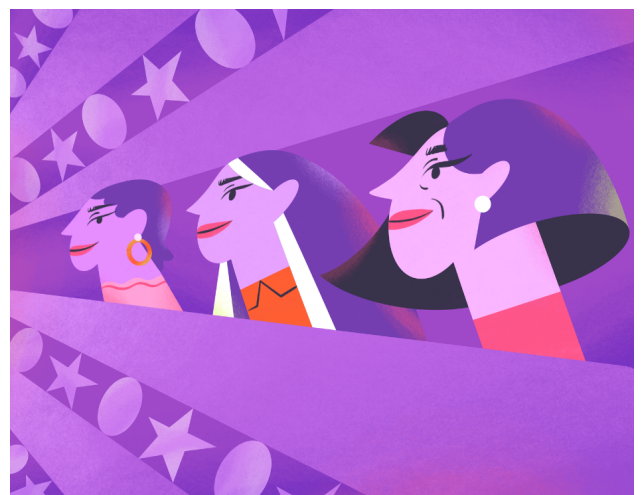


Annual Activity Report 2023

Hungarian Women's Lobby



www.noierdek.hu



Introduction

Message from the Board

2023: A Year of Challenges and Achievements in Women's Rights in Hungary

From the point of view of the Hungarian Women's Lobby, the year 2023 brought significant challenges as well as achievements in the realm of women's rights in Hungary. The EU's Strategy for Gender Equality offered an important opportunity to lobby for critical issues. We observed a strong push within EU politics to advance women's rights and gender equality, even in the face of opposition from countries experiencing democratic backsliding.

While the overall level of gender equality within the EU is gradually improving—particularly in certain member states—Hungary has seen stagnation in key areas, leaving the country trailing behind its European counterparts. One of the most concerning indicators of this stalling is the low level of progress in women's political representation, as highlighted by the EU's Gender Equality Index, as well as the worryingly high prevalence of domestic violence against women.

In addition, the economic crisis that followed the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected women in Hungary. The absence of targeted social policies has exacerbated financial difficulties, especially among lower-income groups. This has further deepened the economic challenges faced by women, underscoring the need for more inclusive and supportive measures moving forward.

Despite facing systematic challenges and financial difficulties, Hungary's women's movement saw important successes in 2023. One of the most notable achievements was the solidarity fostered among our members, which allowed us to strengthen coalitions and cooperation with both our members and their communities.

We also received moral support from EU institutions and international bodies, which recognized our expertise in women's rights. This opened new opportunities to highlight the challenges Hungarian women face, particularly in the context of the war in Ukraine. Additionally, our members have fostered cross-border solidarity, extending support to women beyond Hungary, which has been a positive development to witness.



Organizational Structure

Board & Leadership:

The Hungarian Women's Lobby's Board of Directors has three members:

Réka Sáfrány – Chairwoman

Dr. Enikő Pap – Secretary

Gréta Mészáros – Regular Board Member

They are currently holding their mandates until January 2025.

HWL's Supervisory Board consists of three members:

Marianna Terézia Rózsáné dr. Lupkovics – Chair of the Supervisory Board

Anna Betlen – Regular member

Ágnes Katalin Csordás – Regular member

EWL Representation:

Réka Sáfrány – Board member on behalf of HWL, EWL President until June 2023, Women in Politics Working Group member

Dorottya Szalay – Board Member from June 2023

Dr. Enikő Pap – Alternate Board Member until June 2023, Member of EWL Observatory on Violence Against Women

Borbála Juhász – Alternate Board Member from June 2023, Member of the Brussels Call, BC Steering Group, and Member of the Regional Task Force

Katalin Keveházi – Member of the Feminist Economics Working Group

Membership Overview:

Békés Megyei Nők Egyesülete (Békés County Women's Association)

Bódva-völgyi Közéleti Roma Nők Egyesület (Bódva Valley Public Life Roma Women's Association)

Magyar Cserkészleány Szövetség (Hungarian Girl Scouts Association)

JÓL-LÉT Alapítvány az egyének és közösségek tartós harmóniájáért (WELL-BEING Foundation for Sustainable Harmony of Individuals and Communities)

Közéleti Roma Nők Egyesülete (Public Life Roma Women's Association)

Labrisz Leszbikus Egyesület (Labrisz Lesbian Association)

Magyar Védőnők Egyesülete (Hungarian District Nurses' Association)

MONA Magyarországi Női Alapítvány (MONA Hungarian Women's Foundation)

Nők a Nőkért Együtt az Erőszak Ellen Egyesület (Women for Women Against Violence Association)

Nők a Holnapért Alapítvány (Women for Tomorrow Foundation)

PATENT Patriarchátust Ellenzők Társasága Jogvédő Egyesület (PATENT Society of Opponents of Patriarchy Legal Protection Association)

Sex-Educatio Alapítvány (Sex-Education Foundation)

Nők a Tudományban Egyesület (Women in Science Association)

Színes Gyöngyök - Délvidéki Roma Nőkért Egyesület (Colorful Beads - Association for Southern Hungarian Roma Women)

Veszprémi Nők Kerekasztala Egyesület (Roundtable of Women of Veszprém Association)

Magyar Üzletasszonyok Egyesülete (Hungarian Businesswomen's Association)

Emma Közhasznú Egyesület (Emma Public Benefit Association)

Örömteli Életért Közhasznú Alapítvány (Foundation for Joyful Life)

Nők Egymásért Mozgalom Egyesület (Women for Each Other Movement Association)

Key Activities in 2023

Advocacy & Lobbying

National Advocacy

In 2023, the Hungarian Women’s Lobby continued its advocacy efforts at both national and international levels. We remained active participants in the government’s Human Rights Roundtable, specifically within the thematic working group on women’s rights. In this role, we provided feedback on various strategic and legal documents related to women’s rights and gender equality developed by the government. We also raised concerns based on reports and observations from our member organizations regarding issues affecting women's rights.

As a member organization of the UNICEF Hungarian Children’s Rights Civil Coalition, we actively participated in children’s rights advocacy throughout 2023. It was particularly important for the coalition to respond to the erosion of children's rights and to highlight the specific impact on girls. We consistently sought to draw attention to the conditions in which children receive institutional care and to the situation of children fleeing from Ukraine. The coalition published important methodological guides, calls to action, and statements addressing these pressing issues.

International Advocacy

At the international level, we worked to represent civil society’s women’s rights perspectives within key human rights mechanisms in which Hungary participates. A notable opportunity for this was the United Nations CEDAW review process in February 2023. In collaboration with our member organizations—particularly NANE, Patent, and EMMA Associations—we prepared an alternative report highlighting the primary concerns regarding women's rights in Hungary.

This process allowed us to present these issues at an international forum, providing UN experts with a more comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding of the state of women’s rights in the country. We believe this was important in broadening the discussion, not only through evidence and statistics but also by outlining practical steps for future improvements. The report also received media coverage, including an article on the Qubit.hu website. (<https://qubit.hu/2023/02/09/mismasolt-semmitmondott-kontorfalazott-genfben-a-magyar-kuldottseg-az-ensz-nojogi-bizottsaga-elott>)

Related media appearances can be found on Klubrádió’s (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-mOsEjx8NEY>) and Partizán’s channels (<https://youtu.be/ktWtoCK79Pg?feature=shared>):



International Representation

In 2023, the Hungarian Women's Lobby and its member organization, NANE Association, were honored to be invited by the Embassy of the Netherlands to participate in an event marking the 12th anniversary of the Istanbul Convention. We extend our gratitude to Her Excellency Desirée Bonis for hosting this important occasion. At a working lunch with ambassadors and diplomatic representatives, two of our delegates, Dr. Enikő Pap and Réka Sáfrány, presented the international and domestic significance of the Convention. Despite the fact that Hungary has yet to ratify the Convention, the event provided an important platform to highlight its relevance and discuss its impact on women's rights.



In 2023, the Hungarian Women's Lobby (HWL) continued its active participation in the European Women's Lobby (EWL). In the first half of the year, Réka Sáfrány, representing the Hungarian coordination at EWL, had the honour of serving as the President of EWL for the last half-year of a 2-year mandate. This period provided significant lobbying opportunities on women's rights issues. One key moment was the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) meeting in New York, where the main focus was on advancing the digital rights of women and girls. This topic is rapidly evolving globally, yet women and girls still face significant disadvantages. Beyond addressing these disparities, the focus was also on laying the groundwork to ensure their rights and safety in the digital space. The forum allowed for the discussion of various regulatory options and provided decision-makers with crucial information on best practices moving forward.



In collaboration with other EWL representatives, HWL advocated for women's safety in the digital space and contributed to the development of the EU's directive on combating violence against women. Additionally, there were important discussions on eliminating prostitution and human trafficking, fostering global cooperation through the UN platform. From a European perspective, this was particularly important in the context of revising the EU directive on combating human trafficking, aiming to strengthen the protection of women's rights. The forum provided a unique opportunity for women's rights advocates to collaborate globally, exchange ideas, and discuss critical issues. At an EWL side event, we addressed the issue of violence against women in the digital space, with participation from both European and international, including African, representatives.



The EU's Gender Equality Strategy, which runs until 2025, presented an opportunity for important legal and policy initiatives related to women's rights. During this period, the directive aimed at eliminating violence against women and domestic violence was also developed and agreed upon. The EWL played a key role in ensuring that the directive aligned with the principles of the Istanbul Convention, given the varied practices and legal frameworks across EU member states. This directive aims to improve standards in the legal, judicial, and other sectors, ensuring better protection for women and girls in every EU country. The work of the EWL and other women's rights organizations in this area has been highly productive, and all EWL member organizations can take pride in the fact that, after decades of lobbying, the directive is set to be adopted by early 2024.



2023 also provided the opportunity to prepare for the 2024 European Parliament elections. The EWL issued a manifesto titled *Europe at a Crossroads*, which Réka Sáfrány helped to present. The manifesto, which has been translated into Hungarian, outlines key legal issues requiring further progress and serves as a foundation for engaging with political parties and EU institutions on advancing women's rights and gender equality.

Projects & Programs

Empowering communities to combat violence against women and domestic violence in Hungary, sponsored by the Council of Europe

The Hungarian Women's Lobby, in consortium with NANE Association and Patent Association, implemented a [communication and advocacy project](#) related to the **Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence** (Istanbul Convention). The project was initiated by the **Council of Europe** in several countries within the region where the Istanbul Convention had been rejected. The campaign and advocacy activities targeted the general public, local authorities, and various stakeholders from professional organizations working on violence against women and domestic violence. To carry out our activities, we used methodologies developed by the **Council of Europe's Gender Equality Division**, the **Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) Network**, and **UN Women**.

From February to August 2023, HWL, NANE and PATENT associations led a joint campaign to dispel myths and misinformation surrounding the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). The project also highlighted best practices, as well as the experiences of victims of violence in Hungary, and identified urgent steps needed to improve the situation.



Images from the campaign: The Istanbul Convention versus Hungarian reality on the issue of custody rights in domestic violence cases.

The campaign included live roundtable discussions and podcast recordings, held in May, June, and July. These forums addressed key pillars of the Convention: victim support, holding perpetrators accountable, and prevention. Experts from various fields participated, including victims, social workers, legal experts, and municipal representatives. Topics ranged from victim protection to the role of media and school prevention programs. The podcasts are publicly available on Spotify, [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). The second roundtable is also available on video here: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=797571508480685> .



The project concluded on August 8 with a half-day conference in Budapest at the European Youth Centre, attended by 70 participants from government, civil society, embassies, and the media. International experts discussed the victim-centered approach of the Convention and its successful implementation in countries that have ratified it. The conference also showcased promising local initiatives and municipal collaborations aimed at supporting victims of violence.



This campaign effectively raised awareness of the challenges facing women in Hungary and strengthened cross-sector cooperation to combat violence against women and domestic violence.

The **campaign** reached over **23,600 people** and included myth-busting visuals, translations and adaptations of Council of Europe materials and engagement with the media.

Further Media Appearances:

Mérce (June 11, 2023)

It's absurd that someone who suffers violence is the one who must leave their home, flee, and start a new life.

<https://merce.hu/2023/06/11/abszurd-hogy-valakit-eroszak-er-megis-neki-kell-elhagynia-az-otthonat-elmanekulni-uj-eletet-kezdeni/>

Népszava (June 14, 2023)

The EU has joined the Istanbul Convention on preventing violence against women, but this is unlikely to bring significant change in Hungary.

<https://nepszava.hu/2023/06/14/csatlakozott-a-nok-elleni-eroszak-megelozeserol-szolo-isztambuli-egyezmennyhez-az-eu-de-itthon-ez-aligha-hoz-erdemi-valtozast/>

Mérce (July 20, 2023)

"A form of violence appears that the system is unable to handle."

<https://merce.hu/2023/07/20/megjelenik-egy-olyan-eroszakforma-amelyet-nem-tud-kezelni-a-rendszer/>

Jelen (August 26, 2023)

Vera Péterfi: In all cases ending in homicide, there were warning signs.

<https://jelen.hu/2023/08/26/peterfi-vera-az-emberellessel-vegzo-do-esetek-mindegyikenel-voltak-elojelek/>

The project facilitated **networking events** in **six municipalities** in Budapest to raise awareness of services provided to victims, and to discuss policies and actions that local authorities can implement

to reduce violence against women. These programs targeted both victims and the wider public, providing education and information to support a safer community.

"The campaign offered an outstanding opportunity to reaffirm the principles of the Istanbul Convention in the Hungarian national context. Despite the lack of ratification at the country level, with the help of the project we managed to strengthen and support the commitment of several municipalities to implement services for the support of victims of violence against women and domestic violence. Their approach, based on victims' needs, relied effectively on the indispensable 4 pillars of the Convention: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution and Co-ordinated Policies." said **Réka Sáfrány**, Chairwoman of the Hungarian Women's Lobby.

Our Publications in Hungarian:

Council of Europe: The Four Main Pillars of the Istanbul Convention: http://noierdek.hu/2/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/COE_Az-Isztambuli-Egyezme%CC%81ny-ne%CC%81gy-fo%CC%8B-pille%CC%81re.pdf

Council of Europe: Why Is the Istanbul Convention Needed? – Facts and Myths: http://noierdek.hu/2/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/COE_Mie%CC%81rt-van-szu%CC%88kse%CC%81g-az-Isztambuli-Egyezme%CC%81nyre-te%CC%81nyek-e%CC%81s-te%CC%81vHITEK.pdf

Council of Europe: Why Is the Istanbul Convention Needed? – What Changes Can It Bring and What Changes Has It Already Brought in Other Countries? http://noierdek.hu/2/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/COE_Mie%CC%81rt-van-szu%CC%88kse%CC%81g-az-Isztambuli-Egyezme%CC%81nyre_2.pdf

Council of Europe: Promising Practices – On the Path to Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls
http://noierdek.hu/2/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Brochure-Istanbul-Convention-Sustaining-Progress_HUN_online.pdf

International Project Cooperation:

'GLORIA' Project – Feminism and Strategic Approach to Gender Equality

In 2023, the Hungarian Women's Lobby participated as a collaborating partner in the project *GLORIA – Feminism and Strategic Approach to Gender Equality*, alongside the Romanian Women's Lobby (RoWL), Hedda Association, the Bulgarian Platform of the European Women's Lobby, and the Network of East-West Women (NEWW). Led by the Community Safety and Mediation Center Foundation (CMSC), the two-year project focused on supporting the organizational development of 22 member NGOs of RoWL. The initiative aimed to enhance their capacity to raise public awareness about the challenges faced by the women they serve. This partnership proved highly insightful and contributed significantly to our advocacy efforts for gender equality.

Other notable events:

Film Screening of *Buying Her* in May



As part of its European tour, the documentary *Buying Her*, presented by Magic Lantern Pictures and Exodus Cry, was screened at Toldi Cinema in Budapest, an event initiated by the Hungarian Women’s Lobby (HWL). The film explores the root causes of sex trafficking, focusing on the men who purchase sex. It is the first documentary to follow the lives of sex buyers, examining their motivations and how

exposure to pornography from a young age often leads to predatory behavior. Through candid accounts from sex buyers and survivors of human trafficking, the film sheds light on the damaging cycle and offers glimpses of hope by showing the changes in the lives of these men.

Following the screening, a roundtable discussion took place with Hungarian experts on the topic, including Ágnes De Coll (Baptist Aid), Dr. Árpád Sebestyén (crisis psychologist), Borbála Juhász (HWL), László Berzi-Nagy (anti-porn activist), and two female survivors of human trafficking. The discussion was moderated by Zsófia Balogh (Partizán).

Update of the NŐVÉRTÉKA Knowledge Base (<https://noverteka.v-comp.ch/noverteka/home.htm>)

In 2023, the NŐVÉRTÉKA women’s rights and gender knowledge base was significantly expanded with over 300 new entries. This update incorporates journal articles published between 2015 and 2022 from respected academic sources, including Szociológiai Szemle, socio.hu, Replika, Metszetek, Erdélyi Társadalom, TNTeF, Intersections, Demográfia, Educatio, Esély, Információs Társadalom, and Iskolakultúra.



With this update, NŐVÉRTÉKA continues to serve as a comprehensive and up-to-date resource on women's rights and gender issues. The platform remains accessible to the public, offering valuable insights for researchers, advocates, and the broader community. This update was made possible through the dedicated work of Csaba Zugschwert during his internship at ELTE’s Faculty of Social Sciences, with coordination by his supervisor, Anikó Gregor. We are grateful for their contribution.

TeFESZT! Project in Terézváros District of Budapest

In August 2023, we took part in the Te!Feszt! event, held in Budapest's 6th district, Terézváros. The Deputy Mayor of Terézváros, Szilvia Temesvári, highlighted the importance of our collaboration when promoting the event: “Join us at Te!Feszt this weekend! The Hungarian Women’s Lobby, which unites 22 Hungarian women’s rights organizations, will be present with four of its member organizations.”



At the festival, visitors were introduced to the victim support and prevention programs of NANE Association and Patent Association, the Let It Be Visible! campaign by NEM! – Women for Women Together Against Violence, and the initiatives of the Women for Tomorrow Association aimed at supporting female workers.

Successful Collaboration with E.ON Hungária ProBono Team

We are delighted to report the successful completion of our collaboration with the E.ON Hungária ProBono team. We are deeply grateful for their expert assistance and the inspiring community experience they provided. Their support was invaluable in helping us renew our communication strategy and modernize our website.



OUR MEMBERS’ HIGHLIGHTS

Our member organizations have undertaken significant professional and advocacy work throughout 2023. Below is a selection of their activities:

NANE Association

At the start of the year, NANE hosted its Rebel Girls Camp during the first week of January in Budapest, where 25 teenage girls participated in self-awareness, educational, and community-building programs. The camp, now in its sixth edition, remains one of NANE's most popular initiatives, with spots filling up within hours. Both the girls and the volunteers found the five-day experience transformative, thanks to the support of donors from NANE’s December fundraising campaign.



EMMA Association

On January 16, EMMA participated in the Hungarian Women's Lobby General Assembly. During the event, we shared insights on the joint efforts of EMMA and Patent Association to support women fleeing the war in Ukraine. EMMA has played a particularly active role in advocating for women's rights around childbirth. This work not only impacts Hungarian women but also extends to supporting the reproductive and childbirth rights of disadvantaged women from Transcarpathia who have relocated to Hungary due to the war in Ukraine.

NATE Women in Science Association

In April 2023, the *Women in Science Association* (NATE) successfully organized the *Girls' Day* initiative once again. This project, which has been running for over a decade, offers high school girls interested in STEM subjects the opportunity to visit companies, organizations, and scientific institutions. During *Girls' Day*, these young women experience inspiring workshops and hands-on activities across various scientific fields.



The initiative plays a crucial role in addressing gender imbalance in STEM by giving girls early exposure and opportunities to engage with these subjects. This important project has already supported many girls in pursuing their interests in science, and we hope it continues to thrive in the future.

Financial Overview

Financial Summary for 2023

In 2023, the Hungarian Women's Lobby generated a total income of **30,777.50 EUR**. This included revenue from project grants amounting to **28,937.50 EUR**, donations totaling **1,255 EUR**, membership fees of **150 EUR**, and an additional **185 EUR** from the 1% personal income tax donations. A small portion of the income, **250 EUR**, came from sales revenue.

On the expense side, the organization spent **3,027.50 EUR** on services and **225 EUR** on bank fees, bringing the total expenses for the year to **3,252.50 EUR**. As a result, the organization ended the year with a net income of **26,475 EUR**.

Plans for 2024

As we enter 2024, we have several important plans ahead. Topics like violence against women, especially online harassment, will continue to be key areas of focus for us. This is particularly relevant as 2024 will see both European Parliament and municipal elections in Hungary, events we will closely monitor.

Additionally, we aim to launch new projects to commemorate the 20th anniversary of our organization. One of our ambitions is to renew our public policy recommendations on women's rights and gender equality, ensuring they address current societal challenges after 10 years.

We extend our sincere thanks to the staff, volunteers, followers, and partners of our member organizations for their collaboration and support throughout the year. We look forward – in feminist solidarity – to continuing our efforts to advance social equality together.

Contact Information

Address:

Magyar Női Érdekvégyesítő Szövetség
Rákóczi út 11. 1/10., 1088 Budapest, Hungary
noierdek@gmail.com

Web: www.noierdek.hu

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NoiErdek>

LinkedIn: <https://hu.linkedin.com/company/magyar-női-érdekvégyesítő-szövetség>

If you would like to support our work, please donate to us through [PayPal](#). Thank you!