

The President

Ms Ágnes KERTÉSZ
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Hungary
to the Council of Europe

Ref ► CINGO/Pres/Hungary

Strasbourg, 9 July 2026

Dear Ambassador,

As you know, the Conference of INGOs through its periodic country visits and its Expert Council on NGO Law follows the evolution of the civic space and legal framework related to Freedom of Association in Council of Europe member States. The Expert Council carries out thematic and country studies on specific aspects of NGO legislation and its implementation that seem to pose problems of conformity with international standards, notably the European Convention on Human Rights and [Recommendation \(2007\)14](#) on the legal status of NGOs in Europe (which is expected to be updated very soon). Its work covers the 46 member countries of the Council of Europe and Belarus. In the implementation of its mandate, the Expert Council has issued opinions and thematic reports about restrictive legislation and stigmatisation of the civil society sector in Hungary.¹

CINGO and its Expert Council on NGO Law welcome the opportunity created by the political transition in Hungary to restore and strengthen democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and in particular opportunities to strengthen the right to freedom of association and enhance civic space.

In its [program](#) the governing party Tisza identified several problems and formulated commitments to civil society and strong communities. We note that Prime Minister Magyar has expressed an apology for the harassment civil society had to endure – this is a meaningful statement. We also welcome that the new government has already taken some initiatives and measures with the aim of addressing some of these challenges, including the abolition of the Sovereignty Protection Office that was used to intimidate critical voices.

A holistic approach and further measures are necessary to rebuild Hungary's civic space and safeguard the right to freedom of association, peaceful assembly, expression and other related rights guaranteed by the ECHR and the EU Charter. These measures must include repealing existing restrictive laws, such as the Act XLIX of 2021 on the Transparency of Organisations Carrying out Activities Capable of Influencing Public Life and the special tax on immigration, as well

¹ See: Letter of 6 June 2025 - [In English](#); Opinion on the Hungarian Bill on the Transparency of Public Life which was submitted to the National Assembly of Hungary on 13 May 2025 (June 2025) - [In English](#); Opinion on the Hungarian Draft Act on the Transparency of Organisations supported from abroad (2017) - [In English](#). As regards thematic reports, see for instance [Recent adverse developments for non-governmental organisations in Europe](#) - 2026

as supporting progressive reforms for a truly participatory democracy and a strong and diverse civil society sector.

The broadest possible dialogue and meaningful engagement of all stakeholders is essential. You can draw upon the extensive experience, expertise, and recommendations of civil society, as well as European and international institutions.

We would therefore like to invite the Hungarian authorities to share further information on the priorities and steps that the government plans to undertake to strengthen Hungarian civil society and civic engagement. In this regard, the programme for the next General Assembly (28 September-1 October) is being prepared as we speak and convocations/invitations will go out soon. As usual, a public session with the participation of the Permanent Representations will be included on the agenda and we would therefore like to invite you to an exchange of views on that occasion, or alternatively at the following CINGO General Assembly in April next year.

We remain committed to contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for NGOs throughout Europe, including in Hungary. Therefore, the Expert Council stands ready to offer its expertise on any draft regulations concerning NGOs that the Hungarian Government would wish to submit for its consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Gerhard Ermischer
President of the Conference of INGOs

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gerhard Ermischer', written in a cursive style.

Jeremy McBride
President of the Expert Council on NGO
Law of CINGO

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Jeremy McBride', written in a cursive style.