

URGENT ACTION

DRAFT LAW TARGETING NGOS MUST BE STOPPED

A draft law targeting Hungarian NGOs receiving funding from abroad on the grounds that they may represent “foreign interests” was passed in the National Assembly on 13 June. If signed by the President, the law will become a new tool to discredit and intimidate NGOs and undermine their capacity to protect human rights and provide valuable services to Hungarian people.

The draft “Law on the Transparency of Organizations Funded from Abroad” (T/14967), submitted to the National Assembly on 7 April by members of the governing Fidesz party, will force **Hungarian NGOs** receiving more than 7,200,000 HUF (approx. €24,000) per year from abroad to register as “civic organizations receiving foreign funding” and to put this label on all their publications. Organizations which fail to comply with the new requirements will face sanctions that could go up to dissolution. This is the newest step by the government to intimidate and silence critical voices and NGOs delivering essential services to citizens and refugees and migrants in the country.

While the proposal was under discussion in the National Assembly, the government continued to denounce and discredit NGOs and accused several of them of undermining national sovereignty.

It is now up to the President to sign the law and send it for publication in the Hungarian Gazette – thereby triggering the registration and labelling requirements – or to use his veto and refer the law to the constitutional court on the grounds that in its current form, it contravenes the Fundamental Law of Hungary (the constitution). The adopted law, by only applying to certain types of civil society organizations will discriminate against these NGOs and impose limitations on their right to association. The right to be protected from discrimination is enshrined in the constitution (Article XV). The law is also at odds with Hungary’s human rights obligations on the right to association, including the right to seek, receive and use funding from foreign and international sources.

Please write immediately in Hungarian, English or your own language:

- Calling on President János Áder to exercise presidential veto and refer the law to the constitutional court;
- Urging the President to publicly condemn the government’s attempts to discredit, stigmatize and intimidate NGOs operating lawfully and transparently in Hungary.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JULY 2017 TO:

President of the Republic

Dr. János Áder
1536 Budapest, Pf. 227

Hungary
Fax: +36 1 224 5009
Email: sajto@keh.hu or use online
contact form
http://www.keh.hu/messages_to_the_presidents_office

Salutation: Dear President

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Fax Email Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 119/17. Further information:
www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur27/6366/2017/en/

Name: NGOs in Hungary

Gender m/f: all

Further information on UA: 119/17 Index: EUR 27/6514/2017 Issue Date: 14 June 2017

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