



## SOLIDARITY DECLARATION

in relation to the report of the Office for the Protection of Sovereignty  
published on 29 January 2025

**The Hungarian Child Rights Coalition (hereafter: Coalition) expresses its solidarity with the NGOs that have been the target of unfounded attacks and stigmatisation by the Office for the Protection of Sovereignty.**

On 29 January 2025, the Office for the Protection of Sovereignty published a report entitled "*THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S CERV PROGRAMME - How Brussels opened the money tap to finance the Soros network*"<sup>1</sup>, which suggests that some **Hungarian NGOs that have received direct EU funds** are using EU funds **for political pressure**, primarily as members of the network built by George Soros. The report does not treat civil society as an entity and as a value, but divides it into two distinct groups on the basis of an unknown, vague criteria: political pressure organisations and NGOs, which is unacceptable.

The Office for the Defence of Sovereignty (hereinafter: the Office) lists the NGOs that have successfully applied for funding from the European Commission's CERV (Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values) programme in recent years. **Launched in 2021, the CERV programme**, according to the official website of the European Union, "*aims to support the emergence and development of open, democratic, equal and inclusive societies based on rights and the rule of law. To achieve this goal, we need a vibrant and self-determining civil society, we need to promote democratic, civic and social participation of people and we need to nurture the diversity of European society on the basis of our common values, history and memory.*"<sup>2</sup> The **CERV programme** is not intended to finance political pressure and foreign interests that undermine Hungary's sovereignty, but **to promote democratic societies, as stated as an objective in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and to make children's rights part of EU primary law.**

**There are four main themes under the CERV programme:**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/The-European-Comissions-Cerv-Programme-This-is-how-Brussels-turned-on-the-money-tap-to-fund-the-Soros-network.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme-overview\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme-overview_en)

1. **equality, rights**, gender equality - promoting rights, non-discrimination and equality (including gender equality) and promoting gender equality and non-discrimination in general;
2. **civic participation and empowerment** - promoting citizens' empowerment and participation in the democratic life of the Union, encouraging dialogue between citizens of different Member States and raising awareness of our common European history;
3. **fight** against **violence**, including gender-based violence and violence against children;
4. **EU values** - protecting and promoting EU values.

The projects supported by CERV programme aim to promote the rights of vulnerable groups, including children.

The document published by the Office **criticises** the fact that **the Hungarian state has no control over who wins the European Commission's tender** and how the beneficiaries use the funds awarded. **The reality is** that the evaluation of applications is carried out by evaluators appointed by the European Union, of which Hungary is a member, and by the European Commission itself, in accordance with predetermined criteria. The persons involved in the evaluation of applications are subject to **strict rules on conflicts of interest**, which preclude the evaluation of an application by a person who would himself or herself be a beneficiary of the funding. On the other hand, the CERV programme **is open to applications from all Member States, so it is not a direct funding for Hungarian NGOs**. It should be noted that CERV is not the only EU programme under which NGOs and other organisations, including municipalities can obtain funding directly from the European Commission without the intervention of the Member States. **The projects that receive funding under the CERV programme are public and can be consulted by anyone on the European Union's website.**<sup>3</sup>

**The Coalition was dismayed** that the NGOs listed in the document issued by the Office are described as using EU funds for political purposes, serving foreign interests, against the priorities of the Hungarian state. They stigmatise and, worse still, **intimidate Hungarian citizens who, with dedication, determination and a belief in democratic values, carry out their work to fill the gaps**, standing up for the weak, the disadvantaged, the marginalised:

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<sup>3</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-results?isExactMatch=true&order=DESC&pageNumber=NaN&sortBy=title>

the poor, refugees, the homeless, sexual minorities, Roma, as well as women, the elderly and children.

**Several of our coalition members are listed by the Office as political pressure groups.**

These coalition members are organisations that have worked for many years to promote children's rights through a variety of means, carrying out credible and professionally recognised work, in compliance with the provisions of the Hungarian legal environment, and which are also members or invited participants in a number of thematic working groups established by the government.<sup>4</sup> In many cases, these organisations working on children's rights are involved in the performance of state duties, given the serious anomalies in the Hungarian child protection system, as the Coalition has repeatedly drawn the attention of decision-makers and the public in recent years.

Through their involvement, civil society organisations make a major contribution to the effective management of social problems, the satisfaction of social needs and the performance of public tasks. **The Coalition expects the government not to attack but to protect and support the community and value-creating activities of civil society organisations, because the quality of the relationship between the state and the civil sector influences the content of democracy.**

Budapest, 5 February 2025

Organizations of the Hungarian Child Rights Coalition:

Bagázs Public Benefit Association

Family, Child, Youth Association (CSAGYI)

Élményakadémia Public Benefit Association

Gyerekesély Association (GYERE)

Phoenix Association

Hintalovon Children's Rights Foundation

Igazgyöngy Foundation

Jogismeret Foundation

Kék Vonal Child Crisis Foundation

Hungarian LGBT Alliance

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<sup>4</sup> <https://emberijogok.kormany.hu/nok-jogaiert-felelos-tematikus-munkacsoport>  
<https://emberijogok.kormany.hu/gyermekek-jogaiert-felelos-tematikus-munkacsoport>  
<https://emberijogok.kormany.hu/menekultugyert-felelos-tematikus-munkacsoport>

Hungarian Women's Advocacy Association  
Hungarian Terre des hommes Foundation "Lausanne" MPA  
Children's Interests Section-Korczak Working Committee  
National League for the Protection of Children  
Pressley Ridge Hungary Foundation  
Rosa Parks Foundation  
Social Workers Association of Hungary  
Social Professional Association  
Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (TASZ) Validity Foundation  
Világ szép Foundation

and individual experts:

Anna Aczél  
Katalin Adler  
Zoltán Békés  
Edina Gyulai  
Rita Herczeg  
Boglárka Jánoskúti  
Erika Pehr  
Ágnes Lux  
Éva Makai  
Barbara Németh  
Andrea Toma  
Zsófia Tóth  
Dóra Varga-Sabján

The declaration is agreed by as an observer organisation:

Civil Platform for Public Education  
Human Rights Educators Network (EJHA)