

Declaration

14 January, 2011

In Hungary, there are 23 thousand people with disabilities living in large residential institutions. A key social policy reform goal is the dismantling of archaic residential institutions for people with disabilities that exclude them from society. People with disabilities have the right to receive services in their local communities. Hungary can achieve this goal through financing from the European Union Structural Funds. According to its current plans, Hungary is to spend 13 billion HUF (47 million Eur) for this purpose between 2011 and 2013.

We, the undersigned declare that our government is not respecting the need to have a real debate about the terms for the Structural Funds tenders. As such, it fails to fulfill its obligations and to utilize European taxpayer money in the most responsible way.

On December 15th, 2010, we, the undersigned, commented on the terms for the 2011-2013 Structural Funds tenders (specifically TIOP 3.4.1. and TIOP 3.4.2.) concerning housing services for people with disabilities in an open letter to the government. Our letter, signed by organizations that have both theoretical and implementation competencies in the reform of social welfare services asked the National Development Agency (NDA) and the Ministry of National Resources (MNR) for a meeting to discuss the reframing of the terms so that Hungary can use this funding as efficiently as possible to modernize housing services for people with disabilities.

On **January 6th, 2011**, the Deputy Secretary of State for Social Policy of the MNR contacted us with the information that the meeting we requested would be held the next day, **January 7th, at 12:00**, with representation from both the MNR and NDA. The undersigned responded that it is not possible to ensure the participation of all of the organizations within 24 hours, and that it is not possible to prepare for the meeting on such short notice. It is regrettable that the ministry insisted on holding the meeting on the 7th. It is also surprising that there were no formal invitations to such an important meeting. Organizations were called on the 6th by the MNR one by one and given an ultimatum: the meeting will be held on the 7th with or without you. There is no alternative date.

The undersigned did not participate at the meeting. Our view is that **under no circumstances was the meeting held on the 7th a true or real debate about the terms of the Structural Funds tenders. We continue to expect an invitation to an open debate about the terms of tender packages TIOP 3.4.1. and TIOP 3.4.2. How Hungary uses these Structural Funds will determine whether it respects the human rights of people with disabilities and begins to dismantle large residential institutions where they are currently being held.**

It is alarming, as Hungary takes on the European Union Presidency in January 2011, that the MNR pays no heed to the written and the unwritten rules of social consultation. In Hungary it has become a routine to establish NGOs with several thousand members - thus operating with a complicated method of collation - work on a one day deadline, when dealing with decisions concerning disabilities. The collation mechanisms are hard to see through, and the submitted notions are untraceable, and the viewpoints leading to a substantive decision are usually unknown to the public.**I don't understand what you mean by this- can you try to clarify? We would draw the government's attention to the fact that in the long run, bypassing social debates on critical issues will lead to poor decisions and an enormous waste of resources. This method of operating is not in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) that Hungary was among the first countries in the world to ratify, and it is not in line with Hungarian law (Act CXXXI of 2010), regarding the requirement for social dialogue during the legislative process.

True and transparent social dialogue and the process of conciliation that can take time to carry out are fundamental, valuable parts of a democracy because they ensure that members of communities can make the best decisions based on access to all of the information. Our expectation is that the Government of the Republic of Hungary will act accordingly and hold true public debates on critical issues that affect all of the country.

Yours Sincerely,

Ágnes Kozma, Tizard Centre, University of Kent

Ágnes Soltész on behalf of the **Soteria Foundation**

Ágota Scharle, economist

Andrea Krizsán, Central European University

Balázs Dénes on behalf of the **Hungarian Civil Liberties Union**

János Fiala on behalf of the **Disability Rights Center**

Gábor Gombos on behalf of the **Mental Disability Advocacy Center**

László Hankó, Macte Animo Foundation

Márta Hankóné Szabó on behalf of the the **Association for Persons with Complex Dependency Need**

Judith Klein on behalf of the **Open Society Mental Health Initiative**

Katalin Gruiz on behalf of **Down Foundation**

Katalin Szabó on behalf of the **Eötvös Loránd University, Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Education**

Katalin Tausz on behalf of the **Eötvös Loránd University Budapest Faculty of Social Sciences Department of Social Work and Social Policy**

Lajos Hegedűs on behalf of the **National Federation of Disabled Persons' Associations**

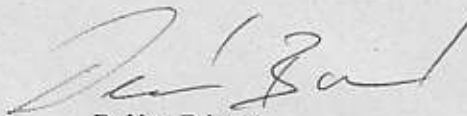
Melinda Kovács on behalf of the **Hungarian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability**

Uitz Renáta, jurist

Zsolt Bugarszki, **Eötvös Loránd University Budapest Faculty of Social Sciences Department of Social Work and Social Policy**

Zsuzsanna Szilvássy on behalf of the **Hungarian Autistic Society**

Authorized to certify by



Balázs Dénes,
Hungarian Civil Liberties Union

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