The EEA NGO Programme and the controversy about civil society in Hungary
The “blacklisted” Hungarian NGOs are the following:

- Transparency International Hungary (www.transparency.hu/)
- K-Monitor (http://k-monitor.hu/)
- Asimov Foundation (http://atlatszo.hu/)
- Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (http://tasz.hu/)
- Roma Press Center (http://romasajtokozpont.hu/)
- Krétakör Foundation (http://kretakor.eu/)
- NaNe Women’s Rights Association (http://www.nane.hu/)
- Foundation for Democratic Youth (http://www.i-dia.org/)
- Hungarian Women’s Lobby (http://noierdek.hu/)
- Labris Lesbian Association (www.labrisz.hu)
- PATENT – Association Against Patriarchism (http://patent.org.hu/)
- LiFE – Association of Young Liberals (http://liberalisfiatalok.hu/)
- Szivárvány Misszió Foundation (http://budapestpride.hu/)

- “Blacklist” of 13 civic organizations was announced, and names of evaluators of the NGO Programme were leaked to media.
Chronology 2.

• The Government Control Office’s audit started in June 2014, the foundations disputed the legal basis of the investigations, but received no answer.

• 58 NGOs supported by the Programme were also audited by the GCO.

• The Norwegian Government expressed its concerns.

International solidarity action of NGOs: Stop Targeting Civil Society in Hungary!

Stop Targeting Civil Society

Hungary: Attacks against civil society must stop

Paris-Geneva, June 12, 2014. As the Hungarian Government meets today representatives from Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein to discuss the European Economic Area Grants, the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, an FIDH-OMCT joint programme, expresses its deep concern that the Hungarian government is alarmingly shrinking the space of civil society by hindering their access to funding, conducting unexpected inspections and blacklisting prominent human rights organisations.

Hungary: Stop targeting NGOs

Amnesty International calls on the Hungarian government to stop targeting NGOs and civil society groups but ensure that they can exercise their right to freedom of association and freedom of expression without intimidation.

The organization is concerned at what appears to be an attempt by the newly reelected government in Hungary to silence Hungarian NGOs that are carrying out vital human rights work and threatening the rights to freedom of association and expression.

source: omct.org

source: amnesty.eu
Chronology 3.

- **June 2014**: The audit report of the previous Programme (2008-11) was leaked. The Government announced that they might file a criminal investigation for “organized criminal activity” and embezzlement.

- **GCO audit went on with threatening to implement sanctions for non-cooperation.**

- **The Operators submitted all documents, except confidential and sensitive information.**
Criminal accusations

„NGOs are paid political activists serving foreign interest”
(Viktor Orbán, PM, HU)

• August 2014: The Inner City Police Department requested documents from the Fund Operator.

• Media revealed that an official investigation was launched by the National Bureau of Investigation against suspects unknown in an embezzlement case related to the NGO Programme; later the offence was changed to misappropriation.
Chronology 5.

Escalation!

8 September 2014 - Police raid on the premises of Ökotárs Foundation, at its accountant, the IT provider company, one of the partner foundations (DemNet) and an employee, involving 43 officers altogether.

Demonstrations were organized for the evening, and during the following weekend.
Solidarity
September 2014 - Online solidarity campaign: #listmetoo, #állj
Petition signed by 977 NGOs from 60 countries (http://blacklistedhungarians.eu/)

Several press releases:
- Human Rights Watch
- Transparency International
- Amnesty International
- Civicus
Battle at courts

- September 2014: GCO ordered the suspension of the tax registration numbers of the Operators.

- Appeals were submitted against the suspension of tax numbers, and Operators turned to court in the case.

- October 2014: GCO released the report of its audit, containing numerous allegations of malfeasance, some of which it was alleged amount to criminal wrongdoing, including unlicensed financial activity, misappropriation of assets, and fraud, however, without referring to any concrete data, or names, or amounts of supposedly misspent funds.
Chronology 7.

- **January 2015**: The Operator foundations filed lawsuits against the suspension of their tax numbers.

- **Tax inspections at 7 NGOs supported by the NGO Programme were launched.**

- **Court decision said that house search against the Operator was illegal.**

- The proceeding court sought the opinion of the Constitutional Court, whether the tax number suspension conflicted the Basic Law (Constitution).

- **October 2015**: The Constitutional Court effectively referred the decision back to the district court.
Chronology 8.

November 2015: Agreement reached between the Donors and the Hungarian Government regarding the use of funds in the 2009-14 period; this reiterates that the Hungarian Government has no responsibility or oversight concerning the NGO Programme.
Thank you!
norvegcivilalap.hu/en