

Hungary 2025

Information from: Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary

Independence, effectiveness and establishment of NHRIs

International accreditation status and SCA recommendations

The Hungarian National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) currently holds a B-status after being downgraded in [March 2022](#). [In October 2019](#), the SCA had decided to defer its decision on the re-accreditation of the NHRI. [In June 2021](#), the SCA recommended that the Hungarian NHRI be downgraded to B-status, with recommendations on ‘addressing human rights violations’, ‘selection and appointment’, ‘interaction with the international human rights system’ and ‘cooperation with civil society’. The Hungarian NHRI had one year to provide the documentary evidence necessary to establish its continued conformity with the UN Paris Principles and maintained its A-status during this period. However, in March 2022, the SCA confirmed its recommendation for the Hungarian NHRI to be downgraded to B-status. The NHRI challenged this recommendation before the GANHRI Bureau, in accordance with Article 12 of the [GANHRI Statute](#). This challenge was not successful, and the decision became final on 17 May 2022.

Follow-up to international and European actors’ recommendations on NHRIs and relevant developments

The SCA recommendations have been reviewed by the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary (CFR) and they are used in his practical work. While his primary responsibility lies in protecting the rights ensured in the [Fundamental Law of Hungary](#) and in a broader sense, the values enshrined therein, during his proceedings, he pays special attention to the standards formulated in international treaties and the recommendations made by international organisations as well. The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary continues to be open to dialogues with both national and international organisations with a view to sharing and getting familiar with their useful experience.

The European Commission 2024 Rule of Law Report on Hungary explains that

the competence of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary (CFR) was significantly extended in 2023, i.e., to the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and whistle-blowers. It should be stressed that the wide range of investigations conducted in 2024, the number of issued reports, as well as the broad range of fundamental rights concerned all prove that the extension of the competences of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary has in fact strengthened the efficiency of rights protection.

The legal institution of the CFR, which is an organ with administrative powers that is also responsible for the enforcement of the principle of equal treatment from 1 January 2021, meets the requirement of independence from the aspects of legal regulation, personal conditions and organisational structure alike.

The CFR pays special attention to ensuring that his activity extends to the broadest possible spectrum of the protection of fundamental rights, furthermore, he strives to give detailed, professionally informed answers to all international inquiries. In the course of this activity, the CFR regularly participates in personal meetings and professional events and receives experts in his Office. In those areas of fundamental rights protection that are especially sensitive, the work of the CFR is supported by two internationally esteemed deputy commissioners (one responsible for the protection of the rights of national minorities living in Hungary, and another one in charge of the interests of future generations) elected by the National Assembly, furthermore, his professional decisions are supported by senior experts and staff members with special knowledge, who are working for the organisational units with responsibilities clearly defined in the internal regulations (OPCAT, principle of equal treatment, police complaints, CRPD Independent Monitoring Mechanism, whistle-blower protection).

Two directives of the European Union adopted in 2024, included gender-specific issues i.e.,

- Directive (EU) 2024/1500 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment and equal opportunities between women and men in matters of employment and occupation, and amending Directives 2006/54/EC and 2010/41/EU,
- Council Directive (EU) 2024/1499 of 7 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment between persons irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin, equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation between persons irrespective of their religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, equal treatment between women and men in matters of social security and in the access to and supply of goods and services, and amending Directives 2000/43/EC and 2004/113/EC.

The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary places particular emphasis on ensuring compliance with relevant legal directives, for example within penitentiary institutions. In fulfilment of this mandate, the CFR conducts on-site visits to personally assess the implementation of these directives.

Regulatory framework

The regulations defining the procedure of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary that are set out in [Act CXI of 2011 on the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary](#) (hereinafter referred to as: the CFR Act) were not modified in their substance in 2024.

The rules for access to classified data were modified and the respective provisions of the CFR Act were adjusted to these with effect of 1 March 2024. All this does not meaningfully affect the exercise of the Ombudsman's powers, this is merely about an amendment serving legal harmonisation purposes.

The Hungarian NHRI's mandate to contribute to access to justice for individuals has been overall strengthened since 2022 in relation to complaints handling, strategic litigation before courts, providing legal assistance to individuals, awareness-raising.

One of the content criteria of the rule of law is the establishment and operation of a system of safeguards that guarantee fundamental rights. These safeguards include the establishment of the institution of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary (CFR) that is meant to protect fundamental rights, which is only accountable to the National Assembly. [The Fundamental Law of Hungary created an Ombudsman system](#) that ensures the uniform, efficient and comprehensive protection of fundamental rights. The CFR is a public function regulated on the constitutional level, which is elected by the National Assembly by a two-third majority for a six-year period, thus ensuring a high level of legitimation.

It is his responsibility to protect fundamental rights and to ensure that the activity of the authorities does not violate the constitutional rights of the citizens. Pursuant to Article 30 of the Fundamental Law of Hungary, the Ombudsman carries out fundamental rights protection activities, his proceedings may be launched by anyone. He investigates into or gets expert to investigate into any improprieties regarding fundamental rights and he initiates general or individual measures in order to remedy them.

The operation of the Office is established by Hungary's highest-level legal source, the Fundamental Law of Hungary, which defines the mandate and procedural framework of the Ombudsman. The detailed regulations governing its functions are further specified in [Act CXI of 2011 on the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary](#). The Office of the Ombudsman is independent

from the executive power and the courts, and it serves to supplement the self-controlling mechanisms of state power, to ensure the protection of fundamental rights and to work as an efficient tool of the control function of the Parliament.

In the course of his activities, the CFR pays special attention to the interests of future generations, the rights of national minorities living in Hungary, the rights of children, and the protection of the rights of the most vulnerable social groups. Anyone is free to initiate his proceedings.

The CFR is not eligible to launch judicial proceedings for remedying the disclosed impropriety in his general Ombudsman's competence. However, he may interfere with the already launched judicial proceedings, i.e., he may support the successful litigation of the claimant or the defendant:

- in lawsuits for the review of a police decision on a police complaint that he has investigated into;
- in administrative cases launched against administrative decisions related to the condition of the environment.

The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary may conduct an administrative procedure in order to enforce equal treatment and the administrative decision adopted by him may be subjected to judicial review.

In any cases that cannot be reviewed due to the lack of competence, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary pays special attention to informing the petitioners of the possible legal remedies, including the option of going to court.

Extension of Mandate

One of the key elements of the changes of the past five years was the extension of the mandate of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary, which included four priority areas: the [handling of police complaints](#) (2020), the [protection of the principle of equal treatment](#) (2021), the [protection of the rights of persons with disabilities](#) (2023), as well as [whistle-blowers protection](#) (2023). These new responsibilities have led to the establishment of a uniquely integrated fundamental rights protection system in Hungary, combining administrative and Ombudsman-type mechanisms. With the extension of its mandates, the CFR now has the authority not only to issue non-binding recommendations for remedying identified improprieties but also to make administrative decisions through a separate procedure. In cases where a violation of the principle of equal treatment is established through an Ombudsman-type procedure, the CFR may impose sanctions, including ordering the enforceable termination of the infringement, prohibiting similar conduct in the future, or levying fines ranging from HUF 50,000 to HUF 6,000,000.

In connection with this, 2023 saw yet another addition to the mandates of the NHRI covering an important international aspect. In 2023, in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), a CRPD Independent Monitoring Mechanism was set up within the Office, which promotes, protects and monitors the national-level implementation of the Convention with regard to persons with disabilities.

Among the newly introduced authorizations, a key development is the legislator's provision allowing whistle-blowers to request anonymity, a safeguard that has been ensured through a secure electronic system since 24 July 2023. This system enhances the security and confidentiality of whistle-blowers reports, fostering greater trust and encouraging the disclosure of public interest concerns. Additionally, the regulation reinforces oversight by ensuring that fundamental rights-related inquiries extend to the procedures of state bodies that receive and assess public interest disclosures, including those operating independent whistleblowing systems.

To effectively fulfil these new responsibilities, the establishment of a dedicated, well-trained staff and specialized organizational units became essential. The gradual expansion of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary's competences has contributed to the development of a highly efficient Ombudsman system, further strengthening fundamental rights protection.

Regional Offices and Temporary Regional Office

Between 40-44% of individuals initiating Ombudsman procedures in Hungary over the past five years were residents of Budapest or Pest County. To enhance nationwide accessibility, particularly for disadvantaged groups facing financial and digital barriers, the [CFR established six regional offices](#) in 2022 in Debrecen, Szeged, Győr, Székesfehérvár, Miskolc, and Pécs. This initiative has significantly improved access to rights protection services.

The CFR's regional office model is recognized as exemplary in Europe, attracting international delegations. The Ombudsman also played a key role in global rights protection efforts, particularly in response to the Ukrainian-Russian conflict. Within two days of the war's outbreak, he visited border areas and set up temporary regional offices in Záhony and Beregsurány to provide legal and humanitarian support. Additionally, since March 2022, the [CFR's website has offered critical information in Hungarian, Ukrainian, and English](#).

The regional and temporary offices ensure nationwide legal aid and rapid humanitarian response. In autumn 2024, the NHRI shared information on these activities with the International Rescue Committee NGO.

Mobile Ombudsman's Office (Educational Initiative)

[On the occasion of World Children's Day in 2024](#), the National Human Rights

Institution (NHRI) launched [the Mobile Ombudsman's Office Programme](#), an innovative initiative designed to enhance accessibility to fundamental rights protection services across the country. The programme operates through a specially equipped mobile office, housed within a converted bus, which functions as a regional office in any location, ensuring broader outreach and engagement with communities nationwide.

At present, the programme primarily focuses on promoting awareness of children's rights. As part of this initiative, the mobile office visits children's homes and educational institutions to strengthen children's legal knowledge and foster their understanding of their rights. The [educational programme consists of a structured, interactive learning experience](#): children first watch an age-appropriate short film, followed by an opportunity to assess their knowledge through an online quiz. Additionally, they are given the chance to engage directly with children's rights experts, enabling them to ask questions and gain deeper insights into their rights and legal protections.

Exemplary Client Service

The Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary underwent considerable infrastructural development in the period between 2019 and 2024. In August 2020, the Office moved to new headquarters, which are in a revamped building at Falk Miksa utca 9-11 in Budapest's 5. district. The new, modern facility provides a state-of-the-art working environment, in line with the requirements of the 21st century, whose level of professional and technical equipment, availability, accessibility, as well as the staff's high-level professional qualifications all serve the purpose of ensuring the protection and practical enforcement of fundamental rights even to the most vulnerable groups of society, especially to persons with disabilities.

With a view to the professional and comprehensive management of complaints, the staff members of the complaint office, both at the Budapest headquarters and at the regional offices, receive continuous further training on the changes in the effective laws and they take part in sensitisation training sessions several times a year. In 2024, it was the experts of the Directorate-General for Equal Treatment (DGET) who provided the sensitisation training sessions for the staff.

The NHRI would like to present its practice in which the staff members of DGET hold the hearings and meetings in a specifically designed conference hall of the Office. This room is free of barriers both physically and from an info-communication perspective, and it is also equipped with an induction loop.

The delegations visiting the Office always praise the facilities and practices of the complaint office, as well as the reception hall for the complainants, which is not only barrier-free but also, child-friendly.

The Fundamental Law of Hungary provides a modern legal framework that upholds fundamental rights and effectively addresses contemporary challenges. The CFR operates with full independence, safeguarded by constitutional and statutory guarantees against political or economic influence. As a supervisory body of the National Assembly, the Ombudsman enjoys institutional autonomy, with strong democratic legitimacy ensured by an election process requiring nomination by the President of the Republic and election by a two-thirds parliamentary majority. The six-year mandate is renewable once, promoting stability and continuity.

Candidates must be highly qualified legal professionals with significant expertise or at least ten years of experience in fundamental rights-related proceedings or legal scholarship. The Ombudsman holds personal immunity equivalent to Members of Parliament, reinforcing independence. The Ombudsman's work is guided solely by law, with reports being final and not subject to appeal. Transparency and accountability are maintained through public reporting and open procedures.

NHRI enabling and safe space

The relevant state authorities have good awareness of the Hungarian NHRI's mandate, independence and role. The NHRI fulfils a widely acknowledged and accepted role in the area of rights protection, which is confirmed by continuous and constructive cooperation with the partners concerned.

Partnerships and Cooperation

The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary (CFR) has achieved significant progress in fostering constructive and results-oriented partnerships with state institutions. Ombudsman investigations serve not only as a means of oversight but also as a platform for promoting long-term, cooperative engagement aimed at enhancing the protection of fundamental rights. The National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) maintains close collaboration with key Hungarian institutions, particularly those involved in child protection and social services, the Hungarian Police, the Hungarian Prison Service, and state forestry companies. Through joint professional meetings and active participation in legislative and regulatory processes, the NHRI has further strengthened its role and recognition within the national institutional framework, reinforcing its commitment to ensuring effective rights protection.

Acceptance of recommendations

Approximately 90% of the recommendations outlined in the reports issued by the NHRI are accepted and incorporated into the operations of the relevant institutions. This high rate of implementation underscores the credibility and effectiveness of the Ombudsman's inquiries, demonstrating that the findings

not only merit attention but also serve as valuable guidance for improving institutional practices and strengthening the protection of fundamental rights.

The organisational and operational rules kept in effect or issued by the Government formed as a result of the 2022 elections (e.g. BM (Ministry of Interior) instruction No. 12/2022 (VI. 28.) on the Organisational and Operational Rules of the Ministry of Interior, or IM (Ministry of Justice) instruction No. 5/2024 (VI.20.) on the Organisational and Operational Rules of the Ministry of Justice) define which senior manager or organisational unit of the ministry is responsible for the crafting of a position statement and the preparation of a response to the measure proposed by the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary.

Significant Changes since 2022

Under the leadership of the Ombudsman, the Office has established cooperation with numerous new partners, with a particular focus on safeguarding the rights of society's most vulnerable groups, including children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. The NHRI remains steadfast in its commitment to reducing social inequalities and upholding respect for human dignity, reinforcing its role as a key advocate for fundamental rights and inclusive societal development.

The Hungarian NHRI has adequate access to information and to policy makers and is involved in all stages of legislation and policy making with human rights implications. Based on his mandate, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary is fully authorised to, and capable of participating in each phase of human rights-related legislation and policy-making.

Legislative Consultation and Cooperation

In accordance with Section 20 (2) of the CFR Act, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary (CFR) is entitled to provide comments on draft legislation falling within the scope of his competencies. The CFR actively exercises this mandate and consistently emphasizes the importance of this consultation obligation in its annual reports.

The experience of the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) indicates that the relevant authorities and institutions demonstrate a cooperative approach, ensuring compliance with consultation requirements and providing the necessary information within the prescribed deadlines. This collaborative framework contributes to the effective integration of fundamental rights considerations into the legislative process.

Investigative Powers and On-Site Inspections

The NHRI possesses broad investigative powers, which it exercises in full

compliance with statutory requirements. In 2024, the NHRI conducted numerous on-site inspections at various institutions, including children's homes, retirement homes, residential care facilities for persons with disabilities, and penitentiary institutions.

The findings from these visits informed a series of recommendations aimed at improving conditions and ensuring compliance with fundamental rights standards. The majority of these recommendations were accepted by the relevant institutions, reflecting the effectiveness of the NHRI's oversight and its role in fostering positive institutional reforms.

Cooperation with Policymakers

The NHRI takes part in legislative decision-making and policy-making on an ongoing basis, for example, in its report No. [AJB-1262-29/2023](#), in which he drew attention to the issues concerning the detainees' rights of contact. In their response, BVOP, i.e., the Hungarian Prison Service Headquarters accepted the measures taken by the CFR and took measures to ensure the practical implementation of the proposals made in the report. In the wake of the report, the organ concerned amended BVOP instruction No. 12/2020 (IV. 24.) on the procedural rules of conducting visits in its own competence with effect from 1 July 2024. On the other hand, the legislator amended the respective sections of Act CCXL of 2013 on the execution of punishments, criminal measures, certain coercive measures and confinement for administrative offences in line with the recommendations with effect from 1 March 2025.

Participation in the Legislative Process

In 2024, the NHRI played an increasingly significant role in legislative preparation, including contributions to the amendment of law enforcement regulations. This growing level of cooperation and recognition further reinforces the NHRI's professional credibility and influence in shaping human rights-related policies.

The NHRI has appropriate access to both the necessary information and key policymakers, enabling it to actively participate in all stages of the legislative and policy-making process concerning fundamental rights. Notably, 2024 saw an expansion of opportunities for the NHRI to be involved in the drafting of legislation, further solidifying its role as a key stakeholder in promoting human rights-based governance.

Budget of the Hungarian NHRI

The budgetary resources required for the comprehensive performance of the tasks by the Hungarian NHRI were available in 2024.

The protection of the NHRI's leadership and staff

The independence of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary (CFR) is ensured by legal guarantees that exclude political or economic influence. The Ombudsman and his two deputies enjoy the same immunity as members of the National Assembly, ensuring that they cannot be held accountable for facts or opinions expressed in the course or performance of their duties. However, this immunity does not extend to certain criminal offences, such as incitement against a community or the desecration of a national symbol, nor does it exempt them from civil liability. The staff of the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary are considered public officials and therefore benefit from enhanced legal protection, which covers crimes committed against them in their official capacity.

The physical protection of customer service employees is provided by security personnel during consultations and hearings. Additionally, internal regulations ensure equal opportunity support for employees, with particular attention to those with young children, single parents, individuals with illnesses or disabilities, and employees over the age of 50, such as through flexible working hours. The transparency of the Ombudsman's operations is maintained through clear procedures and publicly accessible reports, further reinforcing its independence and institutional safeguards.

The Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary has not faced any external threats during the discussed period. In a statement issued in December of the year preceding the parliamentary elections, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary emphasized the importance of a society-wide commitment to constitutional fundamental values.

NHRI's recommendations to national authorities

To strengthen the independence and effectiveness of human rights institutions, the NHRI formulates three key recommendations that remain relevant as of today in line with the recommendations of its 2022 baseline report. These recommendations focus on promoting accessibility, enhancing the protection of the rights of homeless individuals, and ensuring the enforcement of human dignity.

Regarding accessibility, the NHRI places special emphasis on ensuring equal access to rights, particularly for persons with disabilities. A notable example is the operation of the regional customer service office of the Directorate-General for Disability Affairs, which, thanks to modern infrastructure, ensures the practical realization of fundamental rights. The Debrecen-based office serves as a model of best practices for both domestic and international delegations. A [report detailing the challenges](#) and recommendations related to accessibility further explores the difficulties persons with disabilities face when accessing public services.

To protect the rights of homeless individuals, the NHRI considers combating the criminalization of homelessness one of its key priorities. The protection of human dignity is a fundamental priority for the most vulnerable groups. The NHRI recommends strengthening appropriate policy measures to ensure that all individuals have access to the conditions necessary for a dignified life.

Ensuring the enforcement of human dignity is a core objective for the NHRI, serving to uphold the rights of every individual. According to the NHRI, continuously updating human rights protection measures and a particular focus on the situation of the most vulnerable groups are essential for increasing effectiveness.

These recommendations align with those outlined in the previous baseline report and offer appropriate responses to contemporary social challenges.

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Human rights defenders and civil society space

Practices negatively impacting civil society and human rights defenders

There is no known case of a member of a civil society organization being subjected to a violent attack or retaliatory measures.

Since 1 January 2014, the Office has been receiving public interest disclosures and has been engaged in whistle-blowers protection by ensuring the possibility of anonymous reporting. Based on nearly a decade of experience, a significant number of whistle-blowers choose to utilize the anonymity provided by the secure electronic system. This allows them to report unlawful or suspected unlawful acts and omissions without fear of retaliation. During the drafting of [Act XXV of 2023 on complaints, public interest disclosures, and whistleblowing regulations](#), a key legislative principle was to build upon and complement existing, well-functioning legal mechanisms while establishing new legal institutions.

The Hungarian NHRI confirms that the following initiatives, frameworks, and policies are in place at the national level:

- Presence of specific laws protecting the rights of human rights defenders;

- Specific strategies to protect human rights defenders and/or inclusion of human rights defenders in human rights action plans.

Government Decree no. 1291/2023 (VII. 19.) on the National Crime Prevention Strategy (2024–2034) and its Action Plan for 2024–2025, as well as Government Decree 1619/2021 on the Government Action Plan for the Implementation of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 (2021–2024), emphasize cooperation with civil society organizations as a fundamental element. Both strategies define the main areas and organizational frameworks of this cooperation, ensuring structured collaboration between governmental and non-governmental actors.

Activities of NHRIs to support civil society space and Human Rights Defenders

In 2024, the Hungarian NHRI took actions to promote civil society space and human rights defenders, including:

- Award of prizes;
- Promotion campaigns;
- Joint meetings.

The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary has the constitutional task to engage and cooperate with civil society. Some of these collaborations take place informally, while others are conducted within organized frameworks. The **Civil Consultative Body** supports the implementation of the tasks associated with the National Preventive Mechanism. The previous three-year mandate of the previous Civil Consultative Body expired in the Autumn of 2024. Following a call for applications initiated by the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary, the new Civil Consultative Body was expanded, making it the largest to date, with 16 members. For the next three-year cycle, its members can also make proposals regarding the content of the annual visit plan of the National Preventive Mechanism, set investigative priorities, and recommend performing visits to specific detention facilities or closed institutions. During the meeting on 11 November 2024, participants summarized past experiences, reviewed the results of institutional visits, and discussed future plans. The successful collaboration between the stakeholders is demonstrated by the continuation of their work with an expanded membership in 2024. The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary conducts institutional visits either personally or through the staff of the office. The jurisdiction of the National Preventive Mechanism now covers nearly 3 000 facilities. The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary also highlighted that several investigations were launched based on reports issued by the members of the Civil Consultative Body. In addition to the [two formal meetings held in 2024](#), the National Preventive Mechanism also organizes professional roundtable discussions involving members of the Civil Consultative

Body and representatives of legislative bodies and law enforcement agencies. These discussions focus on broader, systemic issues – such as irregularities in misdemeanour proceedings – and seek to explore possible solutions.

In the context of the responsibilities of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary as the Independent Disability Mechanism, the work is supported by the **Disability Advisory Board**. This board [consists of delegates from 28 organizations](#), including national advocacy groups for people with disabilities, other organizations working for the rights of people with disabilities, representatives from the scientific community, and the great historical churches. During the board's meeting on 19 November 2024, participants first visited the [Immanuel Home of the Debrecen Great Reformed Church Congregation](#), where the institution's director presented the facility at the behest of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary. The institution provides exemplary solutions in Europe for the care of individuals with severe and multiple disabilities. The members of the Disability Advisory Board were introduced to the results achieved in the fields of special education and social services, with several civil partners highlighting the usefulness and lessons of the professional program. The [meeting's agenda focused on comprehensive issues related to the deinstitutionalization of residential placements and the implementation of supported housing](#) – topics that were also suggested by the Board members in writing to the NHRI. At the Ombudsman's request, civil partners – such as the Máltai Szeretetszolgálat (Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta) and TASZ (Hungarian Civil Liberties Union) – and speakers from the relevant professional fields – such as the delegate from the Hungarian Reformed Church – presented the process of implementing supported housing. They illustrated its outcomes through practical examples.

In 2024, the Ombudsman's institution participated in civil initiatives aimed at recognizing the work of human rights defenders and helpers. In addition to the Varázsceruza Award ceremony, the NHRI actively contributed to the “Odaadó Award” ceremony, where it acted as a jury, evaluating submissions and participating in the award decision process. The event provided an opportunity for the community to recognize those who, through dedicated work, support their fellow human beings facing challenges. Such initiatives serve as exemplary models and contribute to the social appreciation of civil society and human rights values.

In 2024, the Hungarian NHRI took actions and conducted initiatives to protect civil society space and human rights defenders. These included:

- Monitoring;
- Complaints-handling;
- Legal assistance;
- Recommendations and opinions;

- Capacity building;
- Additional mandates (protection of whistleblowers).

The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary regularly collaborates with civil organizations, which often approach the Office regarding their own matters or to protect the rights of individuals they represent. In 2024, numerous initiatives and investigations were launched with the participation of civil society. The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary, as the National Preventive Mechanism, played a particularly important role in this work. In his report no. [AJB-1114/2024](#), the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary presented the findings of a visit to the Tengerszem Integrated Social Institution at the Öregtorony Home in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County. The visit was carried out at the suggestion of a member of the Civil Consultative Board and revealed significant infrastructural and staffing deficiencies in the institution, which threatened the basic rights of those in care. The report made detailed recommendations for the renovation of the institution, improvement of healthcare services, enhancement of hygiene conditions, and an increase in the number of staff. Similarly, report no. [AJB-1182/2024](#) was also prepared with the same objective and details the Ombudsman's visit to the MMSZ Care House - "Domb" Home in Zalaapáti and the Napsugár Service Center. During the unannounced visit, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary assessed the living conditions and treatment of the residents, as well as the shortcomings in the operation of the institutions. Based on the findings, the report proposed several corrective measures to the institution's maintainer.

The problems and issues initiated by civil partners were often discussed in professional forums or roundtable discussions, where the NHRI, representatives from the relevant state ministries, and civil society members collaboratively sought solutions. A noteworthy example of such a practice is the session held in Debrecen, where, upon the suggestion of the Disability Advisory Board, the issues of institutional replacement and supported housing were placed on the agenda.

In 2024, the Ombudsman demonstrated its support for the work of human rights defenders in several significant cases, including monitoring, complaint handling, legal assistance, and the formulation of professional recommendations. The NHRI continues this work to strengthen the protection of human rights and promote the active participation of civil society in the enforcement of fundamental rights.

In 2024, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary continued to collaborate actively with international and regional mechanisms to support human rights defenders and civil society. This work is well-reflected in the activities of the [Disability Advisory Board](#) and the [Civil Consultative Body](#), which were detailed earlier by the NHRI. In addition, the Commissioner for

Fundamental Rights of Hungary received a delegation from the International Rescue Committee, providing them with detailed information on the situation of those fleeing the Ukrainian-Russian conflict and presenting the swift and exemplary initiatives that have been taken to assist refugees since the outbreak of the war.

Furthermore, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary hosted high-level diplomatic meetings, as part of which he met with the new rapporteur from the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice, and Home Affairs (LIBE), during which they discussed issues related to the protection of human rights and the situation in Hungary. The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief also visited, during which the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary gave a comprehensive overview of the domestic situation concerning freedom of religion and the institution's work in this area.

NHRI's recommendations to national and regional authorities

The key recommended steps for national authorities are:

1. Consultative Committees

Implement the practice of Consultative Committees, as successfully introduced by the Hungarian NHRI (the Civil Consultative Body and the Disability Advisory Board), to enhance the role of Ombudsman institutions as intermediaries between civil society and public authorities. This mechanism fosters constructive dialogue and strengthens collaboration on human rights matters. Notably, several successful cases and reports have originated from civil society organizations participating in the Consultative Body operated by the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary, demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach.

2. Enhancing Client Service

- The NHRI of Hungary recommends enhancing client services to ensure comprehensive accessibility and support for complainants, particularly for vulnerable groups. The NHRI highlights its best practices in improving infrastructural and procedural frameworks to serve as a model for national authorities.
- The NHRI recommends the development of modern, fully accessible facilities for human rights defenders and complainants, ensuring physical and info-communication accessibility. The Hungarian NHRI's headquarters and regional offices provide barrier-free access and are equipped with induction loops and child-friendly reception areas, creating an inclusive and supportive environment for all individuals

- seeking assistance.
- National authorities should implement continuous legal and sensitivity training for personnel handling complaints, similar to the NHRI's practice of regular sensitization sessions conducted by the Directorate-General for Equal Treatment (DGET). Such training ensures that staff remain up-to-date with legislative changes and develop a greater awareness of the needs of marginalized communities.
 - Dedicated Hearing and Consultation Spaces - The NHRI recommends the allocation of specially designed conference halls for hearings and meetings, ensuring both physical and digital accessibility. The Hungarian NHRI's practice of holding hearings in an adapted, barrier-free room equipped with an induction loop serves as a model for creating inclusive and professional environments that facilitate effective engagement with civil society actors and human rights defenders.

These recommendations aim to ensure that civil society representatives and human rights defenders receive the necessary institutional support, accessibility, and professional assistance in their work, ultimately strengthening the protection and promotion of fundamental rights at the national level.

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Functioning of justice systems

The NHRI cannot examine the activities of the courts, which means it does not have direct access to information regarding the exercise of the right to a fair trial within the judicial framework. In accordance with the principle of separation of powers, as enshrined in the Fundamental Law of Hungary and relevant legislative provisions, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary does not have authority to examine the activities of the courts. This limitation stems from the requirement of judicial independence, which guarantees that the judiciary functions autonomously, free from interference by the legislative and executive branches, as well as from other state institutions, including the Ombudsman. This safeguard ensures the impartiality and integrity of the judicial system, in line with international standards on the independence of the judiciary.

Submissions pertain to requests for the further expansion of the already

existing systems of free legal aid ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)).

In the preceding years, following the [adoption of the new civil procedure code](#), several opinions and inquiries issued have emphasized the justification for extending legal assistance. This is particularly relevant in light of the expansion of mandatory legal representation, leading to an increased demand for court-appointed lawyers, and the stricter, more professional approach required for legal proceedings, especially regarding the drafting of legal submissions compared to previous regulations.

The Hungarian NHRI undertakes activities to support implementation of the European Courts' judgments. The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary, within the framework of the OPCAT National Preventive Mechanism, regularly monitors the conditions of detention facilities. In evaluating these conditions, the Ombudsman also takes into account the requirements set forth in the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

The NHRI also monitors European recommendations related to judicial systems, including those found in the European Commission's Rule of Law Reports, and suggestions made by the Council of Europe and other relevant stakeholders.

NHRI's recommendations to national and regional authorities

To improve the efficiency and accessibility of judicial proceedings, national and European actors should prioritize the expansion of digital solutions within the justice system. Implementing advanced case management technologies, digital filing systems, and virtual court procedures can significantly contribute to reducing case backlogs, streamlining judicial processes, and increasing transparency. Furthermore, ensuring equal access to digital justice tools, particularly for vulnerable groups, is essential to safeguarding fair and timely legal proceedings, thereby strengthening the overall effectiveness of the justice system.

Hungary 2025

Information from: Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary

Media freedom, pluralism and safety of journalists

In December 2024, the National Assembly has adopted a law that threatens individuals with up to one year of imprisonment for committing online aggression, meaning expressing a desire or intention to commit a violent crime against specific individuals on public online platforms. In Hungary, the National Media and Infocommunications Authority and the Media Council, which operates under it, are responsible for ensuring the independence of the media and overseeing media services. The tasks of the NMHH include promoting press freedom, protecting media pluralism, and regulating the media market to uphold democratic principles.

The Media Council operates as an independent body and is responsible for tasks such as issuing media service licenses, monitoring balanced information, and investigating and sanctioning any potential violations. The activities of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority and the Media Council are regulated by the [media law adopted in 2010](#) (Act CLXXXV of 2010 on Media Services and Mass Media).

The [linked chart](#) provides a comprehensive overview on Hungarian media statistics as of 2024.

Access to information of public interest and documents of this nature is closely linked to [Act CXII of 2011 on the Right to Informational Self-Determination and the Freedom of Information](#), as the fundamental aim of the Act is to ensure freedom of information and protect citizens' right to access information. The Act establishes that public interest data and data made public in the interest of the public must be accessible, and it sets out the rules under which access to such data must be provided.

The NHRI, in most cases, transfers complaints regarding such matters to the [National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information for further information](#). The National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information supports the freedom of mass media by ensuring access to public interest information and protecting freedom of information, while strictly enforcing data protection regulations.

NHRI's recommendations to national and regional authorities

- Establishing Educational Points: Develop nationwide educational programs modelled on the Mobile Ombudsman's Office, aimed at bringing citizens closer. These initiatives would enhance public awareness, fostering a more informed and rights-conscious society.
- Organizing University Lectures: Holding regular awareness-raising and informational lectures at universities and other higher education institutions, involving experts and decision-makers. In 2024, the NHRI

participated in numerous professional events where it presented its activities and delivered professional lectures. It also organized legal awareness programs for students in higher education.

- Encouraging National and European Cooperation: Promoting the exchange of experiences and sharing best practices within the European NHRI network.

Hungary 2025

Information from: Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary

Other challenges to the rule of law and human rights

A significant advancement in anti-corruption measures was the introduction of the whistleblowing system in 2023, which provides special protection for public interest whistle-blowers. The Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary actively participates in this process by operating a protected electronic system, which serves as an effective tool in the fight against corruption. The Office continued this activity in 2024, in line with previous practices and the recommendations outlined in last year's report. The NHRI does not have further information on the outcomes of the subsequent proceedings or the substantiation of the reports, as these fall under the jurisdiction of the respective authorities.

In 2024, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary conducted several investigations aimed at enforcing the principles of the rule of law. These investigations primarily focused on access to education, healthcare, and social services, while also monitoring the practical implementation of recommendations made by European actors.

One [report concerned the operation of a so-called "preschool" group](#) in a primary school. The investigation revealed that the practice hindered the lawful progression of students through grade levels and violated their right to education and legal certainty. The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary recommended reviewing the relevant documentation and taking the necessary actions to enforce the legal provisions.

In the [report regarding the obligation of healthcare providers to investigate complaints](#), the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary found that in many cases, healthcare providers and their administrators had failed to fulfil their obligation to investigate complaints, which violated patients' right to a fair

process. The CFR emphasized that local-level solutions could be more effective during complaint handling procedures and could contribute to preventing further issues.

Two additional reports ([1](#), [2](#)) examined the operations of nursing homes, during which the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary pointed out areas for improvement in care and services. The investigations highlighted the need for greater attention to the specific needs of patients with dementia and identified opportunities to improve documentation related to care. The Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary emphasized that strict adherence to the principle of the rule of law is crucial for ensuring human dignity, as well as the right to physical and mental health, particularly in the field of social services.

In 2024, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary launched an inspection to uncover human rights issues, with a particular focus on political-based discrimination in the field of higher education. In this context, the aim is to ensure the non-discriminatory nature of state-run universities and promote compliance with the requirements of the rule of law.

Further details and the results of the investigations can be found in the following sources: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#).

NHRI's recommendations to national and regional authorities

National and European stakeholders are advised to pay increased attention to structural human rights considerations during the legislative and implementation processes, particularly in the fight against discrimination. The exchange of experiences and sharing of best practices in the protection of human rights can contribute to the harmonization and strengthening of European-level protective frameworks.

