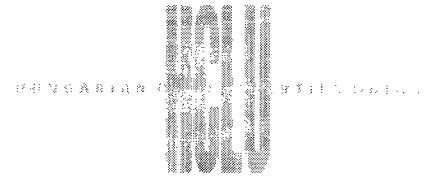




Hungarian Helsinki Committee



EÖTVÖS KÁROLY
POLICY INSTITUTE



Ms. Viviane Reding

European Commission Vice-President in charge of Justice, Fundamental Rights and
Citizenship
BE-1049 Brussels
Belgium

Dear Vice-President Reding,

We, the heads of the below listed Hungarian non-governmental organisations, are writing to express our grave concerns regarding recent legislative developments in Hungary threatening the full and proper implementation of the values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU).

Using their constitutional majority the ruling parties Fidesz-Magyar Polgári Szövetség (Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Union) and Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt (Christian Democratic People's Party) have in the past seven months adopted numerous laws removing institutional guarantees of the rule of law and violating fundamental rights and principles set forth by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Examples include the curbing of the competence of the Constitutional Court; introducing the unjustified dismissal of civil servants; retroactive legislation imposing a punitive tax on certain severance payments paid on the basis of effective laws; the discrimination of persons choosing to stay within private pension schemes; or the widely criticised media laws that severely restrict the freedom of expression by extending the executive's control over all forms of media, including the print press and the internet.

For your information, we are attaching two English language summaries of the most problematic measures and amendments. Several of the concerned areas directly fall within the scope of EU law, but even those that do not fall within this scope, constitute a violation of the values that are common to the Member States and therefore bear strong relevance from the point of view of the Union – especially in the eve of the Hungarian presidency.

Therefore, as heads of organisations committed to freedom, democracy, the rule of law and other values enshrined in Article 2 of the TEU, but also as European citizens, we have felt it important to bring these developments to your attention, and to ask you to use the means available to you to achieve that the Government of Hungary would reconsider the legislative measures that are not in line with its obligations under the TEU.

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If – either during your forthcoming visit to Hungary or later on – you need more detailed information on the matters raised in the attached summaries, we would be happy to provide you with it in the framework of a personal meeting or in any other form of your convenience.

On behalf of the signatories:



András Kádár
Co-chair
Hungarian Helsinki Committee

Magyar Helsinki Bizottság
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The Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC) monitors the enforcement in Hungary of human rights enshrined in international human rights instruments, provides legal defence to victims of human rights abuses by state authorities and informs the public about rights violations. The HHC strives to ensure that domestic legislation guarantees the consistent implementation of human rights norms and the proper functioning of the rule of law.

Balazs Dénes
Executive Director
Hungarian Civil Liberties Union

The Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU) is a law reform and legal defence public interest NGO in Hungary, working independently of political parties, the state or any of its institutions. HCLU's aim is to promote the case of fundamental rights and principles laid down by the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary and by international conventions.

László Majtényi
Chair
Eötvös Károly Policy Institute

The Eötvös Károly Public Policy Institute (EKINT) wishes to contribute to raising professional and general public awareness and to shaping the political agenda in issues with an impact on the quality of relations between citizens and public power. The Institute is deeply committed to the liberal interpretation of constitutionality, constitutional democracy, and individual rights.