilized criminal law to address public health and social policy issues through high-profile law



enforcement actions and constitutional restrictions on the representation and interpretation of drug use. These generalized, undifferentiated interventions increased the state's presence in the daily lives of young people and nightlife communities, blurring the line between lawful oversight and the unjustifiable disturbance of privacy. Personal liberty became significantly more vulnerable to state intervention.

The deficiencies in the rule of law was particularly evident in the field of child protection. The social welfare system entered a structural crisis: children remained in institutions or hospitals for months without proper placement, while state agencies systematically withheld data revealing their operations. Institutional functioning often resulted in the sustained vulnerability of children rather than their protection; in other words, the system itself became a source of rights violations. All this indicated that the state is unable to perform its fundamental tasks lawfully and predictably in this area as well.

This sustained pressure not only burdened human rights organizations and those affected, but also clarified responsibilities and boundaries. Attempts to sabotage operations, financial uncertainty, and the growing demand for legal aid created an environment where human rights protection could no longer remain "business as usual". These crises made constant rethinking, disciplined planning, and organizational strengthening necessary. In 2025, these challenges did not weaken but rather aligned and focused the communities working for civil liberties, including the work of the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union.

Rights restrictions and intimidation attempts triggered not only adaptation but also broader social reactions, showing that citizens find these measures intolerable. Despite the bans, Pride events took place in Budapest and Pécs with mass participation and strong community support, signaling that community self-organization cannot be suppressed by crude state threats. The opposition to the

"Transparency Bill" saw an unprecedented level of cooperation between NGOs and editorial offices, forming a determined resistance that eventually forced the government to retreat. Furthermore, news of rights violations in child protection broke through the wall of indifference, becoming a dominant theme in public discourse and creating new alliances between professionals, victims, and civil actors. For many, rule-of-law issues became personal. The narrowing of civil liberties triggered a strengthening sense of responsibility, solidarity, and a lasting willingness to act.

In this year of crisis, the social embeddedness of independent rights protection became visible. More citizens than ever before regarded the work of the HCLU as their own cause, as evidenced by the trend in donations: in 2025, the amount of personal income tax 1% designations doubled. Private donations from Hungarian citizens became a cornerstone of the organization's operations, accounting for nearly 50% of the total budget. According to a national poll, HCLU is among the best-known civil organizations in Hungary. This recognition and support represent not just financial resources, but feedback that the protection of civil liberties has increasingly become a common cause for many.

All of this gives special significance to the coming year, when parliamentary elections will be held in Hungary. Regardless of the election outcome, it is clear that the rule-of-law environment and social expectations are transforming, and with them, the conditions for rights protection. Whether there is a political realignment or continuity, we will face challenges in the coming period that traditional tools may no longer provide a satisfactory answer to. In this situation the consistent, public, and professional protection of fundamental rights remains the most reliable compass for the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union.

*Dalma Dojcsák, Executive Director, and
Máté Szabó, Director of Programs*

2025 IN NUMBERS

We answered

2900

requests for
legal aid

7295

people designated
1% of their personal
income tax to us

We gained more than

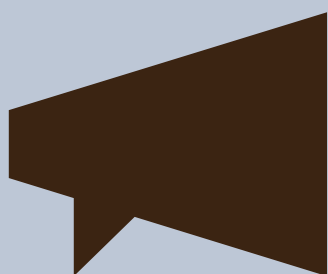
30 000

new followers
on social media
platforms (Facebook,
Instagram, TikTok)

We held

21

election law
workshops across
the country, both in
person and online



In a survey by Political Capital and Civilizáció, the HCLU and the Hungarian Red Cross were the most frequently mentioned organizations after the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta when respondents were asked to name a civil society organization.

(Political Capital – Civilizáció: Social Perception of Civil Society Organizations – Research Report 2025)

We help more effectively

In recent years, we have significantly restructured our legal aid service via telephone and email to focus on issues that fall within the HCLU's mission and where we possess the specific expertise required to address them. Naturally, we do not consider the other questions - numbering in the hundreds or even thousands each year - to be any less important; we also strive to provide ideas and advice in these cases, to help those turning to us move forward. Furthermore, we created numerous materials raising legal awareness – for example, on claiming tax benefits or support related to certain disabilities – and made them freely available on our website, which reached hundreds of thousands of people. We are pleased to have the capacity to take on cases where the goal is not necessarily to change the law, but simply to enforce it, which is of vital importance to those affected.

Our legal aid service's phone calls are handled by our four colleagues answering the incoming inquiries. We speak with hundreds of people every year, and through these calls and emails, we can see and sense the most pressing issues of Hungarian society, to which we strive to respond quickly and adequately.



The ones we've protected from unfair decisions

Many people have turned to us over the course of the year because through various proceedings, authorities denied them the Home Childcare Fee (GYOD) – a benefit that provides crucial support for those nursing their children or relatives living with disabilities.

In the case of our client Anikó, who cares for her chronically ill daughter, the government office immediately assumed bad faith simply because she was unaware that a change of address had to be reported to multiple departments within the same office. Without attempting to investigate the circumstances, they revoked Anikó's GYOD overnight and ordered her to repay more than three million forints. We took Anikó's case to court to prove she did not act in bad faith and that she is rightfully entitled to the support at her new address; therefore, the demand for repayment is unjustified.

In Andrea's case, we didn't even have to reach the courtroom: the government office itself withdrew the resolution that had denied the mother – who cares for her severely disabled five-year-old son – her GYOD. According to the office, Andrea had obstructed the annual review by failing to submit medical documents on time. However, this was not due to laziness or negligence: despite her best efforts, the mother was unable to secure a doctor's appointment for the required examination within the deadline set by the office. Once again, the authorities made no effort to clarify the situation and immediately imposed the harshest possible sanction. Following our legal challenge, they finally admitted their mistake and rescinded the undeniably unjust decision.

We also helped Brigitta, who is raising children on the autism spectrum, so she wouldn't have to give up her dreams. She wished to conduct autism-specific research within a doctoral program, but existing regulations excluded her from receiving the vital childcare benefit while enrolled. With our assistance, she succeeded in having the Social Administration Act amended almost "with the stroke of a pen", making GYOD accessible to those in doctoral programs as well.

We continue our work to ensure that bureaucracy does not crush those bearing the heaviest burdens!



Fighting for children's rights in a collapsing system

Our child protection work became exceptionally significant in 2025.

The ordeal of Marianna and her newborn son served as a heartbreaking example early in the year for the hundreds of infants stranded in hospitals due to the collapse of the child protection system. Marianna contacted us in January when her child was taken from her immediately after birth and kept in the hospital for six months without any legal justification. From the spring onwards, we intensified our representation of families seeking legal aid who had

been unlawfully separated from their children - infants forced to languish in hospital cribs during their first months of life, abandoned and without a single embrace.

Throughout the summer, we repeatedly petitioned the responsible state agencies for information regarding infants living in healthcare institutions. Authorities and ministries persistently concealed how many babies were stuck in hospitals, for how long, and why they have not been placed with families. Since none of the responsible bodies provided answers, in September we launched a public interest data lawsuit to have the court declare that these agencies are mandated to provide information about the infants entrusted to their care.

In September, we launched a campaign for the “hospital babies.” Alongside dozens of children’s rights organizations and child protection experts, we drafted a resolution and a petition addressed to state agencies and political actors, which was signed by 73 prominent public figures. The petition was available for signature both online and in person: during day-long outreach events in Pécs, Miskolc, and Debrecen, we shared our clients’ stories with local residents. We raised awareness of the tragedy of hospital babies among tens of thousands of people, and our open letter was signed by 16,000 individuals.

Our legal aid services in child protection also surged; between September and December alone, we assisted 120 families and initiated legal proceedings representing numerous affected



parents. Interest in our cases was remarkably high, with our materials reaching nearly 3 million people on Facebook and 2 million on Instagram. We learned about the case of the two-year-old Noel, who was abused in an institution, through the press. His family reached out to us to help bring the boy home. In addition to taking the necessary legal steps, we engaged the public and launched a letter-writing campaign to ensure the guardianship office reviewed Noel's case as soon as possible. We succeeded, and although the legal process is ongoing, the guardianship office has consulted with us to examine several options.

In another case, the guardianship office removed three-year-old Evelin from her aunt - who had raised her since birth - due to an administrative error. Thanks to the aunt's perseverance and our legal intervention, the little girl returned to her family after a year and a half. We also assisted Erika, who felt uncertain in herself due to her difficult psychological state right after childbirth but fought for a month, starting the very next day, to get her daughter back.

We provided legal aid not only to families but also to those brave child protection workers who stood up for children's rights within the collapsing system. We supported numerous other child protection professionals, including former employees driven from their careers by the undignified and humiliating "lifestyle screenings" (integrity tests).

In November, we won our data lawsuit against the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Innovation, the National Hospital Directorate-General, and the Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Child Protection: the court ordered them to release the data we requested. In December, we launched a letter-writing campaign to ensure the responsible bodies actually enforced the judgment. Additionally, we contacted all Members of the European Parliament and the National Assembly,

as well as parties and ministries, urging immediate action to resolve the fate of children stuck in hospitals. Many of them responded, with representatives from various parties expressing their agreement and determination. We also consulted with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, proposing an immediate, comprehensive review of the matter.

For Christmas, we organized a particularly beautiful concert series for the infants living in hospitals and their caregivers: in Pécs, Miskolc, and Debrecen, we sang for them in collaboration with the Csíkszerda Choir.

We worked to make the public realize: in many cases the babies left in hospitals have not been abandoned; their parents and families - from whom they were unlawfully torn away - are waiting for them to come home. By sharing our stories and our open letter, we successfully conveyed our arguments to many public figures, and through public discourse and citizens' reactions, we saw that our message was understood.

We did more than just bring attention to the situation of the youngest: it is a monumental success that in the precedent-setting case of Ricsi, who grew up in the child protection system, the court issued a final ruling stating that Hungarian authorities violated his human dignity and his rights to equal treatment and healthy development. By failing to provide him with a foster family, and as a result of continuous institutional harassment and abuse, he suffered lasting psychological trauma.



Violations of patient rights must have consequences!

In 2025, we provided assistance to individuals whose rights were violated during healthcare provision in 175 cases. The stories of those who turned to us were not about isolated incidents, but rather systemic issues: undignified treatment, lack of information, disregard for self-determination, the exclusion of relatives, and the fact that these violations typically carry no consequences.

We achieved significant results in four of our ongoing lawsuits. We represented a family who was kept believing until the very last moment that the mother could recover, even though the doctors already knew there was no chance of rehabilitation. By doing so, the hospital deprived the family of the opportunity to prepare for a dignified end to her life instead of clinging to futile hope. The hospital did not wait for a verdict: they agreed to pay the symbolic restitution (non-pecuniary damages) demanded in our claim.

In another case, Péter's family was forever deprived of the chance to say goodbye to him because they were denied entry to the hospital. Citing a heavy workload, staff also failed to inform the relatives that their loved one was dying. As a result, they had no chance to be by his side in his final hours. The court of first instance ruled that the hospital severely violated the right to maintain contact by unjustifiably restricting visitation and failing to provide proper information.

Erzsébet was not informed about the treatment plan her doctors intended to follow after discovering a cancerous

lesion. Her condition deteriorated steadily, and by the time they would have actually begun treatment, it was too late to save her. Four years later, her daughter filed a lawsuit against the clinic with our help. The hospital admitted its error and apologized to our client. Beyond the court settlement, they are also committed to holding internal trainings on communication between doctors to prevent such situations from occurring again.

In the case of a young boy in serious condition, we successfully proved that his parents' right to maintain contact was unlawfully restricted when visitation was limited to just one hour a day for ten months. The family won the case at both the first and second instance; tragically, however, the boy passed away by the time the proceedings ended.

Alongside our legal aid, we have outlined the type of healthcare system Hungary needs - a system where:

- » *everyone has access to adequate care;*
- » *patients receive clear and comprehensive information;*
- » *consent is not a mere signature, but a real decision;*
- » *human dignity is respected;*
- » *the presence of relatives is guaranteed;*
- » *care is safe and transparent;*
- » *and there are real consequences for violations.*

At the HCLU, we continue the fight to ensure that patient rights are not empty promises and that people can retain their rights and

human dignity even within the healthcare system.

HCLU's Maternity Care Project has launched

In 2025, we began preparing a comprehensive maternity care project, which we officially launched in December. Our goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the issues within obstetric care and to use our resources to make giving birth in Hungary a better experience. During the preparatory phase, we conducted expert interviews with civil society actors and healthcare professionals to map out the most pressing structural and practical problems from multiple perspectives. This was complemented by extensive research, during which we analyzed the state of Hungary's healthcare and social security systems and examined international best practices.

Even during the preparation phase, we engaged in concrete activities, primarily focusing on legal awareness-raising. In April, we held workshops in Budapest, and in October in Eger, for doulas and families planning to have children. During these sessions, we discussed participants' fears and uncertainties, outlined opportunities for legal enforcement, and provided practical advice. As part of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence," we organized an online webinar providing clear, accessible information on rights applicable during obstetric care. We also produced video webinar materials for the La Matriarcha platform, focusing on the rights of women and their families during prenatal care and childbirth.

As part of our work, we also provided assistance in a specific case: we initiated ethical proceedings on behalf of Sára,



who had experienced obstetric violence. At the conclusion of the proceedings, the Chamber of Hungarian Healthcare Professionals ruled that the midwife providing her care had committed ethical

misconduct on several counts. This provided crucial validation for Sára and highlighted the presence of systemic issues within the healthcare system.

Six Victories for a Free and Open Public Discourse

In recent years, we have had to dedicate immense energy to protecting the public sphere from the ambitions of the owners of Hell Energy, a company producing a popular energy drink in Hungary. In 2025, we handled six proceedings initiated by the Barabás brothers because they refuse to tolerate investigative articles and critical opinions published about them. We won all six.

We stood by editorial offices that refused to be intimidated and reported on the wealth and the success of these entrepreneurs, some of the most influential businessmen in the country. We represented Forbes Hungary in three lawsuits and one administrative proceeding, and Magyar Narancs - another Hungarian news outlet - in another lawsuit. The sixth case was filed by the Barabás family against us because we reported on their legal campaign against the press.

The Barabás family used the GDPR as a weapon to achieve their goal. Invoking the protection of their personal data, they argued that the press should not have collected or published information about them - especially without providing detailed, personalized notice about the collected data prior to publication. However, the GDPR was not created to allow influential people to control what gets published about them; it was designed to protect



individuals' privacy against companies that handle their data unlawfully.

The press operates under a completely different logic than the data controllers for whom GDPR rules were tailored: for journalists and editorial offices, data collection is not a goal in itself, but a tool for providing information of public interest. If an investigative journalist had to reveal what they were working on and what they knew before publication, it would mean the end of the story before it was even born. Furthermore, if journalists must fear that publishing a story will land them in a costly legal battle - even if every word they wrote is true - they might not start the investigation at all. The owners of Hell Energy exploited exactly this.

Over the past year, two landmark rulings were handed down. In the lawsuit filed by the Hell owners against Forbes Hungary, the Curia (the Supreme Court of Hungary) confirmed that the right to the protection of personal data cannot be an obstacle to fact-based reporting on the wealth of

economic actors with significant influence; thus, the Barabás brothers can be included in "rich lists" even against their will. Perhaps an even greater breakthrough was achieved in the decision of the Budapest Regional Court of Appeal in the case of Magyar Narancs, which published an investigative piece on the Barabás family's wealth. This ruling concluded that editorial offices can be exempted from the obligation of prior notification if such notification would jeopardize the mission of the press. If this interpretation becomes solid legal practice, it will substantively undermine strategies aimed at silencing the media.

We know the owners of Hell Energy will not abandon their efforts, but neither will we. We want to reach a point where influential public and economic figures cannot use their nearly limitless resources to deter others from engaging in public affairs through abusive litigation. Our results show that the space for press censorship disguised as data protection is increasingly narrowing.

Standing up for academic freedom

The case of Bulcsu Bognár embodies the very values we represent as we work toward an equal, brave, and free Hungary. An associate professor at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Bognár conducted research on the social perception of gay people. The institution branded his study as offensive to Catholic values and fired our client shortly thereafter. This termination coincided with retaliatory measures taken against three other professors at the university who had authored an article in HVG before Pride, arguing that every relationship built on love is of equal value.

Representing Bulcsu Bognár, we turned to the court to have his dismissal declared unlawful. Our petition also highlighted that several other faculty members and students at Pázmány's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences had faced discrimination for addressing LGBTQ+ topics in their research, teaching, or public appearances. "We can only preserve the autonomy of universities if we take a stand against the arbitrary restriction of the freedom of research. That is why I turned to the court," said Bulcsu Bognár.

Court rules that student activist's rights were violated by her former school

In 2025, representing Lili Pankotai, we achieved a landmark ruling at the Pécs Regional Court of Appeal. The second-instance court declared that the Cistercian Order's high school violated the student activist's personal rights through a campaign directed against her, which ultimately forced Lili to change schools in her graduation year.



Lili Pankotai spoke out at a protest in Budapest in 2022 against the state of public education. The following day, her school publicly distanced itself from her, after which she was subjected to continuous emotional pressure within the institution. In 2023, with our assistance, she filed a lawsuit against her former school. Although the Pécs Regional Court initially dismissed the claim in the first instance, we appealed. We argued that the first-instance court had failed to consider the impact of the psychological pressure and the intentionally harassing environment, and had not properly assessed the vulnerable position of a high school student facing her teachers, homeroom teacher, and principal.

In the second instance, the Pécs Regional Court of Appeal upheld our appeal. It ruled that the school had violated Lili's personal rights by creating a harassing and hostile environment due to her expression of her political opinion, and by exerting pressure that ultimately left her with no choice but to transfer to another school.

By representing Lili Pankotai, we are standing not only by her but also for a freer and more equal education system.

Pride: From the Year's Biggest Human Rights Scandal to its Greatest Human Rights Victory

The ban on Pride was one of the biggest human rights scandals of 2025 - and the failure of it became the year's greatest human rights victory. The Prime Minister of Hungary publicly stated that organizers should not even bother preparing for the march, which was followed by legislation: a ban on assembly based on a deceitful propaganda law that violates European law, an amendment to the Fundamental Law of Hungary, the expansion of facial recognition technology, and other rules intended to deter participation.

Despite all this, 2025 saw the largest marches to date, not only in Budapest but also in Pécs. We immediately joined forces with Amnesty International Hungary, the Háttér Society, and the Hungarian Helsinki Committee to collectively draw

the attention of EU decision-makers to this unprecedented violation of rights in Europe, to take the case of the ban to court, and to provide legal assistance to those facing legal retaliation for participating in Pride.

With our partners, we challenged the police resolutions banning the marches and the Curia judgments upholding them before the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights. We are also providing legal defense for the organizer of Pécs Pride, who faces criminal proceedings for organizing a prohibited assembly. Ultimately, however, the authorities backed down: the marches took place peacefully, with hundreds of thousands of participants in Budapest and thousands in Pécs.

Authorities failed in their attempt to use facial recognition for oppression

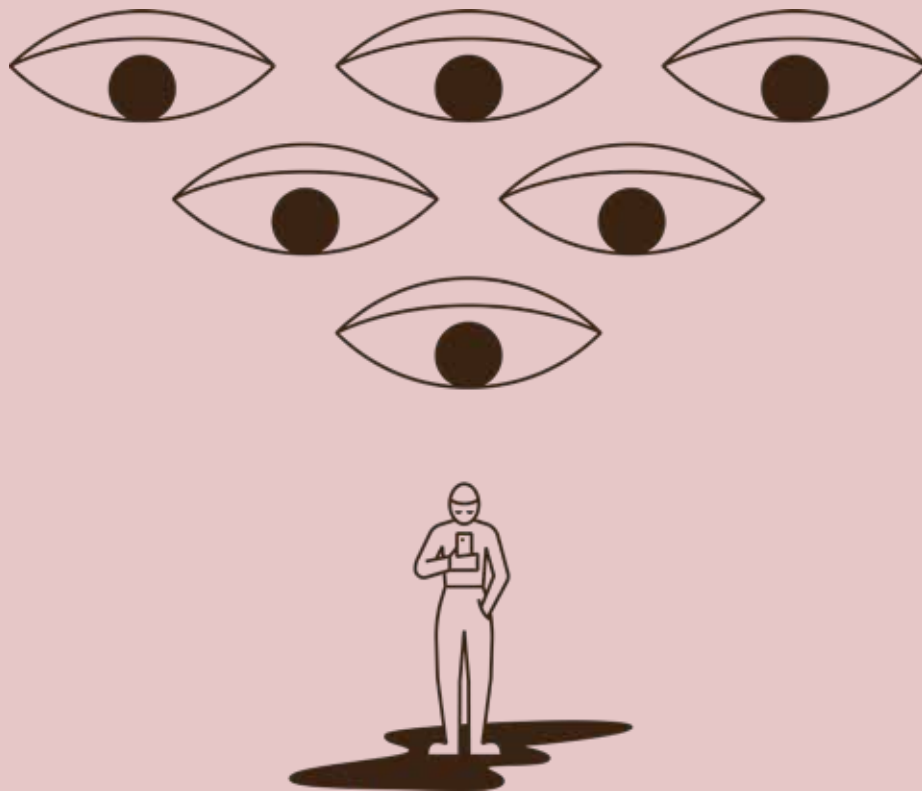
We have monitored the use of facial recognition technologies in Hungary from the very beginning, but the issue took on exceptional significance in 2025. This followed the government's move to enable its application on a mass scale,

specifically targeting participants of the Budapest Pride. The mere threat of such surveillance is sufficient to deter citizens from participating, thereby violating the right to peaceful assembly. However, the Hungarian government intended to use

facial recognition for overt oppression in a way that exceeded previous fears: to enforce a law prohibiting the Pride, in violation of European minimum standards for assembly rights - sending a message that participation inevitably results in punishment.

We were among those who helped citizens interpret the regulations surrounding facial recognition and, despite the lack of transparency, assess the actual risks to participants. We pointed out that, due to the lack of capacity within state agencies, it is practically impossible to launch proceedings against tens or hundreds of thousands of people. Furthermore,

we highlighted that due to system imperfections, countless individuals would be falsely identified even if they had not been anywhere near Pride. In the end, the government's plan failed spectacularly: hundreds of thousands participated in Pride, and we contributed to this outcome. Although the facial recognition system remains operational, we are doing everything in our power to ensure its transparent use. We have filed public interest data requests with the police and the relevant ministries, and subsequently turned to the National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (NAIH).



We took the case of unlawful surveillance to court

When the Pegasus affair - the largest surveillance scandal of recent years - broke, we did not hesitate to offer our help to the victims. We knew this would

be a long and challenging struggle, as the system was deliberately designed to make any surveillance comply with the letter of the law. However, by representing seven

clients in legal proceedings, we have been building our case strategically and, despite the obstacles, have succeeded in launching the lawsuit where the court must examine the legality of the surveillance.

Our client in this lawsuit is Szabolcs Panyi, a journalist for Direkt36, who himself participated in the international investigative work that uncovered the Pegasus scandal. After we managed to discover that the Constitution Protection Office indeed stores data on him, we asked the court to examine whether this data was acquired unlawfully or for genuine national

security interests. Since such a procedure faces numerous hurdles - including the fact that no one is ever notified of their surveillance - a court in Hungary has never before reviewed whether a surveillance operation was conducted for actual national security reasons or purely for the interests of those in power.

If we succeed, we can ensure that more effective judicial control is exercised over surveillance and that secret service tools cannot be used without consequences.

We took action against discriminatory municipal regulations

In 2025, the National Assembly of Hungary amended the Fundamental Law for the fifteenth time. While the restriction on the right to assembly received the most attention, the amendment also recognized the “right to the self-identity of local communities,” which was used to limit the right to freedom of movement and the free choice of residence.

Based on this constitutional amendment, the Law on the Protection of Local Identity was passed, with the alleged aim of allowing municipalities to preserve their character and customs. In practice, local governments can now determine who may move into a settlement and under what conditions. It was clear from the outset that this regulation was nonsensical and unfit for creating lawful municipal regulations; it was foreseeable that it would be used primarily to take action against the Roma population.

Upon the law coming into effect - and in some cases even before - a series of municipal regulations appeared. As expected, it was not the overcrowded agglomerations around Budapest or the towns on the shores of Lake Balaton that passed lawful ordinances to curb population growth; instead, small, declining villages in disadvantaged regions were the ones attempting to keep out poorer, primarily Roma citizens through severely discriminatory rules.

Within a few months, more than 130 “identity ordinances” were enacted nationwide, almost all of which were deeply discriminatory: some required a financial contribution from newcomers, others mandated high levels of educational attainment, or demanded personal interviews.

We collaborated with civil organizations to take action against these exclusionary

municipal regulations, filing public interest reports with the government offices of several counties. These submissions provide a point-by-point analysis of the regulations, demonstrating that they conflict with the requirement of equal treatment and

proving that they disproportionately affect the Roma population. We also prepared a template for submissions, enabling anyone to initiate a review of a specific county's identity ordinances.

Civil Advocacy Across the Country

In 2025, we began the work of expanding our three offices outside of Budapest into regional hubs. We started assessing the types of civil and civic activism present in these regions, identifying potential local partners, and determining how our legal aid service could best assist local residents. We organized street outreach events on ten occasions across five cities to connect with people regarding our work and their legal concerns - reaching those we likely would not encounter on social media

platforms. This allowed us to introduce our free legal aid service to hundreds of people and discuss topics like our child protection petition and the case of babies left in hospitals.

Our presence extended beyond the streets: we collaborated with comedian Gergely Litkai, who, following his stand-up performances in several cities, engaged in discussions with local activists about the possibilities of green activism.



We assisted numerous civil society organizations threatened by the proposed “disabling law,” particularly in cities where our offices are located. In Pécs, we organized an event featuring a journalist and a political analyst to help citizens better understand the implications of this legislative proposal and the risks it poses to the free press and civil society. With our civil partners in Pécs and Miskolc, we organized actions in both cities to draw residents’ attention to the tools the authorities use to suppress those working for communities and citizens. The civil coalition in Pécs successfully pushed the city assembly to adopt a resolution rejecting the bill and calling on the National Assembly to withdraw it.

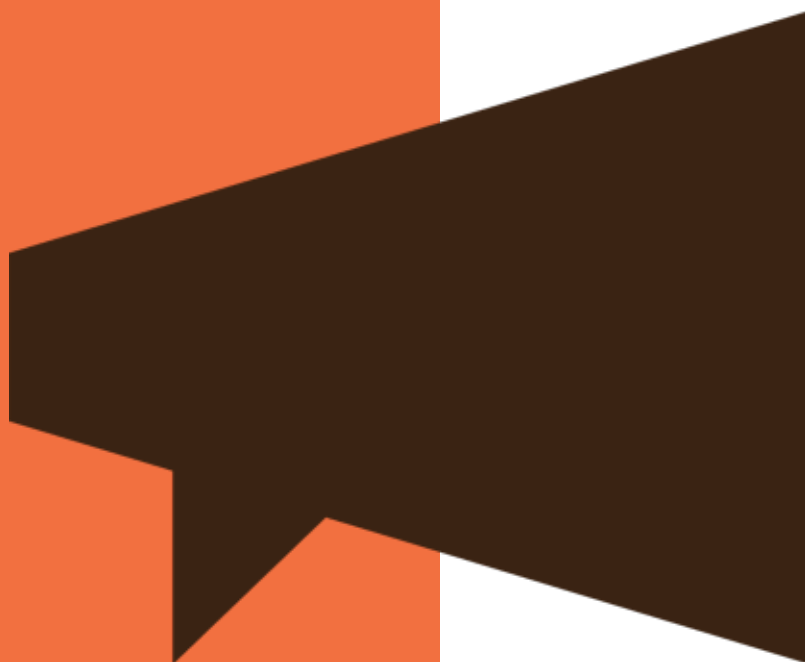
The Pécs Disability Platform, which we established in 2022 with the participation of local NGOs and individuals, launched a campaign in September 2025 for the accessibility of public transport. The city’s bus company, Tüke Busz Zrt., joined us as a partner. Our primary goal was to convince the company to account for various disabilities and change its practices - for example, by implementing predictable and highly visible visual displays as well as clear audio passenger information. We produced an educational video for bus drivers, which

became a mandatory part of their internal training.

We have established an advocacy community in Miskolc, “Civilians for the City” (Civilek a Városért). This informal group consists of local NGOs working to make Miskolc an inclusive city that creates opportunities and involves citizens in decision-making. Mapping out local issues with the “Civilians for the City” community, we organized an event focused on urban development projects. Our goal is to ensure that local affairs are not overlooked, that they remain part of the public discourse, and that the city leadership informs and involves citizens in matters that affect them.

In 2025, we also strengthened the work of our Roma Rights Awareness Program. Our coordinators in Borsod and Szabolcs counties mentor five community leaders who are increasingly able to provide advice independently to members of their communities.

Additionally, we continue to assist citizens and local communities in environmental matters, helping them stand up for their rights.





Honoring the Freest Hungarians

In 2025, in cooperation with the Loupe Theater Company, we organized the SZABAD (FREE) Awards ceremony for the seventh time honoring those who have stood up for a freer Hungary.

The Audience Award was presented to Erika Renner, an advocate for victims of domestic violence, known to the country as the victim of a doctor who used lye to attack her. Erika fights to ensure that the legal system protects victims rather than perpetrators and delivers true justice. “I stand here before you today. Not because I was harmed, but because I did not allow them to silence me. I did not allow myself to become an object,” she said in her speech. The Jury Award - decided by Dorka Horváth



(founder of BOOKR Kids), Anna Kertész (TASZ Head of Communications and Private Fundraising), singer-songwriter Marge, journalist Gábor Miklósi, writer and WMN journalist Luca Nyáry, and actor and former SZABAD Award winner Áron Molnár - was granted to Special Olympian István Cservenka. István lived in an institution for decades, but when a new operator took over in 2018, conditions deteriorated significantly. He was prevented from training and cooking, and others attempted to make important decisions on his behalf. He decided to fight for his own freedom; he turned to the court and successfully won the right to live independently with the necessary support.

The jury and event partners also honored the other nominees with Special Awards:

- Richárd Vidák, a former ward of the state who won a lawsuit against the state for abuse suffered within the child protection system.

- The “Wesley Mothers”, who stood up for their rights after the government office closed their children’s school just three days before the start of the academic year.
- Heni Tilly, who advocated for the right of birthing mothers to remain with their newborns in the hospital.
- Péter Bátonyi, who spoke up publicly about the abuses he witnessed during his heritage protection work despite the threats from authorities.
- MOME Front, for their commitment to university autonomy.



Celebrating the Year Together

We held our 2025 annual fundraising party on December 12th at Gólya Presszó. The lineup of performers - Ganjálló, Tudósok, Beton.Hofi, and Moonbase Patel Disco - guaranteed a full house, so many people joined us to celebrate TASZ’s work throughout the year. In between concerts, guests had the chance to win items and experiences in a raffle donated by our supporters. Participants could not only

take home the usual TASZ merch but also create their own unique “SZABAD.” (FREE.) garments at a screen-printing workshop. All tickets were sold out in advance, and the proceeds from admissions and the raffle are supporting the work of TASZ. It was a wonderful feeling to see so many people who love us celebrating with us until morning!



With us in 2025:

MÁRTON DÁNIEL ASBÓTH, NÓRA ILONA AUJESZKY,
ANNA MÁRIA BALÁZS, MÁRTA ESZTER BALÁZS,
KAROLA BECKER, FLÓRA BENKŐ, ZSÓFIA BLASKÓ,
ZOLTÁN BOGNÁR, DOMINIKA BÓI, ILONA BOROS,
VIKTÓRIA BRUMECZ, KATALIN BUDAI, LUCIA CSABAI,
FLÓRA DÓRA CSATÁRI, ESZTER CSILLAG, ANDREA
CSÖRGITS, BEÁTA DÁNIELNÉ TÓTH, DALMA DOJCSÁK,
EMESE DOROSZLAI, DÁNIEL DÖBRENTÉY, ANETT DUBLECZ,
ANNA DZUNIC, BORBÁLA FERNEZELYI, ANNA FORRÁS,
ESZTER HEGEDŰS, SZABOLCS HEGYI, DÓRA KAPOTS,
STEFÁNIA KAPRONCZAY, JÚLIA KAPUTA, TAMÁS KARDOS,
ANNA KERTÉSZ, DÁVID KOSINA, ZSUZSANNA KUNOS,
RÉKA DÓRA LEBEDI, LILLA LŐRINCZI, ANNA MÁRFFY,
GÁBOR MEDVEGY, JÁNOS MÉCS, ESZTER PAPP,
SZILVIA PAULENKA, EMESE PÁSZTOR,
MÁRIA MAGDALÉNA PERCZEL, BALÁZS PIVARNYIK,
SAROLTA RACSKÓ, ÁDÁM REMPORT, ANNA ROSNER,
ATTILA SZABÓ, MÁTÉ SZABÓ, MELITTA SZARKA,
ÁDÁM TAKÁCS, RÉKA VÁRKONYI, RÉKA VELÉNYI,
EDINA VINNAI, BEATRIX VISSY, JUDIT ZELLER

Our lawyers in 2025:

KATALIN BAGDI, ÁRON BALOGH, LEVENTE BALTAY,
BEA BODROGI, GÁBOR CSŰRI, ERIKA FIALA-BUTORA,
ÁRON HORVÁTH, TIVADAR HÜTTL, HENRIETTA ILYÉS,
FLÓRA KOLLARICS, GÁBOR MÁNDRIK,
NOÉMI FANNI MOLNÁR, KATA NEHÉZ-POSONY, MÁRK PETŐ,
PÉTER STÁNICZ, PÉTER SZEGI, RÉKA SZÉKHELYI,
TAMÁS SZIKLAI, KINGA ZEMPLÉNI

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