

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE

REPORT ON THE BIDEN  
ADMINISTRATION'S POLITICAL  
CORRUPTION AND INFLUENCE-  
PEDDLING ACTIVITIES IN  
HUNGARY

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	4
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	7
<b>I. THE AMERICAN MONEY TAPS</b> .....	7
<b>1.1. Foreign Funds and Political Interference—Background</b> .....	7
<b>1.2. Governmental and Quasi-Governmental Organizations</b> .....	9
1.2.1. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) .....	9
1.2.2. National Endowment for Democracy (NED) .....	12
1.2.3. National Democratic Institute (NDI) .....	13
1.2.4. Internews .....	14
1.2.5. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) .....	14
1.2.6. U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) .....	16
1.2.7. German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) .....	17
<b>1.3. Channels of Foreign Funding</b> .....	19
<b>1.4. The Trump Administration and the Dismantling of the Political Activist Network</b> .....	20
<b>II. OBJECTIVES AND INTERMEDIARIES</b> .....	22
<b>2.1. Motivations for Foreign Interference in Hungary</b> .....	22
<b>2.2. Intermediaries in Hungary and Central Europe</b> .....	23
2.2.1. Zinc Network in the Central European Region .....	29
2.2.2. International Research & Exchanges Board in Hungary .....	30
2.2.3. Internews and Hungary .....	32
2.2.4. Dexis in Hungary .....	33
2.2.5. The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) .....	34
2.2.6. Prague Civil Society Center .....	35
<b>2.3. The Soros Network’s Operations in Hungary</b> .....	37
<b>2.4. Activities of Other Influence-Wielding Agencies and Organizations in Hungary</b>	38
2.4.1. Action for Democracy .....	38
2.4.2. The United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM) and Hungary .....	40
2.4.3. Globsec and Hungary .....	41
2.4.4. The Global Engagement Center and Hungary .....	43
2.4.5. Freedom House .....	45

<b>2.5. The U.S. Department of State’s “NOFO” Calls for Proposals regarding Hungary</b>	46
2.5.1. Strengthening Transparency and Accountability through Investigative Reporting (STAIR) Program	47
2.5.2. Central Europe Program	47
<b>III. THE EU’S ROLE</b>	50
<b>3.1. George Soros’s Gaining Influence in Brussels</b>	51
<b>3.2. Financial Resources and Programs</b>	52
<b>3.3. The NDICI—Global Europe and Creative Europe Programs</b>	54
<b>3.4. Horizon Europe Program</b>	57
<b>3.5. Parallel Funding: U.S. and European Sources</b>	58
<b>3.6. Other Organizations</b>	59
3.6.1. Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)	59
3.6.2. European Endowment for Democracy (EED)	60
3.6.3. Wolne Sady (Free Courts)	60
<b>3.7. Legal Instruments of the European Union</b>	61
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	64

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government appointed András László as government commissioner responsible for investigating political corruption funds paid to Hungarian legal entities by the United States Agency for International Development. The purpose of this report is to present the irregularities uncovered by the Government Commissioner.

The American left sought, on ideological grounds, to undermine and topple the Hungarian government. From government positions, they used U.S. government resources to support those Hungarian actors whom they deemed willing and capable for this purpose.

The interference in Hungary's internal affairs was not unique. Influence operations followed the same pattern as in many other countries around the world. U.S. government money was sourced from multiple entities (U.S. Department of State, USAID, USAGM, NED, etc.), often through intermediary organizations, with multiple layers of transfer, and in many cases not exclusively for Hungary but for regional programs. The intention was to conceal the money's path and original source—that is, the foreign government mandate—as well as the exact manner of its use.

At the beginning of Donald J. Trump's second presidential term, he suspended payments from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)—one of the key tools of this intervention—and ordered a review of the programs.

The overhaul of the U.S. international development system took many months and was not completed by the end of 2025. Efforts to reform the system have been slowed by protracted legal proceedings and political battles over international development programs worth billions of dollars.

USAID was organizationally integrated into the U.S. Department of State. In the spring of 2025, Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced that 5,200 of USAID's active programs—83 percent of the total—had been canceled.<sup>1</sup> The vast majority of employees had been laid off by September. The announcement regarding the organizational restructuring openly stated that (during Joe Biden's presidency) the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor had become “a platform for left-wing activists to wage vendettas against ‘anti-woke’ leaders in nations such as Poland, Hungary, and Brazil.”<sup>2</sup> During Joe Biden's presidency, all three countries had conservative leaderships who maintained good relations with President Donald Trump during his first term (2017–2021). The Telex Academy received direct funding from this Bureau: first \$740,000, then \$690,000—the latter was blocked due to the freezing of funds. Meanwhile, the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the Department of State “facilitated mass migration around the world” through international organizations and NGOs.

From USAID's Central Europe Program, which had a total budget of \$35 million, the first direct payments to Hungarian organizations took place in October 2022. This means that following the 2022 foreign election campaign financing scandal (the so-called “rolling dollars” scandal), the Biden administration positioned itself to exert constant pressure and intervention. Taking

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<sup>1</sup> <https://x.com/marcorubio/status/1899021361797816325>

<sup>2</sup> <https://statedept.substack.com/p/a-new-state-department-to-meet-the>

into account other grants for political influence, this amount is significantly higher. Various cross-border programs in Central Europe were funded with tens of millions of additional dollars. Due to the number of such programs and the mixed U.S.-European funding of the organizations involved in their implementation, the total amount of political corruption funds intended for and received in Hungary can only be estimated.

Due to the suspension of funding, several former grantees have spoken out, and their statements are revealing. According to the Central European Regional Director of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), \$30–35 million flowed into the region annually, and Hungary is the most affected by the suspension of funds—which confirms that Hungary was a priority area of intervention for the Biden administration.<sup>3</sup>

Even by conservative estimates, the total value of these funds approaches or may even exceed \$100 million. USAID spent hundreds of millions more on programs worldwide that were listed in annual reports simply as “miscellaneous foreign awardees.”

Despite the Trump administration’s intentions, a full review of the programs from the U.S. side did not take place due to legal proceedings, protracted leadership appointments, and resistance from intermediary organizations and other entities outside the scope of government oversight. However, the suspension of funding alone dealt a significant blow to the corrupt network operated by the American left, as numerous beneficiaries publicly reported in the spring of 2025.

The Trump administration took several measures to halt interference in Hungary:

- Samantha Power, the head of USAID, who had personally met with USAID’s Hungarian partner organizations in Budapest in February 2023, was dismissed.
- USAID programs in Hungary were canceled.
- USAID diplomats were recalled from the embassy in Budapest, and a new chargé d’affaires was appointed to head the embassy.
- State Department grants, that had been approved but not yet disbursed, were withdrawn.
- The Hungarian language service of the Radio Free Europe news portal, which operated with funding and oversight from the USAGM, was discontinued.

The American left utilized an extensive network of organizations as intermediaries or for direct influence in Hungary. The combined resources of the following organizations amounted to more than one billion dollars over the past few years:

- the National Endowment for Democracy (NED),
- the National Democratic Institute (NDI),
- the International Republican Institute (IRI),
- the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF),
- the Prague Civil Society Center (PCSC),
- Internews,
- the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA),
- the International Research and Exchange Board (IREX),
- Dexis Consulting,
- the Zinc Network,
- Globsec.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://revdem.ceu.edu/2025/05/28/implications-termination-us-assistance/>

The cancellation of previous programs did not mean the end of the network of left-wing globalist organizations. After USAID funding was cut off, hundreds of organizations in Europe alone announced that the decision would limit their operations or force them to suspend their programs indefinitely. Congress, however, despite fierce political debates, maintained its central budget funding for NED—independently of USAID—in 2025 and early 2026, amounting to \$315 million annually, from which NED independently funds members of the global left-wing political corruption network.

Since the 1980s, U.S. government agencies have increasingly relied on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to implement government objectives. The network of organizations built by George Soros followed the same model and became so closely intertwined with government programs and objectives that it is impossible to distinguish which parts of their activities were carried out on their own initiative and which ones were carried out on the government's behalf. Even before the Open Society Foundation was established in 1979, the Soros brothers had already received important U.S. government contracts.

To pursue genuine development activities, Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced a new global health strategy.<sup>4</sup> The United States has placed development programs deemed beneficial on a bilateral intergovernmental basis, and partner countries are also parties to the agreement and its implementation—in contrast to previous practice, when the U.S. government bypassed the other government to fund local organizations to achieve its own political objectives. Programs aimed at supporting persecuted Christians have also been launched, in which Hungary and the United States have once again agreed to cooperate, as they did during the first Trump administration.<sup>5</sup>

It is clear from negotiations with American partners that the American left's intervention in Hungary did not serve American national security or foreign policy interests, but was closely linked to President Donald Trump's first election victory. The American left's goal was to politically, legally, and financially cripple Donald Trump. The foreign policy implication of this is that the Democrats also waged a vendetta against President Trump's international allies who maintained good relations with him, even against NATO allies, as in the case of Hungary.

Despite the closure of USAID, the left-wing global political corruption network continues its attacks against Hungary. Given the increasingly polarized state of American domestic politics, it must be expected that if the Democrats return to power in the United States, they will launch a vendetta against Donald Trump and his movement's foreign partners.

The survival of the left-wing network's organizations is almost certain. The massive financial support they have received in recent years presumably provides them with sufficient reserves, and in Brussels plans are ready to fund the network's organizations.

This is precisely why it is essential that we also take measures in Hungary to protect our country's freedom and sovereignty, ensure the transparency of foreign government funding, place foreign-funded projects on an intergovernmental basis, and dismantle the activities of the intermediary network.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.state.gov/america-first-global-health-strategy>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/02/united-states-and-hungary-partner-on-advancing-religious-freedom-in-the-middle-east-and-africa/>

# DETAILED REPORT

## INTRODUCTION

The Hungarian Government appointed a government commissioner to investigate political corruption funds paid by USAID to Hungarian legal entities.<sup>6</sup>

The purpose of this report is to present the practices of foreign influence-buying in previous years, the government agencies providing funding, the members of the intermediary network, and the beneficiaries in Hungary, thereby providing support in preventing further foreign influence operations.

From the perspective of safeguarding Hungary's sovereignty and Hungarian democracy, it is in Hungary's fundamental interest to monitor and, where possible, prevent foreign attempts to influence Hungarian public life.

During his visit to the United States, Government Commissioner András László held talks with senior staff in the federal government, members of Congress and advisors, as well as with American foreign policy experts. In addition to the discussions in the United States, he also held talks regarding foreign attempts at influence observed in other parts of the world and the efforts made to prevent them.

## I. THE AMERICAN MONEY TAPS

### 1.1. Foreign Funds and Political Interference—Background

The Hungarian public was shocked by the foreign funding scandal that erupted after the 2022 parliamentary elections. Opposition parties and organizations supporting their campaigns received significant foreign funding. An investigation into the foreign financing revealed that Hungarian left-wing organizations, with financial assistance from the American and European left, had built an extensive system of influence in Hungary.<sup>7</sup> As part of this effort, Hungarian opposition media outlets and political activist organizations calling themselves “independent” were supported with billions of Hungarian forints from abroad through intermediary organizations—with the aim of undermining the Hungarian government's domestic and international reputation and, ultimately, overthrowing the democratically elected Hungarian government.

Hungarian laws are clear regarding the financial transparency of political parties and civil society organizations capable of influencing public opinion. The 1989 Act on the Operation and

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<sup>6</sup> Hungarian Gazette. Government Resolution No. 1033/2025 (II.27). On the appointment of a government commissioner responsible for investigating political corruption funds paid by the United States Agency for International Development to Hungarian legal entities. Source:

<https://magyarkozlony.hu/dokumentumok/a062490b8d5a363ee4b16608431345f0b2fb2e9a/megtekintes>

<sup>7</sup> Summary report on foreign influence on the 2022 Hungarian parliamentary elections

[https://www.parlament.hu/documents/129803/64121212/%C3%96sszefoglal%C3%B3\\_jelent%C3%A9s\\_A\\_2022\\_%C3%A9vi\\_moi\\_ogyi\\_v%C3%A1laszt%C3%A1sok\\_k%C3%BClf\\_bef.pdf](https://www.parlament.hu/documents/129803/64121212/%C3%96sszefoglal%C3%B3_jelent%C3%A9s_A_2022_%C3%A9vi_moi_ogyi_v%C3%A1laszt%C3%A1sok_k%C3%BClf_bef.pdf)

Financing of Political Parties<sup>8</sup> prohibits political parties from accepting support from other states, non-Hungarian citizens, as well as domestic and foreign companies or organizations. Regulations concerning non-governmental organizations operating in Hungary<sup>9</sup> serve to establish transparency requirements for other organizations. Current regulations allow non-governmental organizations to accept both domestic and foreign funding.

Since many governments find it objectionable for other states to interfere in their internal affairs, donors themselves show limited openness to funding political parties. However, an analyst at an EU-funded think tank candidly noted in a report that donors provide support to political parties by framing it as support for civil society. “Depending on who the assistance providers are, funding can be categorised as civil society support when it is provided as core or operational funding to certain organizations. These actors then implement party support programmes.”<sup>10</sup>

Political-party support can be viewed as interference by European governments in the domestic politics of other countries, which is why fewer donors focus on this category. The operational interaction among the different actors in party assistance may also contribute to the low figures. Depending on who the assistance providers are, funding can be categorised as civil society support when it is provided as core or operational funding to certain organisations. These actors then implement party support programmes, with only a certain percentage of their budget dedicated to political-party support.

Attempts at foreign political interference continued even after the 2022 parliamentary elections. The American left and the Biden administration explicitly sought to discredit and overthrow national, right-wing governments that had cooperated with his predecessor, Donald J. Trump.

To this end, they launched thematic and regional programs to fund organizations they deemed suitable, with the aim of expanding their networks of influence and spreading the “woke” ideology that shapes the thinking of the American left.

Under President Biden’s administration, USAID made it a strategic priority to integrate the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into all projects in accordance with the USAID’s Equity Action Plan.<sup>11</sup> LGBTQ rights have taken on an increasingly prominent role in official development documents. In addition, the promotion of LGBTQ ideology has appeared in numerous specific measures taken by the Biden–Harris administration.

For fiscal year 2024, President Biden requested a total of \$2.8 billion from Congress for foreign interventions such as the projects funded by the Central Europe Program (Chapter 2.2).<sup>12</sup>

At the beginning of the funding chain were government agencies led by the American left. Left-wing public and private foundations working closely with these government agencies participated in the cross-funding and implementation of the programs. The programs and priorities of U.S. government agencies were reflected by the intermediary organizations, which could also count on EU funding. Through them, millions of dollars and euros flowed to Hungarian intermediary organizations, then to left-wing media outlets and to dozens of organizations posing as civil society groups.

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<sup>8</sup> Act XXXIII of 1989 on the Operation and Financing of Political Parties. Source: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=98900033.tv>

<sup>9</sup> Act XLIX of 2021 on the transparency of civil society organizations engaged in activities capable of influencing public life. Source: <https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a2100049.tv>

<sup>10</sup> <https://europeandemocracyhub.epd.eu/unfolding-trends-in-european-democracy-support/>

<sup>11</sup> [https://assets.performance.gov/cx/equity-action-plans/2022/EO%2013985\\_USAID\\_Equity%20Action%20Plan\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.performance.gov/cx/equity-action-plans/2022/EO%2013985_USAID_Equity%20Action%20Plan_2022.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/fiscal-year-fy-2024-presidents-budget-request-united-states-agency-international-development-usaid>

## 1.2. Governmental and Quasi-Governmental Organizations

Planning and funding are concentrated in a few organizations. The following organizations also played the most important role in preparing influence operations in Hungary. These organizations are government agencies, or, due to their level of government funding, function in practice as government agencies.

### 1.2.1. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is the United States' largest international development agency, with a history spanning more than six decades. It was established by an executive order issued by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 with the aim of countering the influence of the Soviet Union and increasing American influence globally through development programs. The organization's original priorities included promoting market economies, supporting democratic values, and reducing poverty.



Following the Cold War, a debate arose over the organization's future and necessity. Despite efforts by conservatives, USAID's independence from the State Department was reaffirmed in 1998, though cooperation with the administration remained close. USAID served the U.S. State Department, the Department of Defense, and intelligence agencies. USAID was clearly part of the national security apparatus, serving as a softer, friendlier face to the outside world. With its massive budgetary support, it took on an increasingly active role worldwide in exerting political influence and pressure.

During Bill Clinton's presidency (1993–2001), USAID underwent significant structural changes. Following the end of the Cold War, priorities shifted. USAID's Strategic Framework established goals in six areas, placing the focus on economic development, education, promoting democracy and good governance, population and health, environmental protection, and recovery from natural disasters. At that time, maintaining USAID as an organization for bilateral intergovernmental cooperation was still among the goals.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [https://1997-2001.state.gov/budget/fy2001/fn150/forops\\_full/150fy01\\_fo\\_bil-asst-usaid.html](https://1997-2001.state.gov/budget/fy2001/fn150/forops_full/150fy01_fo_bil-asst-usaid.html)

During the presidency of George W. Bush (2001–2009), USAID’s budget nearly tripled. During his presidency, he introduced the “Three Ds” doctrine (defense, diplomacy, and development), elevating development aid to the third pillar of national security strategy alongside defense and diplomacy.<sup>14</sup>

During Barack Obama’s presidency (2009–2017), USAID’s political involvement and the promotion of progressive ideologies further intensified, including support for projects related to gender ideology and the promotion of migration. In the second half of the 2010s, it came to light that the Obama administration had begun exporting LGBTQ activism, with Central and Eastern Europe as one of its targets.<sup>15</sup> An LGBTQ action plan was also drafted for the region, and a special envoy was appointed within USAID.<sup>16</sup>

During Donald Trump’s first presidency (2017–2021), numerous conservatives therefore called for a review of USAID programs and a reduction in the organization’s budget. However, due to a lack of sufficient political will, no substantive changes were ultimately made to the organization during President Trump’s first term.

During Joe Biden’s presidency (2021–2025), USAID was headed by Samantha Power, a close confidante and former advisor to Barack Obama who later served as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations; she also joined President Biden’s National Security Council.

With the help of USAID funds, the American left built an international network aimed at spreading globalist and progressive ideology, as well as discrediting conservative and right-wing politicians and policies that opposed it. This is how the Biden administration intervened in Hungary and Poland during the tenure of conservative governments.

USAID alone spent nearly 3.5 billion HUF (\$9.2 million) on activities exclusively in Hungary between 2022 and 2024.<sup>17</sup> The vast majority of these funds were used to exert political pressure, gain influence over the media, and amplify critical voices against the Hungarian government. (This amount does not include funds that came to Hungary from other governmental or quasi-governmental agencies.)

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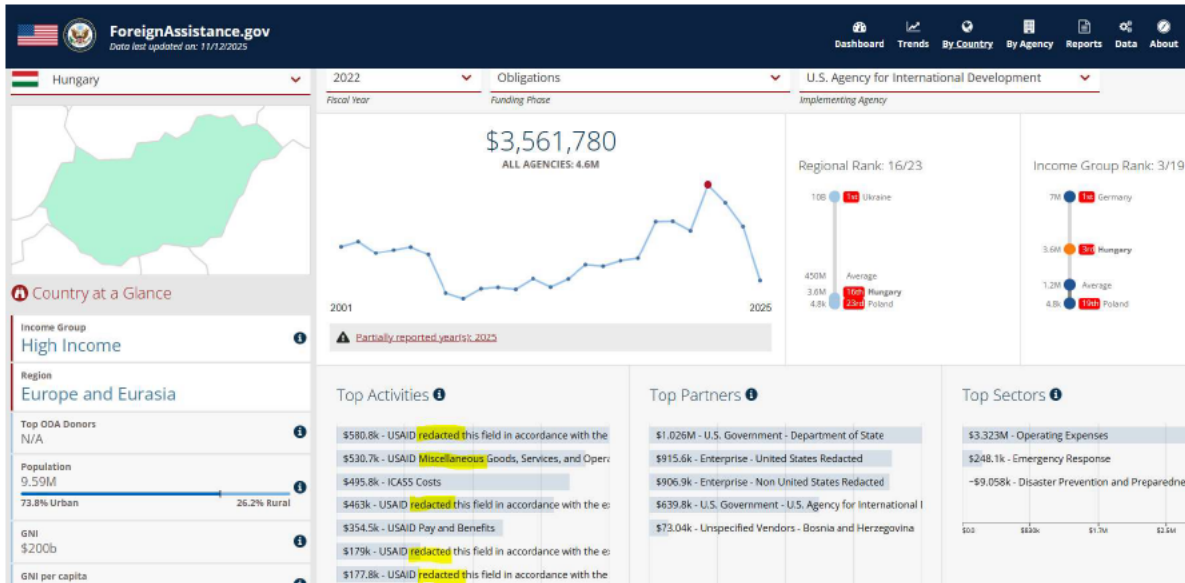
<sup>14</sup> <https://www.devex.com/news/usaid-history-and-reform-we-can-agree-on-84214>

<sup>15</sup> NBC News. Obama's Quiet Mission to Export Gay Rights Overseas. Source: <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/obama-legacy-quiet-mission-export-gay-rights-overseas-n673861>

<sup>16</sup> The White House. (June 9, 2016). Fact Sheet: Obama Administration’s Record and the LGBT Community. Source: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/06/09/fact-sheet-obama-administrations-record-and-lgbt-community>

<sup>17</sup> According to the website <https://foreignassistance.gov/cd/hungary>, the Biden administration, through USAID, committed USD 9,192,698 to organizations in Hungary. Almost all items are unidentifiable because they fall under the “redacted” category, meaning they have been censored.

<https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/A-USAID-botrany-magyarorszagi-korrupcios-szalai.pdf> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (March 26, 2025). A foreign-funded network is exerting political pressure using more than 23 billion HUF (appr. 67,647,058 USD). Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/hirek/tobb-mint-23-milliard-HUFbol-vegez-politikai-nyomasgyakorlast-a-kulfoldrol-finanszirozott-halozat>



On [foreignassistance.gov](https://foreignassistance.gov), which tracks U.S. aid by government agency, USAID’s commitments to Hungary are almost entirely classified—they have been marked “redacted.” The timeline clearly shows that the proportion of commitments to Hungary surged in the Biden administration’s second year. Concealing the details of certain programs is not an isolated case.

During the Biden era, USAID has participated in political actions not only abroad but also domestically, within the United States. According to investigative journalist Michael Shellenberger, the organization went so far as to organize an attempted coup against President Trump during his first term.<sup>18</sup>

USAID reports contain numerous entries labeled “Miscellaneous foreign awardees,” where the identity of the recipient and the purpose of the funding are unknown. Based on the table available on the U.S. government’s website for grant contracts,<sup>19</sup> it can be determined that the amount of funds spent on contracts labeled “miscellaneous foreign awardees” ranged between 5 and 10 percent of USAID’s net expenditures (the organization’s total annual budget) for the years examined, amounting to several billion dollars. Thus, in 2021, 8.41 percent; in 2022, 5.38 percent; and in 2024, 7.74 percent of the Agency’s total annual expenditures were allocated to contracts labeled “Other Foreign Recipients.”

### 1. USAID FUNDS FOR “MISCELLANEOUS FOREIGN AWARDEES”

	Amount spent on “Miscellaneous foreign awardees” contracts	Number of “Miscellaneous foreign awardees” contracts	USAID actual net expenditure
2021	\$1,625,037,608	1,539	\$15,949,898,000
2022	\$2,467,707,487	1,384	\$29,348,853,000
2023	\$1,982,317,096	1,216	\$36,843,601,000
2024	\$1,812,983,824	911	\$23,433,794,000
Total	\$7,888,046,015	2,552	\$105,576,146,000

<sup>18</sup> “They Were Hiding THIS!” Michael Shellenberger UNCOVERS Dark Secret About USAID and The Deep State. Source: <https://youtu.be/RK0h7kphuAA>

<sup>19</sup> USAspending.gov. Source: <https://www.usaspending.gov/>

### 1.2.2. National Endowment for Democracy (NED)



The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is also an organization based in the United States, founded on November 18, 1983, by President Ronald Reagan with the aim of supporting and strengthening democratic institutions worldwide. Four other institutions are closely affiliated with NED and have received the most funding from it: the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the Center for International Private Enterprise, and the Solidarity Center.

The largest portion of NED's budget comes from funding provided by the U.S. Congress, which is allocated from the U.S. federal budget. As a result, the organization is required to provide financial accountability. Its operations are also audited by the U.S. Government Accountability Office and the U.S. Department of State. Among the supported organizations are a large number of left-wing, politically active non-governmental organizations and labor unions from more than 100 countries around the world. NED has supported several Hungarian entities, including Átlátszó,<sup>20</sup> K-monitor,<sup>21</sup> Hungarian Helsinki Committee,<sup>22</sup> Political Capital,<sup>23</sup> Partizán Foundation,<sup>24</sup> Társaság a Szabadságjogokért – TASZ (Hungarian Civil Liberties Union),<sup>25</sup> and Nyugat Media és Világháló Association,<sup>26</sup> among which the Hungarian Helsinki Committee's grant of 118,998,232 HUF (approx. \$345,000) between 2018 and 2024 stands out.<sup>27</sup>

From 1984 to 2021, the organization's president was Carl Gerschman, a member of the American socialist movement.<sup>28</sup> Under his leadership, the organization's budget rose from \$18 million in 1984 to over \$300 million by 2021. He played a key role in launching numerous

<sup>20</sup> [https://atlatszo.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/atlatszo.hu\\_kiegeszito\\_es\\_kozhasznusagi\\_melleklet\\_2022.pdf](https://atlatszo.hu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/atlatszo.hu_kiegeszito_es_kozhasznusagi_melleklet_2022.pdf),  
<https://atlatszo.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Kiegeszito-melleklet-2023-1.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://k-monitor.hu/uploads/EB00526641.pdf>,  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cTF3\\_VJK6GQISfZmbpxDR6ZqWCIZAxVS/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cTF3_VJK6GQISfZmbpxDR6ZqWCIZAxVS/view)

<sup>22</sup> <https://helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/MHB-HHC-beerkezett-tamogatasok-income-2020.pdf>,  
<https://helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/MHB-HHC-beerkezett-tamogatasok-income-2021.pdf>,  
<https://helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/MHB-HHC-beerkezett-tamogatasok-income-2022.pdf>,  
<https://helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/MHB-HHC-beerkezett-tamogatasok-income-2023.pdf>,  
<https://helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/MHB-HHC-beerkezett-tamogatasok-income-2024.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.parlament.hu/documents/129803/64121212/%C3%96sszefoglal%C3%B3\\_jelent%C3%A9s\\_A\\_2022\\_%C3%A9vi\\_moi\\_ogyi\\_v%C3%A1laszt%C3%A1sok\\_k%C3%BCI\\_f\\_bef.pdf](https://www.parlament.hu/documents/129803/64121212/%C3%96sszefoglal%C3%B3_jelent%C3%A9s_A_2022_%C3%A9vi_moi_ogyi_v%C3%A1laszt%C3%A1sok_k%C3%BCI_f_bef.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> <https://tasz.hu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/TASZ-Szoveges-beszamolo-2024.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.parlament.hu/documents/129803/64121212/%C3%96sszefoglal%C3%B3\\_jelent%C3%A9s\\_A\\_2022\\_%C3%A9vi\\_moi\\_ogyi\\_v%C3%A1laszt%C3%A1sok\\_k%C3%BCI\\_f\\_bef.pdf](https://www.parlament.hu/documents/129803/64121212/%C3%96sszefoglal%C3%B3_jelent%C3%A9s_A_2022_%C3%A9vi_moi_ogyi_v%C3%A1laszt%C3%A1sok_k%C3%BCI_f_bef.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Hungarian Helsinki Committee. Annual Reports. Source: <https://helsinki.hu/rolunk/penzugyi-beszamolok/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/carl-gerschman-and-the-struggle-for-democracy/>

initiatives, including the establishment of its European partner organization, the European Endowment for Democracy.

One NED fellow was Michal Wawrykiewicz of Poland, a legal activist and Member of the European Parliament since 2024, one of the European People's Party's most vocal anti-Hungarian politicians, who also participated in and spoke at Tisza Party rallies in Budapest. He was also a member of the EP's LIBE Committee delegation to Budapest in the spring of 2025 and served as shadow rapporteur for the 2025 EP resolution, which aimed to have the European Commission freeze all EU funds allocated to Hungary and the People's Party liberal majority in the European Parliament demanded the suspension of Hungary's voting rights.

Although NED's reports claim to promote transparency, by their own admission, they omit organizations that do not wish to be included. NED's 2024 report shows that, given their annual budget of hundreds of millions of dollars, they attempt to micromanage the political processes of individual countries by supporting a large number of small projects.<sup>29</sup> Nearly \$40 million was allocated to Europe.

Much can be said about NED's activities and political bias by the fact that the Trump administration proposed zero budget funding for the NED; however, certain Republican representatives in Congress did not support this and, together with the Democrats, voted to continue funding NED from the U.S. budget.<sup>30</sup>

Modeled after NED and with the support of NED's president, the EU established a similar agency, the European Endowment for Democracy, which supports similar programs, but the exact use of these funds is not public.

### 1.2.3. National Democratic Institute (NDI)

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) was established in 1983 as part of the National Endowment for Democracy, created by the U.S. Congress.

NDI is officially nonpartisan, but as its name suggests, it is linked to the Democratic Party. NDI's operating costs are covered by the U.S. government, as well as grants from NED, USAID, and the U.S. Department of State. Furthermore, its budget includes grants from other countries and institutions, including Australia, Denmark, Belgium, the Open Society Foundations (OSF) affiliated with George Soros, and other multinational organizations.

NDI regularly conducts public opinion polls in Hungary. Its partner is Political Capital, which also leads the Hungarian hub (HDMO) of the EU's censorship network (EDMO).

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Europe-Grant-Listing-FY24-1.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> On January 14, 2026, the U.S. House of Representatives rejected, by a vote of 291 to 127, an amendment that would have reduced the \$315 million in funding proposed by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for fiscal year 2026. 81 Republicans joined Democrats in voting to preserve the funding. On January 30, 2026, the Senate similarly gave the green light and rejected Senator Eric Schmitt's amendment, which would also have cut funding for the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

#### 1.2.4. Internews

Internews is a foundation registered in the state of California in 1982, which has operated as a nonprofit since 1986.<sup>31</sup> Several organizations contribute to its funding, including USAID, George Soros’s OSF, and NED. With a presence in more than 100 countries, Internews has extensive influence on the global media market, with a particular focus on the Central and Eastern European region, specifically Hungary and Poland.

According to their own statement, the organization’s goal is to support access to information in the Eurasian region. However, experiences from recent years demonstrate that they wield extraordinary influence over media markets worldwide. In Hungary, they provided not only financial but also technical support to media outlets. They also provided editorial guidance to affiliated newsrooms with the aim of steering international public opinion and the political agenda on certain topics.

The agency’s dominant role in the global media market is underscored by the incident in 2024—the year of the U.S. presidential election—when Internews President Jeanne Bourgault, asked companies placing ads to place them only in pre-selected media outlets favorable to the Democratic Party.<sup>32</sup>

According to its own reports, Internews worked with 4,291 media organizations, participated in the training of more than 9,000 journalists, and reached 778 million people with its content in 2023.

Although the White House was able to prevent the agency from intervening in the Hungarian media market during Donald Trump’s first presidential term, Internews’s presence in Hungary strengthened under Joe Biden’s presidency. As a result, Internews opened an office in Hungary in 2023, ostensibly with the goal of creating “*strong and independent* media” in the country.<sup>33</sup> By the spring of 2025, Internews had over \$300 million in USAID-funded projects,<sup>34</sup> which were terminated by the U.S. Department of State.

#### 1.2.5. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL)

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) was established in 1977 as an agency of the U.S. Department of State.<sup>35</sup> It received its current name in 1994. Under Democratic administrations, it has also become a key player in supporting and promoting progressive ideologies. The DRL is a recurring actor in attempts to interfere in Hungary.

In November 2017, the Hungarian government contacted the U.S. Department of State and indicated that the DRL’s grant of up to \$700,000 to rural media outlets would constitute significant interference in the Hungarian media market.<sup>36</sup> The grants were timed to be disbursed

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<sup>31</sup> Internews. Source: <https://internews.org>

<sup>32</sup> X. Source: <https://x.com/MikeBenzCyber/status/1888253355773825282/photo/2>

<sup>33</sup> Internews is coming – the U.S. wants strong independent media in Hungary. (Nov. 5, 2022). Source: <https://fuhu.hu/jon-az-internews-az-usa-eros-fuggetlen-mediak-akar-magyarorszagon/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000195-d4ba-dc7d-add5-f6fe93e40000>

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Department of State. Source: <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-civilian-security-democracy-and-human-rights/bureau-of-democracy-human-rights-and-labor/>

<sup>36</sup> Politico.eu. Hungary accuses US of meddling in election. Source: <https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-accuses-us-of-meddling-in-election/>

less than six months before the Hungarian parliamentary elections.

The example of DRL clearly shows that the American left's influence remained stable even after a change in administration. Although a new political leadership took control of the federal government when the Trump administration took office in 2017, the direction set during the Democratic administration continued to prevail at the lower levels of the U.S. State Department, which is why the grant call undermining U.S.-Hungarian relations could be issued.

During Joe Biden's presidency, funding for left-wing organizations continued. The DRL allocated hundreds of millions of dollars annually to political projects aimed at fostering political activism.

In April 2025, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio highlighted the DRL in a statement regarding the reorganization of the State Department. According to the U.S. Secretary of State, the DRL *"has become a platform for left-wing activists to wage a vendetta against anti-woke leaders in nations such as Poland, Hungary, and Brazil."*<sup>37</sup>

## U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor became a platform for left-wing activists to wage vendettas against "anti-woke" leaders in nations such as Poland, Hungary, and Brazil, and to transform their hatred of Israel into concrete policies such as arms embargoes. The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration funneled millions of taxpayer dollars to international organizations and NGOs that facilitated mass migration around the world, including the invasion on our southern border.

In 2022, the DRL donated \$740,740 to the Telex Academy for the purpose of developing media literacy, an initiative organized in collaboration with the Idea Foundation, which is also linked to left-wing parties.<sup>38</sup> Although Telex's U.S.-funded media literacy project launched in 2022, the Idea Foundation had already been conducting this activity without Telex and had had its own methodology available since 2019.<sup>39</sup> This raises the question of why Telex was needed as a partner or why U.S. funding was necessary. Approximately 80 percent of the funding was allocated as salaries for Telex's editorial staff and journalists.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Marco Rubio. (April 22, 2022). A New State Department to Meet the Challenges of a New Era. Source: <https://statedept.substack.com/p/a-new-state-department-to-meet-the>

<sup>38</sup> Hirado hu. (Dec. 9, 2022). Telex to Receive \$300 Million from the Biden Administration. Source: <https://hirado.hu/belfold/cikk/2022/12/09/300-millio-HUFnyi-dollart-kap-a-telex-a-biden-kormanyzattol>

<sup>39</sup> <http://ideaalapitvany.hu/#rolunk>

<sup>40</sup> <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/hirek/34-milliard-HUFot-kapott-a-telex-kulfoldi-partnereivel-kozosen-az-europai-bizottsagtol>



## TÖRTÉNETÜNK

Az Idea Alapítványt 2019 elején hoztuk létre annak érdekében, hogy működési keretet biztosítsunk alternatív oktatási programjainknak.

### Az első lépések

### Távolabbi célok

Az alapítvány 2019-ben kidolgozott egy tanárképzést, amely 13-14 éves diákokat tanító pedagógusoknak nyújt segítséget a médiatudatosság iskolai fejlesztéséhez.

In 2025, the Trump administration revoked the \$690,000 grant awarded to the Telex Academy for another two years, and the Telex Academy was subsequently closed in the spring of 2025.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio completely overhauled the operations of the DRL.

### 1.2.6. U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM)

The U.S. Agency for Global Media (USAGM) operates on paper as an independent government agency; its stated objective is to provide “accurate, objective, and balanced news coverage” in parts of the world where media freedom is restricted. However, the second Trump administration announced the agency’s dissolution, as the organization had in practice proven to be a servant of the Democratic Party and liberal interests.<sup>41</sup>

The agency, formerly known as the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), has borne its current name since 2018. Although its operations were funded by the U.S. federal budget, its editorial independence was guaranteed by law. USAGM oversees several global media outlets, including Voice of America (VOA), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Radio Free Asia (RFA), the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB) for Cubans, and the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN).<sup>42</sup>

USAGM’s budget request for fiscal year 2025 totaled \$950 million. On March 15, 2025, USAGM suspended the employment of more than a thousand staff members to implement another executive order by the U.S. president aimed at reducing bureaucracy. Furthermore, it withdrew funding from Radio Free Europe,<sup>43</sup> the consequences of which also significantly affected the Hungarian editorial office. The decision caused a major uproar among the left on an international level. These media outlets broadcast in 63 languages across more than 100 countries, reaching approximately 427 million people weekly. From its Prague headquarters, Radio Free Europe broadcast to 23 countries in 27 languages.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> The White House. (March 14, 2025). Continuing the reduction of the federal bureaucracy. Source: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/continuing-the-reduction-of-the-federal-bureaucracy/>

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Agency for Global Media. Structure. Source: <https://www.usagm.gov/who-we-are/organizational-chart/>

<sup>43</sup> U.S. Agency for Global Media. (March 15, 2025). Senior Advisor Kari Lake cancels obscenely expensive 15-year lease that burdened taxpayers and enforces Trump’s Executive Order to drastically downsize the agency. Source: <https://www.usagm.gov/2025/03/15/u-s-agency-for-global-media-complies-with-presidential-executive-order-to-reduce-the-federal-bureaucracy/>

<sup>44</sup> Radio Free Europe. Radio Liberty. RFE/RL 101. Source: <https://about.rferl.org/about-rfe-rl/rfe-rl-101/>

The sudden loss of funding caused an immediate crisis. The European Union, as well as several European countries, indicated that they would contribute to the maintenance of the American media outlet.<sup>45</sup>

On May 20, 2025, the European Union announced the allocation of €5.5 million in emergency aid for Radio Free Europe. This funding was not intended to fully replace U.S. support but was intended as a temporary lifeline.

On May 8, Sweden independently offered 20 million Swedish kronor (approx. \$2.1 million) to supplement EU support. The Swedish contribution is symbolic, showing that some member states are prepared to take on an independent role to save the U.S. government-funded media outlet.<sup>46</sup>

In November 2025, the head of USAGM announced that the Hungarian-language edition of Radio Free Europe would be discontinued. The Hungarian editorial office announced on November 20 that the website would no longer be updated.<sup>47</sup>

### 1.2.7. German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF)

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is a Washington, D.C.-based, non-profit think tank dedicated to deepening transatlantic cooperation. The organization was originally established in Washington, D.C., in 1972 with a donation from West Germany to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Marshall Plan, as a gesture to strengthen the Cold War alliance.<sup>48</sup>

Since then, GMF—which has become a global player—has conducted research and analysis, run political advocacy projects, organized exchange programs, and provided various forms of financial support. It has offices in Berlin, Brussels, Ankara, Belgrade, Bucharest, Paris, and Warsaw.<sup>49</sup> Its operations are supported by a multi-source funding network that combines European Union grants, contributions from U.S. embassies, USAID funds, money from tech giants, and capital from private foundations, supplemented by the organization's own investments. GMF's assets previously ranged between \$175 million and \$227 million, with annual expenditures of around \$30 million to \$39 million.

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which means it is strictly prohibited from intervening in any candidate's election campaign, either in support of or against them.<sup>50</sup>

For years, GMF has been a key player in the left-wing political activist network and has devoted particular attention to the Central European region. It regularly publishes hostile articles about Hungary, so it is not surprising that it was one of the primary intermediary organizations in

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<sup>45</sup> The Brussels Times. (March 18, 2025). EU looks at the possibility of funding Radio Free Europe. Source: <https://www.brusselstimes.com/news-contents/1491485/eu-looks-at-the-possibility-of-funding-radio-free-europe>

<sup>46</sup> Government Offices of Sweden. (May 8, 2025). SEK 20 million in support to Radio Free Europe. Source: <https://www.government.se/press-releases/2025/05/sek-20-million-in-support-to-radio-free-europe/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.szabadeuropa.hu/a/utolso-kozlemeny-2025-11-20/33597421.html>

<sup>48</sup> The German Marshall Fund of the United States. History. Source: <https://www.gmfus.org/about/history>

<sup>49</sup> The German Marshall Fund of the United States. About. Source: <https://www.gmfus.org/about>

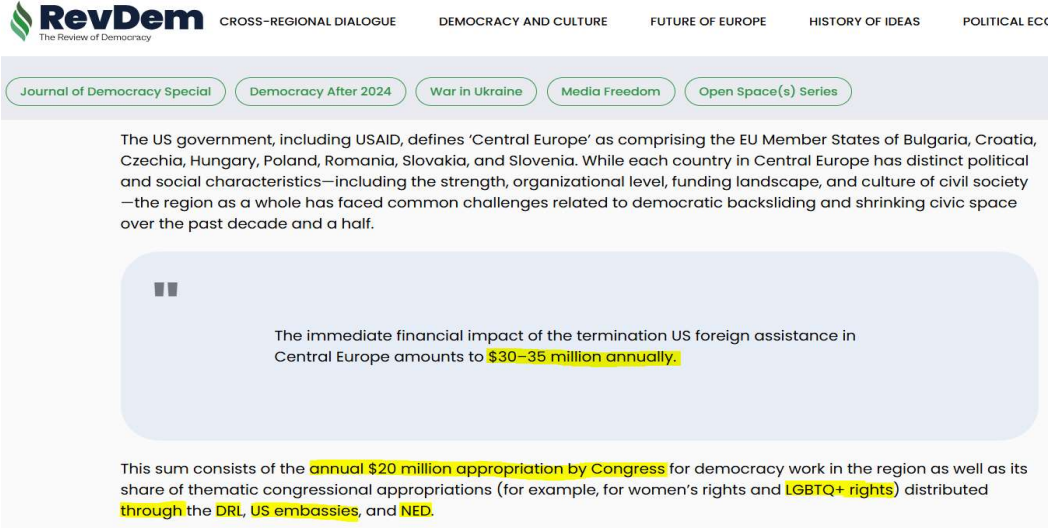
<sup>50</sup> <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/restriction-of-political-campaign-intervention-by-section-501c3-tax-exempt-organizations>

USAID programs aimed at intervening in Hungary. In connection with the intervention in Hungary, USAID entrusted GMF with “capacity building for domestic civil society organizations” and “watchdog capacity building” related to the rule of law. In addition to distributing funds, GMF assisted its Hungarian partners with legal advice, political analysis, and in lawsuits seeking access to public information. GMF’s domestic implementing partners are the Hungarian Helsinki Committee and the Emberség Erejével Alapítvány (Power of Humanity Foundation). Among the Hungarian organizations supported by GMF were Amnesty International Hungary,<sup>51</sup> <sup>52</sup> K-monitor,<sup>53</sup> Political Capital, Partizán Foundation, and Független Médiaközpont (Center for Independent Journalism - CIJ).

In Poland, ahead of the 2023 parliamentary elections, they supported the development of a mobile app to assist with party selection and other voter mobilization initiatives.<sup>54</sup> Other GMF programs also received direct EU funding totaling at least €350,000.<sup>55</sup>

Several key figures involved in political interventions in Hungary have been associated with the GMF. Karen Donfried was one of the architects of USAID’s Central Europe program. Donfried served as president of the GMF from 2014 to 2021, and then, during President Joe Biden’s administration, as the U.S. Department of State’s Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, where she was responsible for developing and overseeing Central European programs starting in 2021. The GMF also supported Dávid Korányi at the end of the Gyurcsány-Bajnai era; Korányi, a key figure in the 2022 foreign interference scandal, had been awarded a GMF scholarship to study at Johns Hopkins University in Washington starting in 2010.

When USAID programs were frozen, Dániel Hegedűs, GMF’s director for the Central European region, wrote that \$30–35 million in government funds flowed into Central Europe annually, and that the cutoff of funding affected Hungary the most severely.<sup>56</sup>



<sup>51</sup> [https://www.amnesty.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIHU\\_Kozhasznusagi-jelentes\\_2023\\_v2.pdf](https://www.amnesty.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/AIHU_Kozhasznusagi-jelentes_2023_v2.pdf)  
<sup>52</sup> [https://www.parlament.hu/documents/129803/64121212/%C3%96sszefoglal%C3%B3\\_jelent%C3%A9s\\_A\\_2022\\_%C3%A9vi\\_moi\\_ogyi\\_v%C3%A1laszt%C3%A1sok\\_k%C3%BClf\\_bef.pdf](https://www.parlament.hu/documents/129803/64121212/%C3%96sszefoglal%C3%B3_jelent%C3%A9s_A_2022_%C3%A9vi_moi_ogyi_v%C3%A1laszt%C3%A1sok_k%C3%BClf_bef.pdf)  
<sup>53</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1\\_9quNRv2j0jH8Z\\_sdqgXULLuuTlkt-K9/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_9quNRv2j0jH8Z_sdqgXULLuuTlkt-K9/view)  
<sup>54</sup> [https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/Year%20in%20Review%20-%20CEBRICS%20Factsheet\\_0.pdf](https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/Year%20in%20Review%20-%20CEBRICS%20Factsheet_0.pdf)  
<sup>55</sup> <https://ngotransparency.eu/>  
<sup>56</sup> <https://revdem.ceu.edu/2025/05/28/implications-termination-us-assistance/>

### 1.3. Channels of Foreign Funding

International experience shows that foreign political interventions do not primarily go directly to political parties, but rather to the left-wing media, journalists, opinion leaders, political activist organizations, associations, foundations, think tanks, and political or communications consulting firms.

The decentralized global network, established along the lines of Cold War logic, has increasingly expanded beyond countries hostile to the United States to influence public opinion in the Western world as well, including Hungary and other allied nations. Such activities led to the undermining of the Western alliance system, the hollowing out of democratic institutions, and the emergence of political dependencies. Since U.S. government funding was often channeled through intermediaries, certain organizations—or at least their non-leadership staff—may not have been or may not be aware that they were operating with support from foreign governments.

The origin of the funds was concealed through a multi-layered network of organizations and companies spanning multiple countries, in which not only the exact source of the funds but also whether they were public or private in nature became opaque.

U.S. budgetary funds often reached Hungarian organizations through two or three layers of intermediaries, creating the appearance that the funds came from private donations.

American private foundations closely linked to government objectives and the system pose a particular challenge. The Soros-style Open Society Foundations and others like them appear simultaneously as co-financers of projects, actors shaping government strategy, and implementing partners for related government programs.

Over the course of decades, a global NGO industry has emerged. This was primarily funded by American taxpayers' money, but supplemented by grants from other governments, foundations, or the EU. While not exclusively, the logos of the EU's CERV and LIFE programs typically appear among the donors, along with those of British, Swiss, Swedish, German, Norwegian, Danish, Dutch, or Belgian government agencies (embassies, development agencies, foreign ministries, etc.).

In the United States, tax law recognizes two types of nonprofit organizations that operate on the fringes of politics: Donations to organizations under Section 501(c)(3) are tax-deductible for the donor; these organizations are tax-exempt, but their activities must be related to charity, education, culture, or religious activities. They may not engage in political or lobbying activities.

Donations made to 501(c)(4) organizations cannot be deducted from the donor's taxes, but these organizations may engage in political activism for up to 49 percent of their time (meaning such activities may constitute less than half of their operations). One such example is Action for Democracy, led by Dávid Korányi—who is part of the Soros–Obama–Bajnai circle and became infamous in the 2022 parliamentary election interference scandal.

However, the global network built by left-wing and liberal political groups goes far beyond financial support. Funds were most often not provided for operational purposes; rather, financial support was tied to specific political expectations, and content-related requirements were also

imposed on the recipient organizations. The scale of these resources and their impact on public discourse are so significant that they rival or even surpass those of political parties.

In 2025, the European Court of Auditors issued a damning report on the EU's funding and regulatory practices regarding NGOs operating within the EU.<sup>57</sup> The report made numerous findings, including regarding the definition of NGOs, the lack of transparency in EU funding provided to them, and the use of such funds for economic lobbying activities.

Apart from a few basic figures, the European Commission provides virtually no insight into the €17 billion in funding distributed across more than 30,000 grant agreements between 2019 and 2023.

With the spread of the internet and the transformation of media consumption habits, manipulating public life from abroad has become cheaper and faster. Alternative funding methods include mimicking micro-donations,<sup>58</sup> as revealed during Action for Democracy's 2022 intervention, political activism disguised as civic activism, financial funding via cryptocurrencies, or supporting individuals (journalists, researchers, experts) directly with scholarships/grants instead of specific organizations.

In addition, there is the issue of in-kind assistance, which relieves political parties of the financial burden of providing certain services (conducting public opinion polls, litigation and legal expertise, recruiting activists or election observers).

#### **1.4. The Trump Administration and the Dismantling of the Political Activist Network**

With Donald Trump's inauguration on January 20, 2025, a new era began in U.S. international development policy. From the moment of its inauguration, the Trump administration made it clear that it intended to put an end to rampant wasteful spending and the left-wing political strongholds of the deep state. Immediately after taking office, the new U.S. administration took steps to dismantle USAID and the political corruption network organized around it.

According to the president's executive order of January 20, U.S. aid policy and the bureaucracy that administers it are not in line with American interests because "*they promote ideas in foreign countries that are directly contrary to harmonious and stable relations within and among nations.*"<sup>59</sup> Therefore, the president ordered a 90-day suspension of all aid programs of U.S. departments and agencies. The review primarily concerned the U.S. Department of State and the related USAID. However, the vetting process and steps taken to dismantle the left-wing corruption system met with fierce resistance. The confirmation hearings and appointments of new leaders were delayed for months in Congress, while left-wing organizations sought through legal action to force the U.S. government to continue programs launched during the previous president's term and challenged the new administration's authority in the areas of foreign affairs, international development policy, and the budget.

On March 28, 2025, the U.S. Department of State announced that the implementation of organizational reforms would be completed by July 1, which indeed occurred. As a result, the head of USAID became the Secretary of State. A decision was made to eliminate 131 offices

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications/SR-2025-11>

<sup>58</sup> <https://data4democracy.substack.com/p/spam-pacs-raise-money-by-deceiving>

<sup>59</sup> White House. (January 20, 2025). Reevaluating and realigning United States foreign aid. The White House. Source: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/reevaluating-and-realigning-united-states-foreign-aid/>

and bureaus engaged in political activities, and to terminate 83 percent of the agency's contracted projects, a decision that affected nearly 5,300 contracts.<sup>60</sup> The number of USAID employees was reduced from over 10,000 to 600.<sup>61</sup>

The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) played a key role in coordinating the review activities. According to DOGE's report, the agency saved \$205 billion for the federal budget by August 2025.<sup>62</sup> A significant portion of the eliminated aid was linked to the State Department and USAID.

A new era in U.S. aid policy was announced in a July 1, 2025, statement by the U.S. Department of State.<sup>63</sup> In the preceding months, thousands of contracts and \$715 billion in aid were reviewed, leading to the conclusion that a significant portion of the aid allocated to foreign countries, including Hungary, served to create a "global-spanning NGO complex." In many cases, these funds supported "global DEI, censorship, and regime-change political operations." As a result, "instability and anti-American sentiment increased"; instead of fostering successful development, they created permanent aid dependency, and, in essence, it was primarily the lives of the leaders of the funded organizations that improved.

Instead of intermediary organizations, the Trump administration will strive for time-limited joint projects based on shared interests.<sup>64</sup>

Beyond creating a globe-spanning NGO industrial complex at taxpayer expense, USAID has little to show since the end of the Cold War. Development objectives have rarely been met, instability has often worsened, and anti-American sentiment has only grown. On the global stage, the countries that benefit the most from our generosity usually fail to reciprocate. For example, in 2023, sub-Saharan African nations voted with the United States only 29 percent of the time on essential resolutions at the UN

On August 29, 2025, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced that he was entrusting the final liquidation and review of USAID to Russ Vought, Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). On September 2, 2025, the last remaining employees at USAID officially left the agency, bringing the wave of downsizing to an end.

In the interest of transparency, the U.S. Congress committee responsible for budget appropriations has recommended that, going forward, the State Department release all necessary information regarding foreign aid provided to U.S.-funded European Union non-governmental organizations upon request by members of Congress. This will hopefully curb the activities of self-serving political organizations funded by budgetary resources.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> U.S. Department of State. (March 28, 2025). Department press briefing - March 28, 2025. Source: <https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-march-28-2025/>

<sup>61</sup> Devex. (Oct. 3, 2025). Trump will double USAID staff numbers to 600, up from 300 yesterday. Source: <https://www.devex.com/news/trump-will-double-usaid-staff-numbers-to-600-up-from-300-yesterday-109330>

<sup>62</sup> U.S. Department of Government Efficiency. (n.d.). Savings Initiatives. Source: <https://doge.gov/savings>

<sup>63</sup> <https://statedept.substack.com/p/making-foreign-aid-great-again>

<sup>64</sup> Rubio, M. (July 1, 2025). Making foreign aid great again. [statedept.substack.com](https://statedept.substack.com/p/making-foreign-aid-great-again). Source: <https://statedept.substack.com/p/making-foreign-aid-great-again>

<sup>65</sup> Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network. (September 3, 2025). FY26 House Foreign Assistance Bill: A Mixed Marker of Congressional Assertiveness. Source: <https://www.modernizeaid.net/press-room/fy26-house-foreign-assistance-bill-a-mixed-marker-of-congressional-assertiveness>

The review and termination of previous grants will reduce, but not eliminate, the risk of interference in Hungary. Budgetary funding for the NED, which plays a leading role in foreign interventions, continues, but its review or restructuring has not taken place, nor has that of several other organizations that acted as intermediaries in implementing influence projects in Hungary.

The American left used government agencies to politically persecute Donald Trump and the MAGA movement he founded and used every legal means (and illegal ones as well) to prevent his re-election as president. They waged a similar campaign of revenge against their international allies, including Hungary. They launched political attacks using the same playbook as those created and funded by USAID and other government sources against hostile governments. It follows from this that the Trump administration is determined to dismantle this political corruption network as much as possible and that in the event of a change in government, new political influence programs will be launched against Hungary.

The EU and numerous European governments have also joined the political corruption network operated by the Biden administration as co-funders. Experience from recent years shows that these European partners have provided extensive funding opportunities and resources to political organizations for the same programs or very similar programs of their own. Typically, the programs focus on “civil society capacity building,” “civil activism,” “media resilience,” “media integrity,” “media literacy,” “civic awareness,” “democratic/electoral integrity,” “oversight capabilities,” “democratic transition,” etc.

Several American negotiating partners have noted that these programs were established in Europe with the political and financial support of the Biden administration. A U.S. congressional report examining the European Union’s censorship regime reached a similar conclusion<sup>66</sup>: *“At best, the Biden-Harris administration attempted to undermine American sovereignty by pushing for global internet regulation. At worst, they used the European Commission to do what the First Amendment prohibits: to pressure [social media] platforms on content moderation rules and censor Americans.”*

## II. OBJECTIVES AND INTERMEDIARIES

### 2.1. Motivations for Foreign Interference in Hungary

During discussions on influence operations in Hungary, it was confirmed that the Biden administration intervened in Hungarian domestic politics out of political revenge and ideological considerations. The Hungarian government’s migration policy, family policy, the protection of Judeo-Christian values, assistance to persecuted Christians, and a peace-oriented foreign policy are shared by today’s American and Hungarian right wing that are unacceptable to the “woke” wing of the American left, which advocates for open borders and espouses gender ideology and race-based social policies.

The anti-war Hungarian stance is also unacceptable to the interventionist (often called neoconservative) foreign policy group,<sup>67</sup> which has been dominant on both the right and left of the American political elite for decades, especially in the context of the war in Ukraine. This

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<sup>66</sup> Page 59: <https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/2026-02/THE-FOREIGN-CENSORSHIP-THREAT-PART-II-2-3-26.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> This foreign policy and national security elite/mindset is often referred to in Washington circles as the “blob,” a term coined by former Barack Obama advisor Ben Rhodes.

interventionist group has dominated foreign policy and national security structures regardless of presidential terms, including during Donald Trump’s first term. They worked to prevent Donald Trump’s return following his ouster and during Joe Biden’s presidency. As the European partner closest to Donald Trump’s policies, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Hungary became a prime target for intervention.

Public aid programs directed at Hungary, as well as regional political influence projects that include Hungary, amount to tens of billions of HUF. The Office for the Protection of Sovereignty, the State Audit Office, and numerous other organizations and media outlets have addressed—and continue to address—various aspects and actors of foreign political interference. Between 2022 and 2024, nearly 3.5 billion HUF (approx. \$10.3 million) in U.S. aid came from USAID alone, while an additional 19.5 billion HUF (approx. \$55 million USD) was received by Hungarian organizations from the European Commission.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, during the 2016–2023 period examined, the Center for Fundamental Rights estimated the amount of funds linked to George Soros received by Hungarian organizations at \$89.5 million. As mentioned in previous chapters, the network of donors supporting the political corruption network is far more diverse,<sup>69</sup> and the relationship between private foundations distributing certain grant funds and U.S. government agencies is inextricably close.

## 2.2. Intermediaries in Hungary and Central Europe

USAID announced the Central Europe Program (CEP) on December 12, 2022,<sup>70</sup> although the call for proposals had already been published in March 2022. The program was set to run for five years and covered eight countries in the region: Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic, and finally Croatia. Attention was primarily focused on Hungary and Poland, with Hungary being the main target.

The program’s funding was divided into four categories. These were, nominally: capacity building for NGOs, strengthening “independent media,” reinforcing the rule of law and the fight against corruption, and increasing public participation in electoral and political processes.

USAID allocated a budget of \$35 million for the program’s implementation. Public documents and certain statements mentioned different amounts, suggesting that the program’s funding was flexible.<sup>71</sup>

The program’s original call for proposals clearly stated at the outset that its objectives included supporting political parties, which is in clear violation of Hungarian party financing rules.

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<sup>68</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (March 26, 2025). A foreign-funded network is exerting political pressure with more than 23 billion HUF (appr. \$67.65 million). Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/hirek/tobb-mint-23-milliard-HUFbol-vegez-politikai-nyomasgyakorlast-a-kulfoldrol-finanszirozott-halozat>

<sup>69</sup> Center for Fundamental Rights. (February 26, 2025). “SOROSAID” – Part 2. Source: <https://alapjogokert.hu/anyagok/kutatasaink/sorosaid-2-resz>

<sup>70</sup> U.S. Embassy in Hungary. Press release: USAID announces Central Europe Program. (December 12, 2022). Source: <https://hu.usembassy.gov/news-usaid-announces-the-central-europe-program/>

<sup>71</sup> Identification number: 7200AA22RFA00012  
<https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/338594>

## **TITLE: Central Europe Program**

### **I. Background**

USAID is developing a new Regional Central Europe Democracy Support Program (or Program). The Program will promote, among other democratic institutions, the resilience of independent, non-governmental entities. For the purposes of the new program, Central Europe includes Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

Given the overlap between strong democratic institutions and resilience against democratic erosion and foreign malign influence, this Program will also support U.S. government efforts to counter foreign malign influence in the region.

The program will seek to **build renewed support** for democratic norms and resilience to foreign corrosive influence in the political systems of the countries of the region **by enhancing the capacity** of civil society, social movements, media, **political parties**, labor, and other democratic actors to engage in oversight of governments and private sector entities, combat corruption, counter disinformation efforts, and operate freely. The program will focus on improving transparency and accountability, strengthening independent media, bolstering rule of law, strengthening political competition, improving electoral processes, protecting minority rights, and combating anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Central to this work will be creating an enabling environment for nongovernmental actors to operate freely and safely.

In recent years, democratic institutions have been undermined in some Central European countries. This program is intended to recognize the unique challenges and opportunities that exist in each of the eight beneficiary countries and should provide tailored and flexible responses which take these variations into account.

### **II. Program Goal**

The goal of the Program is to **strengthen the resilience and capacity of** independent, non-governmental entities, including civil society, media, **political parties**, and other democratic actors, across Central Europe to advance democratic freedoms and reforms. The Program also seeks to strengthen existing governmental mechanisms that support checks and balances, transparency, and democratic accountability. This goal supports USAID's ongoing efforts to empower countries in the Europe and Eurasia region to chart their course toward greater adherence to shared Euro-Atlantic values.

Between 2022 and 2024, nearly 3.5 billion HUF (approx. 10,294,117 USD) in funding for USAID programs was allocated to Hungary alone. An examination of the Central Europe Program reveals that the agency did not distribute funds equally among the eight countries in question; Hungary was given priority in every chapter, as evidenced by the fact that former USAID Administrator Samantha Power traveled to Hungary just two months after the program's announcement to consult with Ambassador David Pressman and Hungarian left-wing organizations.

To implement the chapters, the agency contracted with GMF,<sup>72</sup> Zinc Network Limited,<sup>73</sup> the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), Dexis Consulting Group,<sup>74</sup> and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).<sup>75</sup>

The network is also reflected in Hungarian partnerships: GMF's partners included the Emberség Erejével Alapítvány (Power of Humanity Foundation) and the Hungarian Helsinki Committee; Zinc's network included the Center for Sustainable Media, as well as—through the U.S. Embassy—the Ökotárs Foundation and the Mérték Médiaelemző Műhely (Mérték Media Monitor). NDI's Hungarian partners are the DemNet Foundation and NDI Hungary Nonprofit Kft.

<sup>72</sup> Contract number: 7200AA22CA00025

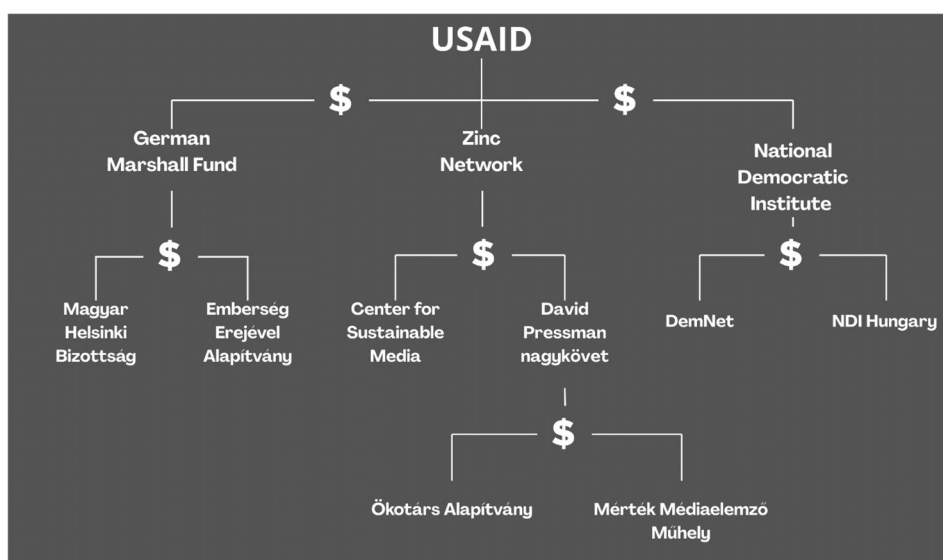
<sup>73</sup> Contract number: 7200AA22CA00027

<sup>74</sup> Contract number: 7200AA22CA00024

<sup>75</sup> Contract number: 7200AA22CA00026

Dexis Consulting differed from the others: it did not partner with regional organizations but instead engaged local coordinators. As part of the rule of law chapter, in 2023 Dexis and USAID provided 28,655,116 HUF (approx. \$84,279) in support of the expansion of the local office network of the Társaság a Szabadságjogokért – TASZ (Hungarian Civil Liberties Union),<sup>76</sup> with particular emphasis on strengthening the presence in Pécs, Debrecen, and Miskolc—officially under the heading “national efforts to restore the rule of law.”<sup>77</sup>

In the first phase of CEP, GMF’s implementing partner in Hungary was the Emberség Erejével Alapítvány (Power of Humanity Foundation). On its own website, the foundation did not list USAID as a donor for the Incubator grants, while the Catalyst grants were funded through the Proteus program within the EU’s CERV grant system. Through the program in question, the Emberség Erejével (Power of Humanity Foundation) distributed approximately 365 million HUF (approx. \$1,073,529) among 276 applicant organizations. The foundation required them to carry out their activities in a manner necessary to achieve the goals set by the GMF.



In the second phase of the Central Europe Program, Hungarian opposition media received USAID funds through the Zinc Network, while the U.S. Embassy in Budapest, during Ambassador David Pressman’s tenure, announced the Free Media Grant Program in October 2023, which consisted of three application rounds and was administered in Hungary by the Mérték Media Monitor and the Ökotárs Foundation. Direkt36 and Átlátszó, which present themselves as investigative portals, as well as 444.hu, which is most closely linked to the Soros network, were directly funded by the Zinc Network to an unknown extent. According to the Reuters news agency, Tamás Bodoky, editor-in-chief of Átlátszó, stated that in 2023 and 2024, 10–15 percent of Átlátszó’s funding came from USAID. The organizers of the Free Media Grant Program calculated with approximately 320 million HUF (approx. \$941,176) when planning the program. In the first round, they awarded nearly 116 million HUF (approx. \$341,176), and in the second round, more than 30 million HUF (approx. \$88,235) to Hungarian left-liberal media outlets. The 173 million HUF (approx. \$508,823) announced in the final round was never paid out due to Donald Trump’s executive order suspending foreign aid.

<sup>76</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (March 6, 2025). Report. The Hungarian Corruption Threads of the USAID Scandal. Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/A-USAID-botrany-magyarorszagi-korrupcios-szalai.pdf>

<sup>77</sup> Association for Civil Liberties. Report by the Association for Civil Liberties on its public benefit activities. Source: <https://tasz.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Szoveges-beszamolo-2023.pdf>

The evaluation of the applications took place with the approval of the U.S. Embassy in Budapest, meaning the decisions were made under diplomatic-level political oversight. In the first round of funding, announced on January 26, 2024, a total of 115,608,880 HUF (approx. \$340,026) was distributed among fifteen beneficiaries. The largest amount—16,477,072 HUF (approx. \$48,461) —was awarded to Magyar Jeti Zrt., the publisher of 444. A total of 32 applications were received for the first round of the program, which had a submission deadline of November 15, 2023. Of these, six did not meet the formal requirements, so the fifteen that ultimately received funding were selected from among the 26 valid applications.<sup>78</sup>

## 2. THE FIRST ROUND OF THE FREE MEDIA GRANT PROGRAM

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION	SUPPORTED MEDIA	GRANT AMOUNT
Alhambra-Press Bt.	Magyar Hang weekly newspaper, website, and YouTube channel	9,980,000 HUF (approx. \$29,352)
atlatszo.hu Public Benefit Nonprofit Ltd.	Átlátszó	9,931,032 HUF (approx. \$29,208)
Együtt Debrecenért Association	Debreciner	9,999,000 HUF (approx. \$29,408)
Esélyegyenlőség és Fenntarthatóság Association	Borsod24 / Szol24 / Szabolcs24	9,324,788 HUF (approx. \$27,425)
Freedom Média PR és Kommunikációs Nonprofit Ltd.	Szabad Pécs	4,000,000 HUF (approx. \$11,764)
Greenfo Környezetvédelmi Hírszolgáltató Bt.	Greenfo.hu – zöld iránytű a neten	5,000,000 HUF (approx. \$14,705)
Klubrádió Ltd.	Klubrádió	5,135,146 HUF (approx. \$15,103)
Liberty Press Ltd.	Jelen Weekly	9,564,080 HUF (approx. \$28,129)
Magyar Jeti Zrt.	444	10,025,048 HUF (approx. \$29,485)
Magyar Jeti Zrt.	Qubit	6,452,024 HUF (approx. \$18,976)
Magyarnarancs.hu Lapkiadó Ltd.	Magyar Narancs	9,904,440 HUF (approx. \$29,130)
Másfél Flekk Ltd.	Life and Everything (podcast)	3,433,672 HUF (approx. \$10,099)
Nyugat Média és Világháló Association	Nyugat.hu	4,980,250 HUF (approx. \$14,647)
Tilos Cultural Foundation	Tilos Radio	10,043,000 HUF (approx. \$29,538)
Van Másik Ltd.	Telex	7,836,400 HUF (approx. \$23,048)

Source: Mérték Media Analysis Workshop.<sup>79</sup>

In the second round, more than 30 million HUF of the available (approx. \$88,235) 40 million HUF (approx. \$117,647) was awarded to support left-wing media.

<sup>78</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (March 6, 2025). The Hungarian corruption threads of the USAID scandal. Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/A-USAID-botrany-magyarorszag-i-korruptios-szalai.pdf>

<sup>79</sup> Mérték Media Analysis Workshop. Free Media Grant. Announcement of Results. Source: [https://mertek.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Mediapalyazat\\_eredmenyhirdetes\\_20240126.pdf](https://mertek.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Mediapalyazat_eredmenyhirdetes_20240126.pdf)

### 3. FREE MEDIA GRANT PROGRAM, SECOND ROUND

SUPPORTED MEDIA	AMOUNT OF FUNDING
Élet és Irodalom	4,500,000 HUF (approx. \$13,235)
Fókusz Studio	5,194,200 HUF (approx. \$15,277)
Magyar Narancs	3,826,900 HUF (approx. \$11,255)
Szegeder hu	2,131,800 HUF (approx. \$6,270)
Enyugat hu	5,187,600 HUF (approx. \$15,257)
Revizor Online	4,591,400 HUF (approx. \$13,504)
Első Pesti Egyetemi Rádió	4,994,000 HUF (approx. \$14,688)

Source: Ökotárs Foundation.<sup>80</sup>

A total of 42 applications were received in the third round. Of these, 36 were submitted under the category “Strengthening independent public media and improving their sustainability” (Category A), while six were submitted under the category “Implementation of media literacy, journalism training, and educational projects” (Category B).

The list of winners was finalized in the spring of 2024: 26 applications were approved, 22 in Category A and 4 in Category B. The total amount of funding awarded was 173,178,230 HUF (approx. \$509,347).

Due to the freezing of USAID funds, the third round of the program—though formally completed—was canceled. The projects lost the U.S. funding awarded in the call for proposals.

### 4. FREE MEDIA GRANT PROGRAM, THIRD ROUND

SUPPORTED MEDIA	GRANT AMOUNT
444	8,303,000 HUF (approx. \$24,420)
Alinda Edith-ed	6,942,200 HUF (approx. \$20,365)
Transparent	9,895,600 HUF (approx. \$29,104)
Balzac	5,000,000 HUF (approx. \$14,705)
Borsod24 / Szol24 / Szabolcs24	7,000,000 HUF (approx. \$20,588)
Csaladinet.hu	3,500,000 HUF (approx. \$10,294)
Debreciner	10,153,000 HUF (approx. \$29,861)
Fókusz Studio	5,953,200 HUF (approx. \$17,509)
G7	7,000,000 HUF (approx. \$20,588)
Greenfo	6,000,000 HUF (approx. \$17,647)
Hallgató (Student) Magazine	3,627,560 HUF (approx. \$10,669)
Jelen	7,000,000 HUF (approx. \$20,588)
Kecsup	7,000,000 HUF (approx. \$20,588)
Klubrádió	10,485,700 HUF (approx. \$30,840)
Kispolgár	9,775,900 HUF (approx. \$28,752)
Magyar Hang	10,461,000 HUF (approx. \$30,767)
NINCS online magazine	2,255,000 HUF (approx. \$6,632)
Nyugat	7,000,000 HUF (approx. \$20,588)
Qubit	5,975,400 HUF (approx. \$17,574)
Revizor	6,000,000 HUF (approx. \$17,647)
Szegeder	3,653,000 HUF (approx. \$10,744)
Tilos Radio	7,574,600 HUF (approx. \$22,278)
Hajdúsági Hallgatókért és Civilekért Association	4,723,120 HUF (approx. \$13,891)
Nógrádi Grund Klubhálózat	6,000,000 HUF (approx. \$17,647)

<sup>80</sup> Ökotárs Foundation. Announcement of Results: Free Media Grant Program, 2nd Call. Source: <https://okotars.hu/eredmenyhirdetes-szabad-media-palyazat-2-kiiras>

Roma Press Center	5,000,000 HUF (approx. \$14,705)
Transparency International Hungary Foundation	7,099,950 HUF (approx. \$20,882)

Source: Ökotárs Foundation.<sup>81</sup>

In the third chapter of CEP, GMF established two separate programs: Proteus and Central Europe – Building Resilience in Civil Society (CEBRICS). According to research by the Sovereignty Protection Office,<sup>82</sup> GMF distributed \$1.3 million in 2023 through its European subsidiary, the Transatlantic Foundation (TF), as part of the CEBRICS program. According to GMF’s 2023 summary, democratic decline is particularly evident in three countries: Bulgaria, Poland, and Hungary.<sup>83</sup> The Proteus grants were implemented within the EU’s CERV system, so TF had access to EU funds in addition to USAID funds.



*The Central Europe – Building Resilience in Civil Society (CEBRICS) project is generously funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). CEBRICS activities, events or publications are the sole responsibility of The German Marshall Fund of the United States and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID.*

According to a report by the Sovereignty Protection Office, in 2023–2024, GMF distributed approximately \$1.5 million in grants in Hungary, some of which went to the Budapest Municipal Government. Gergely Karácsony, Mayor of Budapest, and GMF used these funds, among others, to organize the Budapest Forum conferences on the theme of “protecting democracy and the rule of law.” In addition, since 2021, the Budapest Municipal Government has been continuously collaborating with organizations that have received USAID support. To name a few: the NIOK Foundation, TASZ, the Civil College Foundation, Amnesty International Hungary, and the Ökotárs Foundation. The Count Again Movement also received USAID funds from GMF, which it used to recruit volunteers for vote counting.

Under the fourth chapter of the Central Europe Program, NDI provided \$385,000 in USAID funding to Central European grantees in 2023.<sup>84</sup> Its Hungarian and Polish partners, the DemNet Foundation for Development of Democratic Rights and the Institute of Public Affairs, jointly organized conferences where CEP participants discussed the program itself and how lessons learned from the 2020 Slovakian and 2023 Polish elections could be applied in Hungary of.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Ökotárs Foundation. Announcement of Results – Free Media Grant Program, 3rd Call. Source:

<https://okotars.hu/eredmenyhirdetes-szabad-media-palyazat-3-felhivas>

<sup>82</sup> <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/A-USAID-botrany-magyarorszagi-korrupcios-szalai.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> [https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/Year%20in%20Review%20-%20CEBRICS%20Factsheet\\_0.pdf](https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/Year%20in%20Review%20-%20CEBRICS%20Factsheet_0.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/A-USAID-botrany-magyarorszagi-korrupcios-szalai.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> Sovereignty Protection Agency. (March 6, 2025). The Hungarian corruption threads of the USAID scandal. Source:

<https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/A-USAID-botrany-magyarorszagi-korrupcios-szalai.pdf>

### 2.2.1. Zinc Network in the Central European Region

Zinc Network Limited is a London-based strategic communications and social development agency founded in 2008. Robert Elliott currently serves as the company’s CEO.<sup>86</sup> Zinc Network aims to achieve measurable social change by engaging governments, NGOs, and corporations, particularly in areas they identify as “defending democracy,” “combating disinformation,” “curbing harmful online content,” and “strengthening community cohesion and safety.”

To this end, it conducts research, designs and implements strategic communication campaigns, applies behavioral science methods, and supports capacity building for NGOs through training and partnerships.<sup>87</sup>

In 2023, two of the company’s directors were barred from entering Russia, though the details of this are not public. In a statement provided to Declassified, the company stated that Zinc Network is proud to support civil society in countering hostile Russian influence through its work, particularly in light of the destruction taking place in Ukraine.<sup>88</sup>

According to Zinc Network Limited’s strategic report for the year ending March 31, 2024, the organization supports its clients in achieving their international development and security goals through communication and technology tools. Its clients include the UK government—specifically the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO)—as well as the U.S. federal government, including the State Department and USAID. According to Zinc Network’s own statement, it is “pleased to announce” that in the 2024 fiscal year, its revenue grew by 38 percent to £16.5 million, and it achieved a pre-tax profit of £1.41 million (approx. \$1,889,400).<sup>89</sup>

In July 2025, a former employee of Zinc Network went public, claiming that the British Foreign Office had signed a framework agreement worth nearly £10 million (approx. \$13,400,000) — with Zinc Network Ltd. According to the information that came to light, the money was used to hire influencers in 22 countries—primarily in Central and Eastern Europe, including Hungary—who disseminated the state propaganda of the British government.

The influencers were made to sign contracts that required them to maintain confidentiality so as not to reveal the British government’s influence. Thus, viewers were kept in the dark about the fact that the videos they were watching were produced at the behest of and in the interests of the British government.<sup>90</sup>

Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico stated at a press conference on July 29, 2025, that London had paid “journalists, activists, and influencers” to help Progressive Slovakia (PS) and harm his party, Smer, ahead of the 2023 parliamentary elections. In connection with the matter, the British ambassador in Bratislava was summoned on July 30.<sup>91</sup> The prime minister cited an

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<sup>86</sup> Gov.UK. Zinc Network Limited. Source: <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/06651251>

<sup>87</sup> Zinc Network. We are Zinc Network. Source: <https://zincnetwork.com/about-2/>

<sup>88</sup> Declassified UK. (July 16, 2025). UK Government secretly paid foreign YouTube stars for ‘propaganda’. Source: <https://www.declassifieduk.org/uk-government-secretly-paid-foreign-youtube-stars-for-propaganda/>

<sup>89</sup> <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/06651251/filing-history>

<sup>90</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (July 22, 2025). The British government spent nearly 10 million pounds to buy political influencers. Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/hirek/kozel-10-millio-fontbol-vasarolt-politikai-influenszereket-a-brit-kormany>

<sup>91</sup> Newsnow. (July 29, 2025). Fico: Britain paid activists to influence Slovak election, We want an explanation. Source: <https://newsnow.tasr.sk/fico-britain-paid-activists-to-influence-slovak-election-we-want-explanation/>

article published on July 16 by the British investigative media outlet Declassified UK.<sup>92</sup> According to the Slovak prime minister, Zinc specifically focused on influencing the Slovak elections.

According to the allegations, London’s goal was to support voter mobilization in Central and Eastern European countries—including Slovakia—with the help of the communications agency, by engaging political activists and influencers. According to Declassified, a former employee described Zinc’s campaign as “state propaganda” and accused the company of interfering in foreign elections. According to media reports, Zinc employees were actively involved in editing the commissioned videos, which influencers could only publish after receiving feedback from British government officials.

The Slovak liberal party, PS, however, claimed it had no connection to Zinc Network. Zinc Network firmly rejected the prime minister’s accusations.<sup>93</sup> The UK Foreign Office also rejected the allegations, stating that its activities were solely aimed at supporting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, without any intention of political interference.<sup>94</sup>

With regard to Hungary, it should be noted that Zinc appeared among Átlátszó’s funders well before the launch of the second phase of the Central Europe Program, as in 2020 they received 5,465,914 HUF (approx. \$16,076) from the OIP/Zinc Network donor under the program titled “Covid–19 Media Monitoring & Fake News Monitoring.”<sup>95</sup>

## 2.2.2. International Research & Exchanges Board in Hungary

The International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) is a U.S.-based nonprofit organization whose mission is to support global education and development programs, “strengthen civil society and independent media, and promote leadership development, youth development, and institutional capacity building.”<sup>96</sup> The organization operates various programs in more than 100 countries. In 2023, its annual program portfolio was approximately \$155 million, with about 760 employees worldwide.<sup>97</sup> In 2024, this figure rose to roughly \$160 million; the organization employs approximately 943 staff members, and its activities have impacted the lives of approximately 800 million people.<sup>98</sup> Its funders include numerous government agencies (e.g., USAID, the U.S. Department of State), as well as foundations and private organizations.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Declassified UK. (July 16, 2025). UK Government secretly paid foreign YouTube stars for ‘propaganda’. Source: <https://www.declassifieduk.org/uk-government-secretly-paid-foreign-youtube-stars-for-propaganda/>

<sup>93</sup> TVP. UK media agency rejects claims by Slovak PM that it meddled in elections. (July 31, 2025). Source: <https://tvpworld.com/88105482/uk-media-agency-rejects-slovak-pms-claims-of-election-meddling>

<sup>94</sup> aktuality.sk. British Embassy promises to explain activities related to alleged interference in Slovak elections. (July 30, 2025). Source: <https://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/2xAwXtc/britske-velvyslanectvo-slubilo-ze-vysvetli-aktivitu-suvisiace-s-udajnym-ovplyvnovanim-slovenskych-volieb/>

<sup>95</sup> atlatszo hu. Public Benefit Nonprofit Ltd. Public Benefit Annex for 2020. Source: <https://atlatszo.hu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Kozhasznusagi-melleklet-nonprofit-2020-v5.pdf>

<sup>96</sup> Irex. About us. Source: <https://www.irex.org/about-us>

<sup>97</sup> Irex. (April 17, 2024). Irex launches 2023 Annual Impact Report. Source: <https://www.irex.org/news/irex-launches-2023-annual-impact-report>

<sup>98</sup> Irex. 2024 Impact Report. Source: <https://www.irex.org/files/irex-annual-impact-report-2024.pdf>

<sup>99</sup> Irex. Audited Consolidated Financial Statements, Other Financial Information, and Uniform Guidance Supplemental Reports. Years ended June 30, 2024, and 2023, with Report of Independent Auditors. Source: <https://www.irex.org/files/2024-irex-financial-statements.pdf>

IREX’s activities include scholarships, academic and professional exchanges, media development, support for NGOs, development of educational infrastructure, expanding access to audio and digital information, and the operation of rapid-response support funds (e.g., for war situations and conflicts).<sup>100</sup>

The program’s themes are organized around five main areas: civic dialogue and peacebuilding, open and participatory governance, women’s and gender issues, resilience and sustainable development, and youth engagement.<sup>101</sup>

In the USAID Central Europe program in Hungary, IREX participated in media support projects in partnership with the Zinc Network and the Soros-affiliated Prague Civil Society Center.

The organization’s financial statements dating back to 2010 are available, and without exception, they include the statement: “IREX receives funding from the U.S. Department of State, USAID, other federal agencies, and private-sector actors.”

A significant portion of the funding received by IREX came from the United States, as shown below.

**5. PERCENTAGE OF FUNDS RECEIVED FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT  
RELATIVE TO TOTAL FUNDS RECEIVED**

Year	Percentage of Funds Received from the U.S. Government Relative to Total Funds Received <sup>102</sup>
2024	87%
2023	84%
2022	81%
2021	90%
2020	86%
2019	90%
2018	86%
2017	86%
2016	75%
2015	79%
2014	77%
2013	78%
2012	78%
2011	76%
2010	77%

<sup>100</sup> Irex. Our Work. Source: <https://www.irex.org/our-work>

<sup>101</sup> Irex. (September 5, 2022). Community Engagement Exchange Program Launches Inaugural Fellowship Orientation. Source: <https://www.irex.org/news/community-engagement-exchange-program-launches-inaugural-fellowship-orientation>

<sup>102</sup> Irex. Financial Information. Source: <https://www.irex.org/financials#financial-statements>

### 2.2.3. Internews and Hungary

Although little public information is available about Internews’s operations, based on the data available, it is one of the most important actors in the U.S. foreign influence toolbox, which has been shaping media relations in countries and regions for decades. In the past few years alone, it has spent tens of millions of dollars in the region, and at the end of 2022, it announced a new program in Hungary—among others, Magyar Jeti Zrt.<sup>103</sup> and the Független Újságírók Foundation also received funding from these sources.<sup>104</sup>

Internews’s presence in Hungary became official on May 15, 2023, when Internews Hungary Nonprofit Ltd. was registered in Budapest. The company is owned by the Internews Network, and its managing director is Péter Visnovitz, who previously studied communication at ELTE and then at CEU, and has worked as a researcher on populist media strategies and political discourse.

Internews has launched two major programs in Hungary and Poland, both funded by the U.S. Department of State. One is called Strengthening Engagement of Regional Audiences in Poland and Hungary (SERAPH), and its stated goal is to support the production of “media content relevant to local communities” and to improve communication between newsrooms and their audiences. The support consisted partly of financial contributions and partly of expert mentoring, which Internews provided directly to the partners on a milestone-based system. The program also explicitly encouraged cross-border and intra-country collaborations.

Under the other grant program, called Expanding Production of Independent Content (EPIC), the U.S. State Department supported topics related to Ukraine, Romania, Georgia, Armenia, or Slovenia, though Hungarian applicants were also eligible to apply. For projects with a Ukrainian theme, the organization UkraineWorld provided logistical and content support, such as identifying interview subjects, providing photo and video materials, and sharing databases.

In Hungary, the Független Média Központ received 33,319,000 HUF (approx. \$100,000) in 2022,<sup>105</sup> which was listed as an “international funding,” but Internews lists this on its own website as part of the “Journalist Security Fellowship in Central Europe” program, mentioning the Hungarian organization as a collaborating partner.

The financial report of Magyar Jeti Zrt. (444.hu) is similarly opaque<sup>106</sup>: their 2023 report lists, alongside Internews and the U.S. State Department’s EPIC project, Zinc Network Limited—which distributes USAID funds—as well as the Ökotárs Foundation, which manages both U.S. and European Union funds.

Internews is a strategic tool of U.S. foreign policy, capable of shaping the media landscape and political narratives—including in Hungary—through technical, financial, and personnel support in regions of strategic importance.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> 444 hu. Magyar Jeti Zrt.’s 2023 Financial Performance. Source: [444 hu/a-magyar-jeti-zrt-2023-as-gazdalkodasa](https://444.hu/a-magyar-jeti-zrt-2023-as-gazdalkodasa)

<sup>104</sup> Internews is coming – the U.S. wants strong independent media in Hungary. (Nov. 5, 2022). Source: [fuhu.hu/jon-az-internews-az-usa-eros-fuggetlen-mediak-akar-magyarorszagon/](https://fuhu.hu/jon-az-internews-az-usa-eros-fuggetlen-mediak-akar-magyarorszagon/)

<sup>105</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (March 19, 2025). The role of Internews in influencing the Hungarian media. Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/Az-Internews-szerepe-a-magyarorszagi-media-befolyasolasaban.pdf>

<sup>106</sup> [https://444 hu/a-magyar-jeti-zrt-2023-as-gazdalkodasa](https://444.hu/a-magyar-jeti-zrt-2023-as-gazdalkodasa)

<sup>107</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (March 19, 2025). The role of Internews in influencing the Hungarian media. Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/Az-Internews-szerepe-a-magyarorszagi-media-befolyasolasaban.pdf>

The 2024 transparency report of the Telex online news portal reveals that the editorial office received 2,192,357 HUF (approx. \$6500) in funding from the Internews Network, which was used to produce three pieces covering Ukraine:

- 1) The functioning of the economy in a wartime situation (services, hospitality, real estate market);
- 2) The impact of the war on gender roles in society;
- 3) The railway as a symbol and social institution connecting the country's communities.<sup>108</sup>

Internews is among the quasi-governmental agencies that have received both significant U.S. government funding and over €30 million in EU funding for 26 projects.<sup>109</sup>

#### 2.2.4. Dexis in Hungary

Dexis Consulting Group is a Washington D.C.-based consulting and development services firm founded in the early 2000s with the aim of supporting international development and government programs. In 2017, the company acquired Checchi and Company Consulting, integrating its expertise in the areas of rule of law and justice programs. Dexis has since become a key player in international development consulting.

Dexis's CEO is Mihir Desai, who founded Dexis after the 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S. and subsequently worked for more than 15 years as an analyst and consultant in Iraq, Afghanistan, the West Bank, Gaza, and other high-risk regions.<sup>110</sup>

The company's most significant client and funder was USAID, which paid Dexis approximately \$297 million during the Biden administration, between 2020 and 2024.<sup>111</sup>

The organization was linked to USAID through numerous framework agreements, including the Central Europe Program, which covers Hungary. In 2023, at the request of USAID, the organization consolidated its international projects—covering more than 75 countries—into an international development division.

The organization was involved in several aspects of the implementation of USAID's Central Europe Program (CEP). Dexis Consulting Group was awarded the coordination tasks for the rule of law and anti-corruption components. Dexis worked not with regional partner organizations, but with coordinators recruited at the local level. This is how Balázs Jarábik became the project director in early 2023. As a result, the Társaság a Szabadságjogokért – TASZ (Hungarian Civil Liberties Union) received 28,655,116 HUF (approx. \$84,300) from Dexis-USAID funds to support the project "Supporting active citizens nationwide in their efforts to restore the rule of law in Hungary."<sup>112</sup>

No public financial statements are available on the Dexis Consulting Group website. According to public information, the company reported annual revenue of \$105.7 million in 2025 and

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<sup>108</sup> Telex. (June 2, 2025). We live off the market; there is no foreign influence. Source: <https://telex.hu/kozlemeny/2025/06/02/itt-a-telex-friss-atlathatosagi-jelentese>

<sup>109</sup> The website [www.ngotransparency.eu](http://www.ngotransparency.eu) lists 26 EU-funded projects for which the Internews network received support.

<sup>110</sup> Dexis. Where Agility x Purpose. Source: <https://dexisonline.com/about-us/#our-leadership>

<sup>111</sup> Exact amount: 296,763,653 USD. Source: [usaspending.gov](https://usaspending.gov)

<sup>112</sup> TASZ 2023 Annual Report. <https://tasz.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Szoveges-beszamolo-2023.pdf>

employs approximately 508 people,<sup>113</sup> which represents a significant decline compared to previous years. Following U.S. President Donald Trump’s inauguration, the company laid off dozens of employees in Washington.<sup>114</sup>

### 2.2.5. The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA)

The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) is one of Poland’s leading think tanks,<sup>115</sup> operating since 1995. It addresses domestic, European, and global issues, with key focus areas including European policy, social policy, civil society, migration and development policy, as well as democracy and the rule of law.

Among its leaders is Małgorzata Kopka-Piątek, who previously worked for 15 years at the German Green Party’s Heinrich Böll Foundation and has been responsible for the institute’s European and migration programs since 2021. The organization’s president, Dr. Jacek Kucharczyk, has close ties to the Soros network. He has been a co-founder and board member of several international NGOs, including the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) in Brussels and the Policy Association for an Open Society in Prague. He is also a founding member of the board of trustees of the Prague Civil Society Center.

The organization’s president is the chair and a member of the advisory board responsible for the OSF scholarship programs affiliated with George Soros and previously served as a member of the advisory board of the Open Society Institute Think Tank Fund. Another member of the executive board is sociologist Prof. Beata Łaciak. Danuta Hübner, a member of the foundation’s board of trustees, is the former European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms from the European People’s Party.

According to its financial statements, the organization has managed significant U.S. and EU funds in recent years.<sup>116</sup>

A grant from USAID’s Central Europe Program titled “Promoting Citizen Participation in Political Processes in Hungary and Poland” was specifically listed in their budget. In 2022, they received 32,086.94 Polish zlotys (approx. \$8,000),<sup>117</sup> and in 2023, they received 103,933.88 Polish zlotys (approx. \$27,000).<sup>118</sup> In addition to political grants, they also received foreign funding for migration, environmental, and social programs.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, they secured funding from other U.S. sources, including from both NED and NDI.

Nevertheless, the organization’s largest donor is the European Commission. In 2022, three-quarters of its total revenue came from the European Commission, amounting to 4,595,902.64 Polish zlotys (approx. \$1,150,000), while in 2023, 32.44 percent of their revenue –a total of 1,381,684.74 Polish zlotys (approx. \$357,800)– came from the EU. The organization was also supported by George Soros’s Open Society Foundation; in 2023, the Hungarian-American billionaire provided the organization with 245,997 Polish zlotys (approx. \$65,000).

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<sup>113</sup> Zoominfo. Dexis Consulting Group. Source: <https://www.zoominfo.com/c/dexis-interactive-inc/23237038>

<sup>114</sup> Washington Business Journal. USAID contractor Dexis Consulting laying off dozens in D.C. (April 8, 2025). Source: <https://www.bizjournals.com/washington/news/2025/04/08/dexis-iae-layoffs-usaid-trump.html>

<sup>115</sup> Institute of Public Affairs. Source: <https://www.isp.org.pl/en/about-us>

<sup>116</sup> Institute of Public Affairs. Source: <https://www.isp.org.pl/pl/o-nas>

<sup>117</sup> MNB zloty mid-rate calculated based on the exchange rate as of December 29, 2022

<sup>118</sup> MNB zloty mid-rate calculated based on the exchange rate as of December 29, 2023

<sup>119</sup> ISP Reports. ISP Financial Report 2023. Source: <https://www.isp.org.pl/pl/o-nas>

## 2.2.6. Prague Civil Society Center

The Prague Civil Society Center (PCSC) is a Czech organization operating since 2015 that is active in a total of 12 countries across Central and Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet region.<sup>120</sup>

Just one year after its establishment, PCSC received a 10-year contract worth over \$32 million from USAID. In its own reports, PCSC presents itself as a regional hub that helps sustain an “independent” civil society ecosystem through training, support, and networking programs, even in countries where the state “seeks to restrict” it. In addition to its multi-million-dollar USAID projects, the PCSC has also participated in consortia supported by the EU with millions of euros. Its staff has close ties to organizations supported by George Soros, which explains the rapid and substantial contracts.

Currently, the Prague headquarters is managed by a board of trustees, on which the three founding organizations (People in Need, the Human Rights House Foundation, and the previously mentioned Institute of Public Affairs) are represented by their leaders. Among the board members is Inna Pidluska, the deputy executive director of the International Renaissance Foundation, who previously worked at the OSF’s foundation in Ukraine. Also on the board is Giorgi Gogia, Deputy Director of the Europe and Central Asia Division at Human Rights Watch—an organization also linked to Soros—who studied at CEU in Hungary, as well as Barbara von Ow-Freytag, a journalist and political scientist who previously worked for numerous media outlets, including Reuters, Radio Free Europe (operated by the U.S. government agency USAGM), and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

The organization’s executive director is Rostislav Valvoda, on whose initiative the organization was founded in 2015 and who concurrently served as the head of People in Need’s Eastern European program. The organization’s deputy director and program director responsible for grants is Maria Aghajanyan, who previously worked at OSF in Armenia for 12 years. The other program director, responsible for events and exchange programs, Dáša van der Horst, was previously the director of organizational development and movement building at Amnesty International. The organization’s director of public relations and communications, George Leech, previously worked at the Moscow office of Human Rights Watch, the International Crisis Group, and the OSCE, among others.

The organization’s funding structure clearly shows that PCSC’s largest supporters are government entities. Since 2016, the UK’s Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) has provided annual funding of around \$4 million for several years, while the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs has regularly allocated tens of millions of Czech korunas through the Transition Promotion Program and other state frameworks. The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Sida/MFA) also provided direct support to the organization, totaling 40 million Swedish kronor in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

According to a report by the Office for the Protection of Sovereignty, PCSC primarily provided grants—through closed and invitation-only calls for proposals—to media figures (an average of €54,000) and to NGOs (an average of €35,000,) in grants, an organization active in Eastern Europe, Central Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus region.<sup>121</sup> According to public data from USAspending.gov, PCSC grants support civil activism and media initiatives in our region.

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<sup>120</sup> Prague Civil Society Centre. About the Prague Civil Society Centre. Source: <https://www.praguecivilsociety.org/about/>

<sup>121</sup> <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/A-USAID-botrany-magyarorszagi-korrupcios-szalai.pdf>

PCSC does not publish the list of grantees on its official website, so the grants can only be found in the reports published by the individual organizations. In Hungary, for example, Átlátszó.hu received €48,000 from PCSC for the “Organizational Development and Sustainability Program 2023-2024” project.<sup>122</sup>

The Trump administration terminated USAID’s projects.<sup>123</sup> The organization People in Need is also an important funding source. People in Need provided approximately \$2.15 million in support to PCSC in 2022 and an additional \$1 million in 2023, which stands out among the grants, given that it is not a government agency. People in Need’s USAID grants totaled approximately \$230 million between 2020 and 2024.

This amount is supplemented by a similarly large grant from the European Commission, which will be disbursed to the organization between 2019 and 2027, totaling approximately €195.2 million. Also worth mentioning is the OSF’s grant between 2022 and 2023, totaling \$1,820,034.<sup>124</sup> Thus, PCSC’s funding included both direct and indirect support from American and European taxpayers.

Overall, Prague Civil Society Centre has become one of the most important funding and coordination hubs for political and media projects in Central and Eastern Europe.

**6. PCSC’S MAIN FUNDERS AND GRANTS**

NAME OF SPONSOR	AMOUNT OF GRANT (DOLLARS)	AMOUNT OF GRANT (HUF)	PERIOD
USAID	>60,000,000	>19,260,000,000 <sup>125</sup>	October 2016 – August 2026
UK-FCDO	28,642,515	8,786,879,145	2016–2023
European Commission	2,518,486	899,678,754	July 2023 – May 2025
Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs	4,400,000	1,601,028,000	2022–2024
People in Need	3,182,215	1,155,732,755	2022 and 2023
<b>Total:</b>	<b>&gt;98,743,216</b>	<b>&gt;31,703,319,254</b>	

Sources: usaspending.gov; finmag.cz; ngotransparency.eu; Openaid: 2022; 2023; 2024; Hungarian Central Bank; Exchange Rate Monitor.<sup>126</sup>

The Prague-based consulting and production firm KEYNOTE works in close cooperation with PCSC. KEYNOTE specializes in the comprehensive organization of international conferences and professional events, with a particular focus on current trends in politics, security policy, international relations, as well as “civil society” and the business world.

<sup>122</sup> <https://atlatzso.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Kiegeszito-melleklet-2023-1.pdf>  
<sup>123</sup> <https://www.praguecivilsociety.org/what-does-the-usaid-funding-freeze-mean-for-us/>  
<sup>124</sup> Source: [https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/past?filter\\_keyword=People+in+Need](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/past?filter_keyword=People+in+Need)  
<sup>125</sup> Calculated using the MNB’s official exchange rate as of February 5, 2026  
<sup>126</sup> The data in the table shown in HUF were calculated based on the Hungarian National Bank’s Central Exchange Rate Monitor, using the averaged central exchange rates for the years indicated. Source: <http://mnbkozeparfolyam.hu/>

### 2.3. The Soros Network’s Operations in Hungary

The range of organizations within George Soros’s funding network is extremely broad, and numerous analyses have already been published on their activities. This report does not intend to address them in detail beyond the funding and personnel connections with the organizations already presented.

However, given his significant political connections within the U.S. government and the European Union, it is worth noting the organizations he has supported in recent years, as there is a significant overlap with the Biden administration’s USAID- and NED-funded entities in Hungary. Between 2016 and 2023, George Soros, the Hungarian-American billionaire, provided \$89,494,595 to various organizations in Hungary exclusively through the Open Society Foundations (OSF network) he founded.<sup>127</sup> The year preceding the 2022 elections stands out, when a record amount of \$17 million arrived to domestic actors.

Soros supports at least 153 organizations in Hungary, many of which are active players in Hungarian public life. The activities of these organizations include promoting migration, advancing gender ideology, and raising awareness about the democratic situation.

Although OSF announced in 2023 that it would reduce its presence in Europe, the figures nevertheless show that it continued to spend significant amounts of money on European projects. In 2024, OSF spent a total of \$83.7 million in the European and Eurasian regions.<sup>128</sup>

## 7. ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY THE OSF<sup>129</sup>

	Supported Hungarian organization	Grant (dollars)	Grant (HUF)
1.	Municipality of Budapest	\$3,322,784	1,279,637,346 HUF
2.	Hungarian Helsinki Committee	\$2,579,885	993,539,512 HUF
3.	Emberség Erejével Foundation	\$2,316,680	892,176,635 HUF
4.	Társaság a Szabadságjogokért – TASZ (Hungarian Civil Liberties Union)	\$2,130,118	820,329,743 HUF
5.	Atlatszo hu (and its organizations)	\$704,532	271,322,319 HUF
6.	Political Capital Ltd.	\$685,123	263,847,719 HUF
7.	K-Monitor Public Benefit Association	\$425,360	163,810,390 HUF
8.	Transparency International Hungary	\$422,055	162,537,601 HUF
9.	Menedék – Hungarian Association for Migrants	\$368,739	142,005,076 HUF
10.	Ökotárs Foundation	\$306,147	117,900,271 HUF
11.	Nyugat Média és Világháló Association	\$259,142	99,798,176 HUF
12.	Háttér Society	\$229,543	88,399,305 HUF

In addition to the Soros network, other private foundations also support political projects. The Sigrid Rausing Trust, for example, donated £42 million in 2023 alone.<sup>130</sup> Domestic grantees include: the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, Átlátszó, Háttér Society, K-Monitor, NANE

<sup>127</sup> Center for Fundamental Rights. (February 26, 2025). “SOROSAID” – Part 3. Source: <https://alapjogokert.hu/anyagok/kutatasaink/sorosaid-3-resz>

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/who-we-are/financials>

<sup>129</sup> Center for Fundamental Rights. (February 26, 2025). “SOROSAID” – Part 2. Source: <https://alapjogokert.hu/anyagok/elemezeseink/sorosaid-2-resz>

<sup>130</sup> <https://www.hinchilla.com/funder-directory/the-sigrid-rausing-trust>

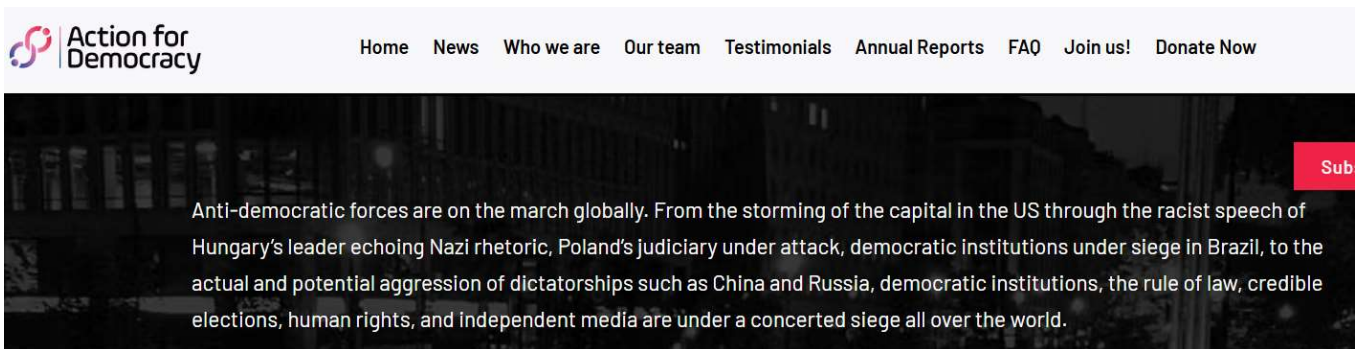
Women’s Rights Association/Patient Association, Transparency International Hungary, Direkt 36, Civilizáció Coalition, and TASZ. Overlap between funders and grantees is common, as seen in other chapters as well.

## 2.4. Activities of Other Influence-Wielding Agencies and Organizations in Hungary

### 2.4.1. Action for Democracy

During the 2022 parliamentary elections, the Hungarian public became familiar with the name Action for Democracy (A4D) and the “rolling dollars” scandal. The organization, formed shortly before the election campaign, has been continuously trying to expand its activities ever since.

According to their website, they are fighting against “global anti-democratic forces,” citing as examples the events in Washington on January 6, 2020 (thus referring to Trump and his supporters), “the racist rhetoric of Hungary’s leader, reminiscent of Nazi rhetoric,” “the attack on the Polish judiciary,” and “the attack on democratic institutions in Brazil.” This description has presumably not been updated on the website since 2022, as their 2022 report criticizes Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, and since then, with the exception of Hungary, there have been leadership changes in both Poland and Brazil. In the meantime, numerous anomalies have come to light that contradict the leftist narrative surrounding the events of January 6.



Three of the four areas of activity defined on Action for Democracy’s own website correspond to the four areas of intervention defined in the USAID Central Europe Program:

Action for Democracy supported 24 grassroots initiatives in six battleground states/regions, which we define as countries facing an imminent threat of democratic erosion and having pivotal elections for the global fight against autocracy. These initiatives aimed to protect and enhance the voting rights of citizens and to increase the political engagement of marginalized groups, such as women and young people. Our funding priorities were guided by the following criteria:

			
<p><b>Electoral Empowerment – Get Out the Vote Campaigns</b></p> <p>Projects that aim to ensure fair elections, empower marginalized groups in the electoral process, with an emphasis on women, the youth and the diaspora.</p>	<p><b>Freedom of Press</b></p> <p>Projects that protect and strengthen freedom of the press and fight disinformation.</p>	<p><b>Democratic Watchdogs</b></p> <p>Initiatives that strive to monitor and assess government actions, elections, and policy-making to safeguard the principles of democracy.</p>	<p><b>Democratic Education</b></p> <p>Initiatives that promote democratic education, such as civics programs, to enhance public understanding of democratic principles.</p>

Action for Democracy's 2023 annual report mentions Estratos as a partner. Estratos is the new name of DatAdat, the company that became infamous in the 2022 foreign interference scandal.

Action for Democracy transferred a total of 1,848,603,106 HUF (approx. \$5.4 million) in funding to the account of the Everyone's Hungary Movement (MMM), the movement of Péter Márki-Zay, the 2022 joint prime ministerial candidate of the left-wing coalition.<sup>131</sup> Of this amount, MMM paid approximately 1,410,561,699 HUF (approx. \$4,150,000) to the DatAdat group between March and July 2022. DatAdat is owned by Tibor Dessewffy, a former advisor to former socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, as well as former socialist Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai, former Minister of State Viktor Szigetvári, and former Minister of State Ádám Ficsor.

In addition, Action for Democracy transferred significant sums to three other Hungarian legal entities. Oraculum 2020 Ltd. received one billion HUF (approx. \$3 million), DatAdat received 148 million HUF (approx. \$435,000), and Gemius Hungary Adatfeldolgozó és Kutató Ltd. received 3.5 million HUF (approx. \$10,300).<sup>132</sup>

The head of Action for Democracy is Dávid Korányi, who previously served as deputy state secretary under former Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai and as an advisor to Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony.<sup>133</sup>

According to a report released by the Hungarian National Information Center, A4D provided a total of more than three billion HUF (approx. \$8.8 million) in U.S. funding to organizations in Hungary. Claims regarding "micro-donations" at the time were refuted by a recording shared on a profile named MagaBabe, in which Korányi stated that one could become one of the largest donors starting from an amount equivalent to two million dollars.<sup>134</sup> It also turned out that the claims that the IDs of the alleged micro-donors were checked to ensure that only money from Hungarian citizens was accepted were not true either. In its own newsletter, A4D reported to its supporters that they had supported the opposition party in Hungary.<sup>135</sup>

Members of Action for Democracy's advisory board, meanwhile, stated that the majority of the funds came from American-Hungarian billionaire George Soros. In April 2025, Dávid Korányi wrote on Politico that his organization would continue its funding activities in Hungary and other "battleground" countries.<sup>136</sup>

This was soon confirmed by the scandal which erupted over videos appearing in the Polish

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<sup>131</sup> Overview of Foreign Campaign Funding for the Unified Opposition (Interim Report I). (Nov. 17, 2022). Source: <https://www.parlament.hu/documents/129803/64121212/Elemz%C5%91-%C3%A9rt%C3%A9kel%C5%91+vizsg%C3%A1lat+id%C5%91szakos+jelent%C3%A9s+%2820221117%294.0.NBB.pdf>

<sup>132</sup> Index hu. Everything we know so far about the American support received by Péter Márki-Zay and his team. (November 30, 2022).

Source: <https://index.hu/belfold/2022/11/30/marki-zay-peter-action-for-democracy-koranyi-david-egyesult-allamok-ellenzok-kampany-valasztas/>

<sup>133</sup> Magyar Nemzet. Behind Péter Magyar stands Gordon Bajnai's notorious company. (April 18, 2022). Source: <https://magyarnemzet.hu/belfold/2024/04/magyar-peter-mogott-bajnai-gordon-elhiresult-cege-all>

<sup>134</sup> Mandiner. At Action for Democracy, this amount is considered an ideal micro-donation. (February 23, 2024). Source: <https://mandiner.hu/belfold/2024/02/az-action-for-democracy-nal-ekkora-osszeget-tekintenek-idealis-mikroadomanyoknak-2>

<sup>135</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFf4ZpFOdyw>

<sup>136</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-could-suspend-citizenship-to-silence-dissent/>

presidential election campaign.<sup>137</sup> A4D's partner, Estratos, also contributed to the financing of Polish organizations and the creation of digital content.

With the emergence of Péter Magyar, currently the president of the TISZA Party, foreign interest groups sprang into action once again.

In 2023, Action for Democracy provided \$1.3 million to Estratos Digital, whose legal predecessor is DatAdat, a company implicated in foreign campaign financing in 2022.<sup>138</sup> According to investigative reports published in the Polish press, the majority owner of Estratos is a company called Higher Ground Labs III, linked to former U.S. President Barack Obama. The senior executives of Higher Ground Labs are Betsy Hoover, Shomik Dutta, and Andrew McLaughlin,<sup>139</sup> who served as advisors to President Obama in the White House. The company's investors are major donors to the U.S. Democratic Party.<sup>140</sup> Barack Obama and his wife also established a media company called Higher Ground Productions in 2018.

A4D's partner, Estratos Digital GmbH, was also listed in the privacy policy of Talpra Magyarok, the predecessor organization of the Tisza Party.<sup>141</sup>

According to a report by Action for Democracy, the main player in the 2022 left-wing foreign campaign financing scandal, the organization supported Estratos Digital with \$1.3 million in 2023 as well.<sup>142</sup> Action for Democracy also has close ties to George Soros's foundation, the Open Society Foundations (OSF).

#### 2.4.2. The United States Agency for Global Media (USAGM) and Hungary

In Hungary, USAGM's activities were primarily carried out through the Hungarian-language service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, namely Radio Free Europe. Radio Free Europe originally operated from 1950 to 1993 under the socialist one-party system until the collapse of the socialist regime and was relaunched in 2020 citing the deterioration of media freedom in Hungary. The radio station's goal is to "provide credible news and analysis in a media market subject to political influence."<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> [https://demagog.org.pl/en/analyses\\_and\\_reports/campaign-out-of-control-from-madrid-to-warsaw-whos-really-behind-the-suspicious-ads/](https://demagog.org.pl/en/analyses_and_reports/campaign-out-of-control-from-madrid-to-warsaw-whos-really-behind-the-suspicious-ads/)

<sup>138</sup> Fact-checker. Dávid Korányi and his associates sent nearly half a billion HUF (approx. 1,500,000 USD) to the DatAdat empire immediately before Péter Magyar's appearance. Source: <https://tenyellenor.hu/felmilliard-HUFnyi-dollart-csurgattak-washingtonbol-a-datadat-kornyekere-magyar-peter-berobbanasa-elott>

<sup>139</sup> <https://highergroundlabs.com/people/>

<sup>140</sup> <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/06/20/tech-incubator-left-leaning-startups-1544415>

<sup>141</sup> [https://talpramagyarok.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/LVE-Adatkezelesi-tajekoztato\\_v2.1\\_20240131-1.pdf](https://talpramagyarok.hu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/LVE-Adatkezelesi-tajekoztato_v2.1_20240131-1.pdf)

<sup>142</sup> [https://ff0ea110-9483-47e3-a973-c7b609900d2c.filesusr.com/ugd/09b920\\_365f97ab44774382952eb5d126593306.pdf](https://ff0ea110-9483-47e3-a973-c7b609900d2c.filesusr.com/ugd/09b920_365f97ab44774382952eb5d126593306.pdf)

<sup>143</sup> Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Hungarian Service. Source: <https://about.rferl.org/service/hungarian-service/>

## 8. USAGM EXPENDITURES IN HUNGARY

*Below are the expenses that USAGM spent on programs in Hungary and reported in its financial statements:*

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Budget (in dollars)/line item</b>	<b>Reference</b>
2019	80,000/ Hungarian Re-Launch Research Funding from IBB	Page 139 <sup>144</sup>
2019	957,000/ Hungarian Service Launch	Page 139 <sup>145</sup>
2020	171,000/ Language services	Page 138 <sup>146</sup>
2022	874,000/ Language services	Page 184 <sup>147</sup>
2023	1,511,000/ Language services	Page 72 <sup>148</sup>

It should be noted that, according to the available documents, funding was budgeted for both 2021 and 2024; however, it is not clear how much of the calculated amount was actually used. According to the available report, the estimated amount for 2021 was \$552,000,<sup>149</sup> while the amount calculated for 2024 is \$1,469,000.<sup>150</sup>

### 2.4.3. Globsec and Hungary

Globsec is a Bratislava-based Atlanticist think tank and security policy forum that was launched in 2005<sup>151</sup> and has since grown into one of Central Europe’s largest geopolitical meeting places. Its main activities include organizing the world-renowned Globsec Bratislava Forum, where heads of state and government, diplomats, experts, and business leaders discuss current issues in global politics, security, and the economy. According to the organization, it also contributes to decision-making through research, analysis, and recommendations, particularly in the areas of “defending democracy,” countering hybrid threats and disinformation, and addressing technological and energy challenges. Globsec’s official goal is to strengthen transatlantic cooperation and actively involve Central European countries in international dialogue.<sup>152</sup>

Political Capital disseminates Globsec’s research in Hungary,<sup>153</sup> and they also organize joint events. They jointly held an online event titled, “Hungary Through the Lens of Russian Propaganda.”<sup>154</sup> The left-wing think tank Political Capital received \$685,123 from the OSF

<sup>144</sup> U.S. Agency for Global Media. FY 2022 Congressional Budget Justification. Source: <https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/USAGM-FY-2022-CBJ-Final-05.26.2021.pdf> (page 139)

<sup>145</sup> U.S. Agency for Global Media. FY 2022 Congressional Budget Justification. Source: <https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/USAGM-FY-2022-CBJ-Final-05.26.2021.pdf> (page 139)

<sup>146</sup> U.S. Agency for Global Media. FY 2022 Congressional Budget Justification. Source: <https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/USAGM-FY-2022-CBJ-Final-05.26.2021.pdf> (page 138)

<sup>147</sup> U.S. Agency for Global Media. FY 2024 Congressional Budget Justification. Source: [https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FY2024\\_CBJ\\_Final\\_3-14-23.pdf](https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/FY2024_CBJ_Final_3-14-23.pdf) (page 184)

<sup>148</sup> U.S. Agency for Global Media. FY 2025 Congressional Budget Justification. Source: [https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/USAGMBudget\\_FY25\\_CBJ\\_03-08-24-1.pdf](https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/USAGMBudget_FY25_CBJ_03-08-24-1.pdf) (page 72)

<sup>149</sup> U.S. Agency for Global Media. FY 2022 Congressional Budget Justification. Source: <https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/USAGM-FY-2022-CBJ-Final-05.26.2021.pdf> (page 139)

<sup>150</sup> U.S. Agency for Global Media. FY 2025 Congressional Budget Justification. Source: [https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/USAGMBudget\\_FY25\\_CBJ\\_03-08-24-1.pdf](https://www.usagm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/USAGMBudget_FY25_CBJ_03-08-24-1.pdf) (page 72)

<sup>151</sup> Globsec. (March 27, 2023). Globsec Launches New Office in Washington, D.C. to Strengthen Transatlantic Cooperation. Source: <https://www.globsec.org/what-we-do/press-releases/globsec-launches-new-office-washington-dc-strengthen-transatlantic>

<sup>152</sup> Globsec. Ideas shaping the world. Source: <https://www.globsec.org/who-we-are/about-us>

<sup>153</sup> Political Capital. (Nov. 16, 2021). Globsec Vulnerability Index: How Resistant Is Central Europe to Russian and Chinese Influence? Source: [https://politicalcapital.hu/kereses.php?article\\_read=1&article\\_id=2897](https://politicalcapital.hu/kereses.php?article_read=1&article_id=2897)

<sup>154</sup> Political Capital. (Nov. 26, 2021). Hungary Through the Lens of Russian Propaganda. Source: [https://politicalcapital.hu/hirek.php?article\\_read=1&article\\_id=2920](https://politicalcapital.hu/hirek.php?article_read=1&article_id=2920)

between 2016 and 2023.<sup>155</sup> The NED, GMF, and NDI also appear among its donors.<sup>156 157</sup>

Globsec itself also received funding from the OSF, totaling \$2,783,370 between 2016 and 2023.<sup>158</sup>

Gordon Bajnai has served as vice president of Globsec since May 2021,<sup>159</sup> but he had already made a statement prior to the 2018 Tatra Summit—at which he spoke as a presenter.<sup>160</sup> In 2019, he co-authored a study with, among others, former Polish Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, former Slovak Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajčák, and former EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Füle, in which they wrote about the future of the Central European region and the challenges it faces.<sup>161</sup>

Dávid Korányi, whom we introduced in the chapter on Action for Democracy, also appeared in connection with the organization, as he began working as a strategic advisor for Globsec in May 2020.<sup>162</sup> He also took on roles at the Atlantic Council and the German Marshall Fund.<sup>163</sup> Previously, Zoltán Varga, the billionaire owner of the Central Media Group—which also owns 24.hu—was a member of Globsec’s International Advisory Board.<sup>164</sup>

In January 2026, Péter Magyar announced that Anita Orbán, a member of Globsec’s Board of Directors, would become the new chief foreign policy advisor to the Tisza Party.<sup>165</sup> Anita Orbán also participated in the work of the Globsec Energy Advisory Committee.<sup>166</sup> In her book *Power, Energy, and the New Russian Imperialism*, she advocated for weaning Europe off Russian oil, a position she regularly advocated for as a representative of Globsec.

Anita Orbán was also a member of another organization with strong ties to the Soros network, the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). Her name disappeared from the ECFR website days before the Tisza Party announcement.<sup>167</sup> In 2023, the organization received €3,775,216 in funding from George Soros’s OSF Foundation, and the European Commission also provided €180,786 in funding to the organization.<sup>168</sup> The Hungarian members of the ECFR are prominent figures on the Hungarian left: former left-wing Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai, DK leader Klára Dobrev, Action for Democracy leader Dávid Korányi, Tibor Dessewffy (linked to the DatAdat group), as well as George Soros and his son, Alex Soros:

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<sup>155</sup> Open Society Foundations. Awarded Grants. Source: [https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/past?filter\\_keyword=Political+Capital](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/past?filter_keyword=Political+Capital)

<sup>156</sup> Political Capital. (September 6, 2016). Partners and Donors. Source: <https://politicalcapital.hu/partnereink.php>

<sup>157</sup> Kontra. (October 26, 2022). With Bajnai and Zoltán Varga in the background, another foreign organization has also gotten involved in the election. Source: <https://kontra.hu/bajnaival-es-varga-zoltannal-a-hatterben-egy-masik-kulfoldi-szervezet-is-ramozdult-a-valasztasra>

<sup>158</sup> [https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/past?filter\\_keyword=Globsec](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/past?filter_keyword=Globsec)

<sup>159</sup> Globsec. (May 13, 2021). Think Tank GLOBSEC Creates the New Board of Directors, Former Austrian Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer Was Elected Its Chairman. Source: <https://www.globsec.org/what-we-do/press-releases/think-tank-globsec-creates-new-board-directors-former-austrian-vice>

<sup>160</sup> Globsec YouTube Channel. (Jan. 31, 2019). Globsec Tatra Summit 2018 - Gordon Bajnai Source:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXpKzNC7SR8>

<sup>161</sup> Globsec. (June 3, 2019). GLOBSEC EU Task Force report: New European cycle - Ideas Coming from Central Europe. Source: <https://www.globsec.org/what-we-do/publications/globsec-eu-task-force-report-new-european-cycle-ideas-coming-central-europe>

<sup>162</sup> Globsec. (May 12, 2020). David Koranyi joins GLOBSEC as Strategic Advisor. Source: <https://www.globsec.org/what-we-do/press-releases/david-koranyi-joins-globsec-strategic-advisor>

<sup>163</sup> Atlantic Council. About. Source: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/expert/david-koranyi/>

<sup>164</sup> Globsec. International Advisory Council. Source: <https://www.globsec.org/who-we-are/international-advisory-council>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7ADrxxLLNk>

<sup>165</sup> <https://www.globsec.org/what-we-do/press-releases/meet-globsec-energy-advisory-committee>

<sup>167</sup> <https://ecfr.eu/council/members/>

<sup>168</sup> [https://transparency-register.europa.eu/search-register-or-update/organisation-detail\\_hu?id=339569615567-89](https://transparency-register.europa.eu/search-register-or-update/organisation-detail_hu?id=339569615567-89)

2025.12.06.

Hungary

- **Gordon Bajnai** – Chair, Global Advisory Board & Head of Global Infrastructure, Campbell Lutyens; former Prime Minister of Hungary
- **Tibor Dessewffy** – President, DEMOS Hungary
- **Klára Dobrev** – Member of the European Parliament
- **Dávid Korányi** – President, Action for Democracy; Senior Adviser, Office of the Mayor of Budapest
- **Tamás Meszerics** – Assistant Professor, Central European University; former Member of the European Parliament
- **Anita Orban** – Vice Chairwoman, Director for External Affairs, Vodafone Hungary
- **Alexander Soros (Hungary/USA)** – Chair of the Board of Directors, Open Society Foundations
- **George Soros (Hungary/USA)** – Founder, Open Society Foundations

2026.02.07.

Hungary

- **Gordon Bajnai** – Chair, Global Advisory Board & Head of Global Infrastructure, Campbell Lutyens; former Prime Minister of Hungary
- **Tibor Dessewffy** – President, DEMOS Hungary
- **Klára Dobrev** – Member of the European Parliament
- **Dávid Korányi** – President, Action for Democracy; Senior Adviser, Office of the Mayor of Budapest
- **Tamás Meszerics** – Assistant Professor, Central European University; former Member of the European Parliament
- **Alexander Soros (Hungary/USA)** – Chair of the Board of Directors, Open Society Foundations
- **George Soros (Hungary/USA)** – Founder, Open Society Foundations

#### 2.4.4. The Global Engagement Center and Hungary

The Global Engagement Center (GEC) is a unit within the U.S. Department of State established by President Barack Obama in 2016 with the aim of coordinating and strengthening the country’s responses to foreign propaganda and disinformation campaigns. The center’s primary mission was to identify, analyze, and counter manipulative information operations disseminated by foreign state and non-state actors—such as Russia, China, Iran, and terrorist organizations. In the course of its operations, it launched strategic communication campaigns, provided support to local media and other initiatives, and advanced research on countering disinformation. Based on this, the GEC can be understood as a central institution in modern information warfare and geopolitical competition.

The organization’s original mission was supposed to be stopping foreign propaganda. Instead, it engaged in domestic political censorship and foreign influence operations. Under the banner of the “fight against disinformation,” it intervened in the internal affairs of sovereign states worldwide through financial support and ideologically driven pressure.

Several Central and Eastern European organizations received funding from sources managed by the GEC—including some in Hungary. The Central European University, which is affiliated with George Soros, was among them. The program titled “PROPDIS: Propaganda and Disinformation – Workshop and Content Creation Project with Hungarian Students,” implemented between September 24, 2018, and July 31, 2019, received funding from the GEC’s Information Access Fund (IAF).<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> KPMG. (December 31, 2019). Independent auditor’s report on the 2019 simplified annual financial statements of Central European University. Source: [https://www.oktatas.hu/pub\\_bin/dload/felsooktatas/hatosagi/kozhasznusagi\\_mellekletek\\_beszamolok/Kozhasznusagi\\_melleklet\\_beszamolo\\_KEE\\_2019.pdf](https://www.oktatas.hu/pub_bin/dload/felsooktatas/hatosagi/kozhasznusagi_mellekletek_beszamolok/Kozhasznusagi_melleklet_beszamolo_KEE_2019.pdf)

According to the GEC’s report for the 2018 fiscal year,<sup>170</sup> provided nearly \$3 million in Central and Eastern Europe (including Hungary) and the Balkans, among other things, to assess public opinion, “social vulnerabilities,” and Russian disinformation.<sup>171</sup>

In addition, Political Capital contributed to the production of several GEC-funded articles aimed at discrediting the Hungarian government.<sup>172</sup>

At a March 5, 2020, hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s Subcommittee on Oversight of the Department of State and USAID, International Operations, and Bilateral Development Cooperation, the then-head of the GEC, Lea Gabrielle, repeatedly acknowledged that they had supported foreign journalists and organizations and conducted communication campaigns among Central and Eastern European allies. According to her, their goal was to “build resilience against disinformation” with the support of U.S. embassies.

At the same hearing, Democratic Senator Cory A. Booker, in a speech on the “gravity of the threat of global disinformation,” also mentioned Hungary as an example of “autocratization.”<sup>173</sup>

On December 15, 2022, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken appointed James P. Rubin as Special Envoy and Coordinator for the GEC, and he remained in office until December 31, 2024. In December 2024, Congress—with a Republican majority—did not renew the GEC’s budget, effectively rejecting further funding. The GEC was subsequently renamed the “Counter Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference” and its operations were reorganized.

The reorganization proved short-lived: in April 2025, Secretary of State Marco Rubio officially announced the closure of the office, emphasizing in his statement that the center had in fact functioned as a tool of censorship. According to Rubio, the office had overstepped its authority because it not only identified foreign manipulation attempts but also targeted communications, media products, and social media posts by U.S. citizens, which it claimed were spreading disinformation. The GEC was used by Democrats for partisan political purposes to silence domestic opponents.

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<sup>170</sup> MNB 2018 average mid-market exchange rate  
<http://mnbkozeparfolyam.hu/arfolyam-2018.html>

<sup>171</sup> Office of Inspector General. Audit of Global Engagement Center Federal Assistance Award Management and Monitoring (April 2024). Source: [https://www.stateoig.gov/uploads/report/report\\_pdf\\_file/final-report-audit-gec-20-april-2020-5.15.23\\_redacted.pdf](https://www.stateoig.gov/uploads/report/report_pdf_file/final-report-audit-gec-20-april-2020-5.15.23_redacted.pdf)

<sup>172</sup> European Values Center for Security Policy and Political Capital. (March 25, 2021). Source: [https://politicalcapital.hu/wp-admin/source/documents/PC\\_EVC\\_Paks2\\_Report\\_210323.pdf](https://politicalcapital.hu/wp-admin/source/documents/PC_EVC_Paks2_Report_210323.pdf) and [https://europeanvalues.cz/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/REPORT\\_EN\\_Hungarys\\_subway\\_trains\\_a\\_case\\_study\\_of\\_Russian\\_active\\_measures\\_against\\_municipalities.pdf](https://europeanvalues.cz/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/REPORT_EN_Hungarys_subway_trains_a_case_study_of_Russian_active_measures_against_municipalities.pdf)

<sup>173</sup> Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. (March 5, 2020). The Global Engagement Center: Leading the United States Government’s Fight Against Global Disinformation Threat. Source: <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/03%2005%2020%20-%20The%20Global%20Engagement%20Center%20Leading%20the%20United%20States%20Government’s%20Fight%20Against%20Global%20Disinformation%20Threat.pdf>

The United States has ceased all Frameworks to Counter Foreign State Information Manipulation and any associated instruments implemented by the former administration. On April 16, Secretary of State Marco Rubio directed the closure of the Department's Counter Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (R/FIMI) Hub, formerly known as the Global Engagement Center (GEC). The Framework, initially launched by the GEC to counter so-called disinformation, devolved into tools for political censorship instead of protecting Americans from foreign adversarial propaganda. These actions align with President Trump's January 20 Executive Order on Restoring Freedom of Speech and Ending Federal Censorship, which prohibits federal censorship and promotes freedom of expression.

Through free speech, the United States will counter genuine malign propaganda from adversaries that threaten our national security, while protecting Americans' right to exchange ideas.

In his statements, Secretary of State Marco Rubio emphasized that the bureau spent approximately \$50 million annually on programs that he deemed incompatible with the principles of freedom of speech in the United States. As a result of this decision, the State Department's central organization for countering foreign influence operations was dissolved.

On September 17, 2025, the U.S. Department of State issued an official press release announcing that the United States had discontinued its entire previous framework for combating information manipulation by foreign states, along with the associated tools.<sup>174</sup>

#### 2.4.5. Freedom House

Freedom House is one of the oldest and best-known American organizations, which, by its own definition, works “to promote democracy, political freedom, and human rights globally.” The organization was founded in Washington in 1941, initially with the aim of combating totalitarianism and fascism. Later, during the Cold War, the organization also took on the task of promoting U.S. foreign policy interests. Although it defines itself as an independent organization, Freedom House's history has been closely intertwined with the foreign policy apparatus.

Freedom House's activities in Eastern Europe have been particularly active in recent years; among other things, it has organized programs whose official goal was to strengthen “democratic resilience” through political advocacy groups and the media.

The organization's annual budget has grown significantly in recent years. The vast majority of its revenue came from U.S. government sources. USAID, the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), and the NED have been among Freedom House's main supporters for years. According to the 2023 audit report, more than 67 percent of the organization's federal expenditures (approximately \$63 million) were provided directly by USAID.<sup>175</sup>

Freedom House's best-known activity is the annual “Freedom in the World” report, which assesses political freedoms and civil rights on a country-by-country basis.<sup>176</sup> Although the publication serves as a global reference point, other countries—including Poland and Israel—

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<sup>174</sup> U.S. Department. (September 17, 2025). United States Champions Free Expression, Ceases Censorship Frameworks Source: <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2025/09/united-states-champions-free-expression-ceases-censorship-frameworks/>

<sup>175</sup> [https://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/3-000-25-012-T\\_0.pdf](https://oig.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/3-000-25-012-T_0.pdf)

<sup>176</sup> Freedom House. Countries and Territories – Country Scores. Source: [freedomhouse.org](https://freedomhouse.org)

have repeatedly sharply criticized its methodology and political bias, alongside Hungary.

Among the sources cited in the reports on Hungary are organizations that, like Freedom House, have received U.S. government funding for political intervention in Hungary. This is a circular, self-perpetuating system of interference: Freedom House, which operates on U.S. government funds, downgrades Hungary based on the opinions of organizations that the U.S. government has tasked with political interference in Hungary. These organizations have a financial interest in painting a negative picture of Hungary so they can secure grant money for further political interference.

The organization's financial reports reveal that, in addition to government funding, several private foundations have contributed to its operations. Regular supporters of left-wing organizations appear: the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, and the MacArthur Foundation are listed as supporters, typically through the funding of projects related to human rights, gender equality, and the rule of law.

InfluenceWatch also mentions the Partnership for Reform in Ukraine (PRU) program, which Freedom House established with USAID support to promote democracy and reform programs in Ukraine. This program has fostered connections among think tanks in the United States, Poland, and Central Europe, and has also contributed to grant proposals aimed at supporting political and economic reforms.<sup>177</sup>

## **2.5. The U.S. Department of State's "NOFO" Calls for Proposals regarding Hungary**

Under the Biden administration, calls for proposals concerning Hungary were published on the U.S. Department of State's website with the designation NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity), in addition to those issued by USAID. A total of 54 calls for proposals were announced under the Biden administration that, based on their descriptions, could be related to Hungary; 31 of these had political content.<sup>178</sup> Based on the available information, it can be determined that in 13 cases, the U.S. Embassy in Budapest was designated as the implementing agency for the disbursement of funds. The data also shows that starting in 2022, and following Ambassador David Pressman's assumption of office, the number of new calls for proposals increased dramatically, with 41 new calls issued beginning in 2022.

The themes, conditions, and target audiences of the calls for proposals are quite diverse. Among other things, the calls for proposals included topics such as "strengthening young people's responsible engagement in the media," "promoting the free flow of information and democratic values in Hungary," "strengthening Hungarian-American relations," "supporting the domestic LGBTQ community," "countering Russian disinformation," "commemorating 100 years of diplomatic relations," and "supporting female performers and developing the digital economy." The politically oriented grants are based on key themes such as the rule of law, media freedom, human rights and democracy, Ukraine, Russian interference, and enforcement of sanctions.

Unlike with media grants, the U.S. Embassy did not publicly announce the winning applicants.

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<sup>177</sup> Influence Watch. Freedom House. Source: [influencewatch.org](https://influencewatch.org)

<sup>178</sup> Discover Your Next Grant. Source: <https://grants.gov/>

The government website lists three USAID-related grants among the closed calls for proposals:

### 2.5.1. Strengthening Transparency and Accountability through Investigative Reporting (STAIR) Program<sup>179</sup>

The STAIR program, with a five-year budget of \$20 million, aimed to strengthen investigative journalism in the European and Eurasian regions. The grant was announced by USAID. Topics supported by the program include, among others: combating malign influence, human rights, anti-corruption, and obstruction of U.S. investments.

According to the program description, building resilience against so-called authoritarian influence was also listed as a goal. It should be noted that the program was announced immediately following the outbreak of the Russia–Ukraine war. Erin Elizabeth McKee, Deputy Director of USAID’s Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, acknowledged in her May 23, 2023, testimony before the European Subcommittee of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee—which focused on the President’s budget request for fiscal year 2024 regarding Europe—acknowledged that the program is Ukraine-focused. The deputy director stated that their goal is to counter disinformation and propaganda in the context of Russia’s war against Ukraine and local news. In this regard, she explained the STAIR program in detail.<sup>180</sup>

It is interesting to note that Erin Elizabeth McKee has been the CEO of Nova Ukraine since August 2025; Nova Ukraine is a California-based international nonprofit organization that provides humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

### 2.5.2. Central Europe Program<sup>181</sup>

The Central Europe Program has already been described in detail. According to the application website, the program was officially announced on March 8, 2022, with a budget of \$35 million.

### 2.5.3. Request for Information—Regional Central and Eastern Europe Democracy Support Program<sup>182</sup>

Available data indicates that the Central Europe Program was preceded by a \$65 million call for proposals, also announced by USAID, in which the development agency sought proposals for a new USAID democracy support program for Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>183</sup> According to the call for proposals, interested parties could submit proposals of up to six (6) pages via email by September 20, 2021, at the latest.

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<sup>179</sup> Source: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/339336>

<sup>180</sup> U.S. Congress. Testimony of USAID Assistant Administrator Erin E. McKee before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Europe on the FY 2024 President’s Budget Request for Europe, May 23, 2023 Source: <https://www.congress.gov/118/meeting/house/116006/witnesses/HHRG-118-FA14-Wstate-McKeeE-20230523.pdf>

<sup>181</sup> Source: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/338594>

<sup>182</sup> Source: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/335594>

<sup>183</sup> Federal grants. Request for Information - Regional Central and Eastern Europe Democracy Support Program Source: <https://www.federalgrants.com/Request-for-Information-Regional-Central-and-Eastern-Europe-Democracy-Support-Program-88180.html>

## **Other calls for proposals on the website that are noteworthy from a political perspective:**

### 2.5.4. DRL Hungary Youth Engagement in the Media<sup>184</sup>

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) of the U.S. Department of State announced an open call for proposals for organizations wishing to apply for projects that strengthen youth engagement in the media and the free flow of information in Hungary.

In an article on December 8, 2022,<sup>185</sup> Telex reported that it was launching the Telex Academy, which would organize workshops for students and accredited teacher training. The call for proposals is for \$740,740, exactly the same amount that Telex received to establish its academy, also from the DRL.

### 2.5.5. FY2023 BridgeUSA Journalism and Rule of Law Scholarship Program<sup>186</sup>

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announced an open call for a journalism and rule of law scholarship program, under which scholarship recipients were recruited and selected from so-called “marginalized” social groups in 27 Central and Eastern European countries, including Hungary. During the selection process, care was taken to ensure that the exchange participants included a balanced representation of individuals from the fields of media and communications, governance and the rule of law, as well as public administration and political decision-making. The call for applications closed on November 28, 2022, and \$100,000 was allocated to the program.

In April 2025, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio highlighted the DRL in a statement regarding the reorganization of the State Department. According to the U.S. Secretary of State, the DRL “has become a platform for left-wing activists to wage a vendetta against anti-woke leaders in countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Brazil.”<sup>187</sup>

### 2.5.6. U.S. Ambassador’s Independent Media Support (AIMS) Fund<sup>188</sup>

The U.S. Embassy in Budapest has announced an open call for proposals from organizations to implement a program aimed at “supporting independent media in Hungary and civil society organizations actively promoting media freedom in Hungary.” Among other things, the funds were used to cover travel, reporting, interviews, and accommodation for journalists and other editorial staff. The same funds were also used to organize conferences and professional training sessions. The call for proposals closed on June 30, 2023, and the maximum grant amount was set at \$500,000.

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<sup>184</sup> Source: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/338977>

<sup>185</sup> Telex Academy Launches. (December 8, 2022). Source: <https://telex.hu/belfold/2022/12/08/indul-a-telex-akademia>

<sup>186</sup> Source: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/343835>

<sup>187</sup> Marco Rubio. (April 22, 2022). A New State Department to Meet the Challenges of a New Era. Source: <https://statedept.substack.com/p/a-new-state-department-to-meet-the>

<sup>188</sup> Source: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/347900>

### 2.5.7. Fund to Support Equal Opportunity for Vulnerable Populations<sup>189</sup>

The U.S. Embassy in Budapest announced an open call for proposals for non-governmental organizations whose mission was to combat prejudice against “vulnerable groups” in Hungary, with a particular focus on LGBTQI+ individuals in Hungary. The call for proposals was announced on June 21, 2023, and the application period closed on July 31, 2023. The maximum grant amount available in a single award was \$300,000.

### 2.5.8. U.S. Embassy Budapest Small Grants Program FY24 Annual Program Statement (APS)<sup>190</sup>

The Public Diplomacy Section (PDS Budapest) of the U.S. Embassy in Budapest announced a call for proposals under the Public Diplomacy Small Grants Program. PDS Budapest sought proposals for programs that strengthen ties between the United States and Hungary through cultural and exchange programs, highlighting shared values and promoting bilateral cooperation.

The program also specified the following themes for 2024:

- a) Promoting the rule of law and democratic governance and combating corruption.
- b) Strengthening respect for international human rights and democratic values and supporting marginalized groups.
- c) Strengthening independent media and journalism and promoting critical thinking.
- d) Promoting unity among NATO allies and a unified response to Russia’s war against Ukraine.
- e) Supporting Hungary’s transatlantic commitment by combating transnational threats, including disinformation.
- f) Raising awareness of America’s role as Hungary’s economic partner.

The call for proposals was announced on June 7, 2024, and the application period closed on July 31, 2024. The maximum grant amount available was \$25,000.

### 2.5.9. DRL Strengthening Regional Media in Europe and Eurasia<sup>191</sup>

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) of the U.S. Department of State issued a \$3,496,295 call for proposals on March 22, 2022, to strengthen media cooperation in Europe and Eurasia following the Russia–Ukraine war.

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<sup>189</sup> Source: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/348836>

<sup>190</sup> Source: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/354767>

<sup>191</sup> Source: <https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/338833>

### III. THE EU'S ROLE

Following the model of the international political pressure network led by USAID and the American left-wing elite, the establishment of a similar system of influence began in Europe in the mid-2010s.

The EU spent €17 billion on supporting NGOs during the 2019–2023 period.<sup>192</sup> The funded programs show that there is significant overlap between the organizations, networks, and program objectives funded by USAID and the EU. Some organizations have already received funding from both USAID and the European Commission in recent years. When the freeze on USAID funding announced in early 2025 came to light, it turned out that certain NGOs had used U.S. funding to cover the co-financing required to secure EU grant money.<sup>193</sup> The European Commission has launched a new program to strengthen political activist organizations called the EU Democracy Shield.<sup>194</sup> In response to a question from an MEP, European Commissioner Marta Kos acknowledged that “the EU regularly exchanges information and coordinates with USAID at the local level, particularly on issues of mutual interest (democracy support, civil society, media, etc.) within the framework of donor coordination.”<sup>195</sup> Although the MEP’s question and answer pertained to the Western Balkans, it had previously emerged from the calendar entries of former USAID Administrator Samantha Power that the head of USAID had held consultations in both the United States and Brussels, including with leaders of George Soros’s Open Society Foundations.<sup>196</sup>

Representatives of left-wing organizations and European Union institutions held 135 different meetings between 2017 and 2024.<sup>197</sup> Of these, a notably high number—49—were meetings with OSF leaders. In connection with this, an OSF document intended for internal use was leaked in September 2014, listing “reliable allies” from the European Parliament. A record was compiled of 226 MEPs as those who “are expected to support the OSF’s goals.”<sup>198</sup>

Daniel Freund, a member of the German Green Party, has also been campaigning against Hungary for years. He regularly calls for the freezing of all EU funds allocated to Hungary, the revocation of Hungary’s voting rights in the Council, and the blocking of Hungary’s presidency of the Council of the EU. In October 2024, a few days before the U.S. elections, he visited Washington, D.C., where he held consultations with USAID, the German Marshall Fund, and the U.S. Department of State—by his own admission, regarding the situation in Hungary and the elections.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> [www.ngotransparency.eu](http://www.ngotransparency.eu)

[https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/hu/webstreaming/committee-on-budgetary-control-ordinary-meeting-cont-committee-meeting\\_20251208-1500-COMMITTEE-CONT](https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/hu/webstreaming/committee-on-budgetary-control-ordinary-meeting-cont-committee-meeting_20251208-1500-COMMITTEE-CONT)

<sup>193</sup> “Many have not only lost a significant portion of their budget, but it is also unclear whether the loss of U.S. funds will exclude them from EU grants, which generally require co-financing.” <https://europeandemocracyhub.epd.eu/filling-the-usaid-gap/>

<sup>194</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip\\_25\\_2660/IP\\_25\\_2660\\_EN.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_25_2660/IP_25_2660_EN.pdf)

<sup>195</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-000749-ASW\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-000749-ASW_EN.html)

<sup>196</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/top-biden-official-repeatedly-met-soros-foundation-other-influential-left-wing-groups-docs-show>

<sup>197</sup> Sovereignty Protection Agency. (January 29, 2025). The European Commission’s CERV Program – How Brussels Opened the Floodgates to Fund the Soros Network. Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/Az-Europai-Bizottsag-CERV-programja-Igy-nyitotta-meg-Brusszel-a-penzcsapot-a-Soros-halozat-finanszirozasar.pdf>

<sup>198</sup> Open Society European Policy Institute. (2014). Reliable Allies in the European Parliament (2014-2019). Source: <https://legacy.gscdn.nl/archives/images/soroskooptbrussel.pdf>

<sup>199</sup> [https://x.com/daniel\\_freund/status/1887520026237780231](https://x.com/daniel_freund/status/1887520026237780231)



Daniel Freund  
@daniel\_freund

...

In Oct 2024 I spoke with @USAID at their DC HQ. They told me they were funding rule of law, anticorruption and pro-democracy programs in Hungary with several million dollars per year.

### 3.1. George Soros's Gaining Influence in Brussels

In the mid-2010s, George Soros began a series of meetings with top-ranking European Union leaders, which were also reported in the press.<sup>200 201 202 203</sup> During this period, the migration crisis was a priority issue for both Soros organizations and the European Commission, and in the United States, President Donald Trump took office in January 2017, which shook both the American left and the European political elite. In 2015, Soros met with Jean-Claude Juncker, then President of the European Commission, behind closed doors, and in April 2017, he met with him partially in public. In the days following the meeting, which received significant media attention, he also held talks with Jyrki Katainen, the Commissioner for Jobs, Growth, and Innovation; Věra Jourová, the Commissioner for Justice; Carlos Moedas, the Commissioner for Research; and Frans Timmermans, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights. The issues raised during these meetings were either not disclosed at all or only partially made public. The details leaked to the press were targeted political communication messages.

Left-liberal organizations had two key objectives: on the one hand, they focused on building a network of influence funded by EU public money; on the other hand, they made serious efforts to turn the political conflict between the network—controlled by the American progressive left—and Hungary into an internal matter for the European Commission.<sup>204</sup> In January 2021, President Joe Biden took office, and on February 23, 2021, nearly two hundred organizations linked to George Soros—including a letter bearing the personal signatures of Márta Pardavi (Hungarian Helsinki Committee, co-chair) and Veronika Móra (Ökotárs Foundation, director)—sent a letter to Věra Jourová, Vice-President of the European Commission. The purpose of their appeal was for the Commission to draw on their organizations' "vast experience" and adopt their fourteen-point proposal. In the letter, they called on the creators of the CERV program to distribute a significant portion of the funds—similar to the Norwegian Fund—through consortia.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> The Brussels Times. (April 13, 2018). Commission meeting in Brussels with Soros sends signal to Hungary. Source: <https://www.brusselstimes.com/47719/commission-meeting-with-soros-in-brussels-sends-signal-to-hungary>

<sup>201</sup> Politico. (April 27, 2017). Today at Commission, Soros and Brexit Dinner. Source: <https://www.politico.eu/blogs/playbook-plus/2017/04/today-at-commission-soros-and-brexit-dinner/>

<sup>202</sup> Express. (April 21, 2017). Juncker and Soros hold Brussels meeting to plot legal action against the Hungarian government. Source: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/794729/Jean-Claude-Juncker-EU-chief-meet-George-Soros-discuss-Hungary-legal-action>

<sup>203</sup> Euractiv. (April 21, 2017). Soros gets warm Brussels reception amid spat with Hungary. Source: <https://www.euractiv.com/news/soros-gets-warm-brussels-reception-amid-spat-with-hungary/>

<sup>204</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (Jan. 29, 2025). The European Commission's CERV program – How Brussels opened the floodgates to fund the Soros network. Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/Az-Europai-Bizottsag-CERV-programja-Igy-nyitotta-meg-Brusszel-a-penzcsapot-a-Soros-halozat-finanszirozasara.pdf>

<sup>205</sup> Suggestions of civil society organizations regarding the implementation of the Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values (CERV) program. (February 23, 2021). Source: [https://www.nhc.nl/assets/uploads/2021/03/Letter\\_Vera\\_Jourova\\_CERV-Programme.pdf](https://www.nhc.nl/assets/uploads/2021/03/Letter_Vera_Jourova_CERV-Programme.pdf)

Anna Donáth, a Member of the European Parliament for Momentum from 2019 to 2024 and a former member of the liberal Renew Europe group, also played an active role in shaping the program’s ideological and political content. According to her, she served as the project’s thematic lead for two years. Donáth and her colleagues lobbied in Brussels to achieve two goals: on the one hand, to prevent Hungary from receiving the EU funds to which it is rightfully entitled, and at the same time, to ensure that organizations linked to the political pressure network continue to receive EU funds.<sup>206</sup> Gergely Karácsony lobbied with a similar goal after winning the mayoral election in Budapest, and the Budapest Municipal Government opened an office in Brussels, entrusting its leadership to his party colleague, former MEP Benedek Jávor. Gergely Karácsony, Dávid Korányi, and the issue of American funding have already been discussed in previous chapters.

### 3.2. Financial Resources and Programs

The European Commission and other EU institutions can fund political activist organizations through programs with budgets of several billion euros.

The CERV program is the European Union’s funding instrument for the period between 2021 and 2027, with the official aim of protecting EU values, law, and the principles of the rule of law. In reality, however, numerous political projects conveying narratives important to the Brussels elite have received funding from it.

The program covers the seven-year EU budget period and originally launched with a budget of approximately €642 million, but its final budget exceeds €1.55 billion.<sup>207</sup>

Political lobbying organizations operating in Hungary received nearly €12 million from the CERV program over the past two years. This budget increases year after year. Neither Hungarian citizens nor the Hungarian government exercise any control over the distribution or use of these funds. According to calculations by the Office for the Protection of Sovereignty, the majority of EU funds allocated to European civil society organizations are utilized by members of the Soros network.<sup>208</sup>

The creators of CERV made no secret of the fact that they view the organizations receiving funding as political allies: “*Civil society organizations are our best allies in ensuring the protection of fundamental rights and the rule of law on the ground. We have made them the main beneficiaries of the CERV program,*” said Didier Reynders,<sup>209</sup> the European

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<sup>206</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (Jan. 29, 2025). The European Commission’s CERV Program – How Brussels Opened the Money Tap to Fund the Soros Network.

Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/Az-Europai-Bizottsag-CERV-programja-Igy-nyitotta-meg-Brusszel-a-penzcsapot-a-Soros-halozat-finanszirozasara.pdf>

<sup>207</sup> EUR-Lex. Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values Program (2021–2027). Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme-2021-2027.html>

<sup>208</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (January 29, 2025). The European Commission’s CERV Program – How Brussels Opened the Money Tap to Fund the Soros Network.

Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/Az-Europai-Bizottsag-CERV-programja-Igy-nyitotta-meg-Brusszel-a-penzcsapot-a-Soros-halozat-finanszirozasara.pdf>

<sup>209</sup> Eur-Lex. (October 11, 2024). Verbatim minutes of the meeting of September 14, 2022. Source: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/HU/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3AC%2F2024%2F06044&qid=1730279789588>

Commission’s Commissioner for Justice, who was investigated by Belgian authorities for corruption and money laundering after stepping down. The essence of the program is that civil society organizations—including political advocacy groups—can apply directly for funding, without interference from governments or state authorities.

CERV features a simple and flexible system: annual work programs and regular calls for proposals make it easier to reach political advocacy groups.<sup>210</sup> The program is managed by DG Justice & Consumers, with certain activities implemented by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).<sup>211</sup>

More than 800 non-governmental organizations have already received support under the Union Values pillar.<sup>212</sup> The system makes it possible even for small, local organizations to access EU funding.<sup>213</sup>

## 9. MAJOR HUNGARIAN BENEFICIARIES SUPPORTED BY CERV FUNDS

YEAR	BENEFICIARY NAME	CONTRACT AMOUNT (EUR)	CONTRACT AMOUNT (HUF)
2019–2023	Hungarian Helsinki Committee	€5,666,803	2,049,455,972 HUF
2021–2022	Amnesty International Hungary	€1,765,135	661,793,240 HUF
2019–2022	Háttér Society	€6,052,161	2,158,155,221 HUF

Sources: *ngotransparency.eu*<sup>214</sup>; *MNB Central Exchange Rate Monitor*.<sup>215</sup>

The CERV program is one of the EU’s most important tools for exerting political pressure. With its large budget, four pillars, and wide range of supported activities, the program gives the Commission a free hand to exert political pressure.

The circle of beneficiaries shows a clear pattern: a network consisting predominantly of NGOs linked to the progressive elite of the United States constitutes the main group of recipients. Since the launch of CERV, €17,749,765 in funds verifiably originating from CERV have been received in Hungary. The nearly four hundred organizations receiving funding can be divided into two groups: political pressure groups and civil society organizations.

Political pressure groups have received a total of €11,798,640 in funding to date (distributed among thirty-nine organizations), while civil society groups and local governments have received €5,951,124 (distributed among three hundred and one organizations). In percentage terms, this means that nearly two-thirds of the funds allocated to Hungary under the program—

<sup>210</sup>European Union. CERV – What is CERV Source: [https://citizens-equality-rights-values.campaign.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://citizens-equality-rights-values.campaign.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>211</sup>European Commission. EU Social Economy Gateway: Citizens, equality, rights, values Source: [social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu](https://social-economy-gateway.ec.europa.eu)

<sup>212</sup>Parliamentary Monitor. Source: [https://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j4nvirkkr58fyw\\_j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vmhe58dnqxzr](https://www.eumonitor.eu/9353000/1/j4nvirkkr58fyw_j9vvik7m1c3gyxp/vmhe58dnqxzr)

<sup>213</sup>European Parliament. (December 4, 2023). Report on the implementation of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values program 2021–2027 – citizens’ engagement and participation Source: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0392\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0392_EN.html)

<sup>214</sup>NGO Transparency. Source: <https://ngotransparency.eu/>

<sup>215</sup>The data in the table, expressed in Hungarian HUF, were calculated based on the Hungarian National Bank’s Central Exchange Rate Monitor, using the average central exchange rates for the years indicated. Source: <http://mnbkozeparfolyam.hu/arfolyam-2019.html>; <http://mnbkozeparfolyam.hu/arfolyam-2020.html>; <http://mnbkozeparfolyam.hu/arfolyam-2021.html>; <http://mnbkozeparfolyam.hu/arfolyam-2022.html>; <http://mnbkozeparfolyam.hu/arfolyam-2023.html>

which is nominally and administratively coordinated by the European Commission—were distributed to organizations exerting political pressure, to the detriment of genuine civil society organizations. This amounts to more than 5 billion HUF (approx. \$14.7 million). In other words, 9.7 percent of the applicant organizations received 66.5 percent of the funds.<sup>216</sup>

The official objective of the EU’s LIFE program is to support the achievement of the EU’s environmental and climate policy goals. Since 1992, it has served as the sole EU funding instrument specifically dedicated to this purpose.

A total of over €5.4 billion has been allocated to the program for the 2021–2027 period – a significant increase of nearly 60 percent compared to the previous period. The program’s official objective is to support the EU’s efforts toward a cleaner, circular, energy-efficient, climate-neutral, and resilient economy, while improving environmental quality and halting the loss of biodiversity.

One of the biggest corruption scandals in Brussels is also linked to the LIFE program. For years, the European Commission secretly funded environmental organizations to support the green policy plans of then-Dutch Commissioner Frans Timmermans. Secret contracts uncovered by a Dutch newspaper detailed how these organizations were given specific objectives to influence policymakers.<sup>217</sup> The case sharply divided the European political elite. In January 2025, the European Commission acknowledged that certain funding allocations from the LIFE environmental program were inappropriate during the previous cycle, which ran through 2024. At the center of the case was the umbrella organization known as the European Environmental Bureau (EEB).

Funds earmarked for the program were also awarded to organizations that specifically lobbied members of the European Parliament in collaboration with green parties. The EEB received a grant of €700,000 to steer agricultural debates toward environmental protection and to conduct a negative campaign against certain agricultural practices, such as the use of fertilizers or heavy machinery.<sup>218</sup>

### **3.3. The NDICI—Global Europe and Creative Europe Programs**

The main financial instrument for the EU’s external actions is the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), which has a budget of €79.5 billion for the period 2021–2027. As part of this, the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) fund several media outlets under the banner of supporting “media freedom and pluralism.”

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<sup>216</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (January 29, 2025). The European Commission’s CERV Program – How Brussels Opened the Floodgates to Fund the Soros Network. Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/Az-Europai-Bizottsag-CERV-programja-Igy-nyitotta-meg-Brusszel-a-penzcsapot-a-Soros-halozat-finanszirozasa.pdf>

<sup>217</sup> De Telegraaf. Lobbying scandal in Brussels: EU secretly paid environmental groups to promote Timmermans’ green plans. Source: <https://www.telegraaf.nl/binnenland/lobbyschandaal-in-brussel-eu-betaalde-milieclubs-in-het-geheim-voor-promotie-van-groene-plannen-timmermans/68020082.html>

<sup>218</sup> Climate Policy Institute. (February 12, 2025). Green lobby, secret funds, and then a sharp turn in the European Commission’s green policy? Source: <https://klimapolitikaiintezet.hu/cikk/zold-lobbi-titkos-penzek-eles-fordulat-europai-bizottsag-zoldpolitika>

## 10. THE MAIN PILLARS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE NDICI

PROGRAM TYPE	BUDGET (EUR)	BUDGET (HUF)
<b>Regional programs</b> <i>Support for the EU's immediate neighborhood</i>	€60.4 billion	21 trillion
<b>Thematic programs</b> <i>Strengthening human rights, civil society, democracy, and the rule of law</i>	€6.36 billion	2.2 trillion
<b>Rapid response</b> <i>Rapid response to crises, conflicts, and migration pressures</i>	€3.18 billion	1.16 trillion
<b>Reserve</b> <i>For extraordinary situations (e.g., wars, refugee crises)</i>	€9.53 billion	3.3 trillion

Sources: European Commission<sup>219</sup>; MNB Central Exchange Rate Monitor.<sup>220</sup>

Although these programs officially operate under the banner of media independence and the fight against disinformation, the real goal is to expand the EU's sphere of influence, particularly to counterbalance Russia's influence in Ukraine, the Western Balkans, and the South Caucasus. An example of a specific project is the €4 million MediaFit (Ukraine) program, supported by DW Akademie<sup>221</sup> and other partners, whose stated goal is to improve access to reliable information and counter Russian disinformation.

These EU practices are similar to the influence operations carried out by USAID, which is operated by the United States, and which have advanced political interests through NGOs and the media. These programs are not merely defensive in nature, but are increasingly “interventionist”—that is, they actively shape public opinion in target countries.<sup>222</sup>

The EU's media programs have a budget of approximately €75 million for the 2021--2027 period. By 2025, nearly €50 million had been spent, primarily on projects that reinforce messages aligned with the EU's narrative.

Numerous media projects have also received funding from the Creative Europe program.

## 11. KEY PROJECTS AND ACTORS

PROJECT	COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION	FUNDING (EUR)	FUNDING (HUF)
<b>Stars4Media</b>	EU-level	Main consortium: VUB, EURACTIV, WAN-IFRA, EJC. Supported topics: EU integration, demystification	8 million	3.2 billion

<sup>219</sup> European Commission. Enlargement and Eastern Neighborhood: Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe. Source: [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/funding-technical-assistance/neighbourhood-development-and-international-cooperation-instrument-global-europe-ndici-global-europe\\_en](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/funding-technical-assistance/neighbourhood-development-and-international-cooperation-instrument-global-europe-ndici-global-europe_en)

<sup>220</sup> The figures in the table, expressed in Hungarian HUF, were calculated based on the Hungarian National Bank's Central Exchange Rate Monitor, using the average rate for the year the program was announced. Source: <http://mnbkozeparfolyam.hu/arfolyam-2020.html>

<sup>221</sup> The central role of DW Akademie: DW Akademie, affiliated with German public service media, is a key implementing partner that has received 35 million euros from the EU over the past 10 years. The author cites this as an example of a semi-structural relationship between public media and EU institutions.

DW Akademie. (Nov. 29, 2024). Mediafit: Reloaded Newsletter. Source: <https://akademie.dw.com/en/ukraine-sign-up-for-our-mediafit-reloaded-newsletter/a-61509594>

<sup>222</sup> Thomas Fazi. (June 2025). Brussels' Media Machine. Source: <https://brussels.mcc.hu/uploads/default/0001/01/18fb1038874ea002371e25e64b22b31da11e46d5.pdf>

<b>MediaResilience</b>	BG, HU, HR, GR, SI	Managed by the Open Society Institute (Sofia), objective: strengthening a pro-EU media environment	2 million	792 million
<b>The Eastern Frontier Initiative (TEFI)</b>	NL, PL, SK, HU, RO	Led by Bellingcat, “fact-based” EU defense policy content	1.07 million	423 million <sup>223</sup>
<b>The Eastern Frontier Initiative 2 (TEFI 2)</b>	HU, RO, PL, SK, NL, LT, LV, EE	Strengthening cross-border journalism and media cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe	1.2 million	460 million <sup>224</sup>
<b>Collaborative and Investigative Journalism Initiative</b>	EU	6 media centers, training programs, in 15 languages	2.4 million	952 million
<b>IJ4EU</b>	EU	Project supporting investigative journalism	3 million	1.2 billion

This funding structurally distorts the media market because media outlets relying on subsidies are effectively bought off, leading them to produce content aligned with the political objectives of the Brussels elite, particularly on sensitive issues such as the Russia–Ukraine conflict.

TEFI (The Eastern Frontier Initiative) is an EU-funded project created specifically to raise awareness about the war in Ukraine. Magyar Jeti Zrt. (publisher of 444.hu and Lakmusz) is both the lead partner and the largest contributor to the TEFI<sup>225</sup> and TEFI 2<sup>226</sup> projects. In the TEFI 1 project, it worked with partners such as Gazeta Wyborcza (Poland), SME (Slovakia), PressOne (Romania), as well as major private foundations and the U.S.-Dutch Bellingcat, supported by the NED. Another partner in the consortium is Globsec, which has already been introduced. The project later received additional funding: in the TEFI 2 (2026–2027) project, Magyar Jeti Zrt.’s partners are Gazeta Wyborcza (Poland), SME (Slovakia), Bellingcat, PressOne (Romania), and the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian editions of Delfi.

Investigative Journalism for Europe (IJ4EU) is an EU-funded project that, following the model of the U.S. USAID, acts as an intermediary to support media projects and grant applications. The European Commission provides the majority of its funding (approximately 90 percent) through the Creative Europe program. Parallel U.S. and EU funding is characteristic of left-wing media networks and their members. Following the USAID model, the EU-funded IJ4EU project acts as a fund intermediary and project manager through its own grant programs. Since 2018, it has distributed more than €6 million in grants. An additional €1.6 million is included in their plans for 2026–2027.

Among IJ4EU’s many partners is the VSquare network, which focuses on the Visegrad countries. VSquare’s Hungarian partners are Átlátszó and Direkt36. According to VSquare’s own statement, it was established with support from the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy, and its supporters include not only the EU-funded IJ4EU, but also USAID and the German Marshall Fund, which support domestic political intervention projects.<sup>227</sup> An article by Szabolcs Panyi on alleged Russian election interference appeared on VSquare a few weeks before the April 12, 2026, elections. Citing this unconfirmed report, European Commission

<sup>223</sup> Calculated based on the MNB’s official euro exchange rate as of August 29, 2025

<sup>224</sup> Calculated based on the MNB’s official euro exchange rate as of January 5, 2026

<sup>225</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43251814/101111855/CREA2027>

<sup>226</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43251814/101242574>

<sup>227</sup> <https://vsquare.org/about-us/partners-and-donors/>


spokesperson announced that unnamed EU fact-checkers would begin verifying and reporting on content related to the Hungarian election campaign on social media platforms.<sup>228</sup> Thus, based on an unconfirmed article published on a website it funded itself, the European Commission launched an intervention in the Hungarian election campaign involving unknown fact-checkers and social media platforms.

### 3.4. Horizon Europe Program

Horizon Europe is the European Union’s research and innovation program for the period 2021–2027; its official objectives are sustainable development, the green and digital transitions, and enhancing the EU’s competitiveness. However, the research projects to be funded are selected through a highly centralized and opaque decision-making process by the European Commission and the European Research Executive Agency (REA).

In the complete absence of member state oversight, EU political priorities can override scientific excellence and genuine innovation. This is how a proposal titled “Promoting Queer Feminist Intersectional Resistance to Transnational Anti-Gender Policies” received €2,379,425 in funding from the Horizon program.<sup>229</sup>

Fostering Queer Feminist Intersectional Resistances against Transnational Anti-Gender Politics

<b>Project information</b>	Project information			 2 379 425,75 Overall budget 2 379 425,75 EU contribution
Fact sheet	Acronym RESIST	Project ID 101060749	Status Ongoing	
Participants	Start date 01 October 2022	End date 30 September 2026	Last updated date 13 January 2026	
Summaries	Coordinated by <a href="#">UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, DUBLIN</a>			
Deliverables	Funded under <a href="#">Horizon Europe (HORIZON)</a>			
Publications				

While part of the Horizon programs is allocated to actual research activities, political projects also receive significant funding from the social sciences portion of the budget. The majority of projects funded by Horizon Europe have no political relevance whatsoever; however, the supported social science research (such as democracy research, the rule of law, media, and the fight against disinformation) provides an opportunity to disseminate political narratives.<sup>230</sup>

In Hungary, for example, Political Capital has received approximately €800,000 in direct EU funding from 8 projects in recent years. As a participant in the Horizon project titled Youth Debunking the Gendered Arguments of far-Right Extremism (You-DARE),<sup>231</sup> the organization received €129,781 for a program that examines the gender-specific narratives of youth groups and leaders it classifies as far-right, as well as their impact on democracy. The project, carried out with the participation of Political Capital, focuses on a narrow, ideologically charged topic

<sup>228</sup> <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/media/video/I-286590>  
<sup>229</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43108390/101060749/HORIZON>  
<sup>230</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (May 16, 2025). The role of Horizon programs in the operation of the globalist network. Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/A-Horizont-programok-szerepe-a-globalista-halozat-mukodeseben.pdf>  
<sup>231</sup> European Commission, EU Funding & Tenders Portal, Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/projects-details/43108390/101178147/HORIZON>

that reflects the priorities of the left-liberal Brussels elite.

YOUth Debunking the gendered Arguments of far-Right Extremism

Project information	Project information			Status	2 999 642,50 € Overall budget
Fact sheet	Acronym YOU-DARE	Project ID 101178147		Ongoing	
Participants	Start date 01 February 2025	End date 31 January 2028	Last updated date 03 January 2026		2 999 642,50 € EU contribution
Deliverables	Coordinated by <a href="#">FONDATION EUROPEENNE DE LA SCIENCE</a>				
	Funded under <a href="#">Horizon Europe (HORIZON)</a>				

### 3.5. Parallel Funding: U.S. and European Sources

Leaked USAID projects and publicly available data on European Union grants, obtained through freedom of information requests on the European NGO Transparency website, reveal overlaps in project themes and organizations.

A comparison of the NGO Transparency and USAID databases reveals that there are four key organizations that have been directly supported by the left-wing elites in both Washington and Brussels. The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), Internews, the Prague Civil Society Centre, and International Research & Exchanges (IREX) have each received tens of millions of euros or hundreds of millions of dollars in funding from both the U.S. and the EU.<sup>232</sup>

According to information from the European database:

- GMF received €350,103 between December 2020 and December 2022.
- In the case of Internews, a total of €26,690,498 was planned to be disbursed between October 2019 and December 2027.
- For the Prague Civil Society Center, this amount is €2,189,988 between July 2023 and May 2025.
- A total of €19,944,555 was planned to be paid to IREX between 2019 and 2027.<sup>233</sup>

According to available information from USAID:

- \$51,498,512 was allocated to GMF for the period between 2017 and 2027.
- For Internews, the amount listed for the period from 2017 to 2030 is \$245,719,490.
- Under the name of the Prague Civil Society Centre, \$33,345,429 is listed for the 10-year period from 2016 to 2026.
- For IREX, \$242,353,966 is listed for the period from 2018 to 2029.

<sup>232</sup> We examined 14 major NGOs (GMF, Zinc Network, Irex, Dexis, National Democratic Institute, National Endowment for Democracy, USAGM, Internews, Transatlantic Foundation, Open Society Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS), GLOBSEC, and Prague Civil Society Centre).

<sup>233</sup> NGO Transparency. Source: [ngotransparency.eu](http://ngotransparency.eu)

## 3.6. Other Organizations

### 3.6.1. Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)

Following the 2024 European elections, the European Commission provided €604,269 in funding to the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP),<sup>234</sup> which is the world's largest network of investigative journalists, comprising 75 different investigative portals and agencies. This information was acknowledged by Henna Virkkunen, the European Commission's Executive Vice President for Technological Sovereignty, in response to a question from a Member of the European Parliament.<sup>235</sup>

Numerous newsrooms around the world are members of OCCRP, including Átlátszó and Direkt36 in Hungary. In their official communications, they refer to “independent investigative journalism.”

The network's “partner media” (including Der Spiegel, Die Zeit, Süddeutsche Zeitung, and the Czech Deník N) conducted a coordinated smear campaign ahead of the European Parliament elections against conservative and EU-critical politicians who criticized the idea of continuing the war in Ukraine or the policies of current EU leaders.<sup>236</sup>

In addition to the approximately €600,000 grant, however, they also received further EU funding. OCCRP and its network partners will receive an additional €1,294,234 in EU funding under another program called “Fighting Conspiracy Theories and Trolls (FACT),” which amounts to more than half a billion Hungarian forints. The funds were awarded for the development of an AI-driven fact-checking infrastructure.<sup>237</sup>

In addition to EU funding, the organization has received funding from numerous foreign sources and the United States. In 2023, the Biden administration was OCCRP's largest supporter: USAID, the U.S. Department of State, and the NED together provided more than half of its annual funding. The organization's official website lists the French, British, Swedish, and New Zealand governments (or their government agencies) among its other supporters.<sup>238</sup>

Michael Benz, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the first Trump administration,<sup>239</sup> currently Executive Director of the Foundation for Freedom Online,<sup>240</sup> revealed that USAID paid \$20 million to OCCRP through the “Strengthening Transparency and Accountability through Investigative Reporting” program. The expert found a document in the internet's digital archive on USAID's former official website, where it was listed as a success that the OCCRP network had brought about 548 policy changes, 21 resignations and dismissals, and participated in the preparation of 456 arrest warrants.

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<sup>234</sup> Data in Hungarian HUF was calculated based on the Hungarian National Bank's Central Exchange Rate Monitor (2024–2025). Source: <http://mnbkozeparfolyam.hu/arfolyam-2025.html>; <http://mnbkozeparfolyam.hu/arfolyam-2024.html>

<sup>235</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-10-2025-001169\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/P-10-2025-001169_EN.html)

<sup>236</sup> Spiegel. (March 29, 2024). How Deep Is the AfD's Involvement in the Russia Scandal? Source:

<https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/afd-spendenaffaere-neue-enthuellungen-ueber-geldfluesse-aus-russland-a-0633977a-c07f-484b-b6f7-b826b52ed8ad?giffToken=1d9450ca-646d-44a6-875d-30492b104765>

<sup>237</sup> Office for the Protection of Sovereignty. (October 14, 2025). The European Commission's New Mercenaries: Drew Sullivan and the OCCRP. Source: <https://szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/hirek/az-europai-bizottsag-uj-zsoldosai-drew-sullivan-es-az-occrp>

<sup>238</sup> OCCRP. Source: <https://www.occrp.org/en>

<sup>239</sup> U.S. Department of State. Michael A. Benz. Source: <https://2017-2021.state.gov/biographies/michael-a-benz/>

<sup>240</sup> Foundation for Freedom Online. Source: <https://foundationforfreedomonline.com/about/>

Shannon McGuire,<sup>241</sup> a USAID staff member, acknowledged that USAID had a direct influence on the organization's operations and held veto power over OCCRP leadership appointments and annual work plans. In addition, USAID staff members were involved in preparing OCCRP's grant applications.

In the United States, the second Trump administration withdrew funding for OCCRP, identifying it as a tool for political influence. The European Union, however, stepped in to fill the funding gap as U.S. resources dried up.<sup>242</sup>

The network's true mission was recently revealed by its co-founder, Drew Sullivan: in a documentary by the German public broadcaster NDR<sup>243</sup>—which was later censored under pressure—Sullivan admitted that OCCRP had participated in the overthrow of the governments of five or six countries.<sup>244</sup>

### 3.6.2. European Endowment for Democracy (EED)

Following the example of the U.S.-based NED, the EU has also established its own advocacy organization, the European Endowment for Democracy (EED). The EED is a Brussels-based non-governmental organization established in 2013 at the initiative of the European Union. The organization's operations are primarily funded by the EU budget, with the majority of support coming from the European Parliament and the European External Action Service (EEAS). Although the organization is, in theory, politically independent, its board of directors includes numerous Members of the European Parliament. The EED is a key player in the European political lobbying system, as it can provide rapid and flexible financial support and carries out complementary activities with the NED. Its grants and funding are not managed through open calls for proposals but typically through direct solicitations, recommendations, and active partnership-building.

The EED's target regions encompass numerous countries. The Eastern Partnership countries include Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus. To the south, the focus is primarily on North Africa and the Middle East. In the Balkans, attention is directed mainly toward the Western Balkan countries that are candidates for EU membership.

Since 2013, the EED has supported hundreds of projects and received over €100 million in funding from the EU. A full report on its grants is not available, as the organization's director general refused to disclose the grants at a meeting of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), citing the need to protect the political security of the grantees.

### 3.6.3. Wolne Sady (Free Courts)

Wolne Sady (Free Courts), a liberal, non-governmental organization associated with Michal Wawrykiewicz, also received dual funding.<sup>245</sup>

The liberal organization received U.S. funding through multiple channels between 2017 and

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<sup>241</sup> <https://mandiner.hu/kulfold/2024/12/lehullt-a-lepel-igy-penzeli-es-iranyitja-a-fuggetlen-oknyomozo-ujsgirokat-az-amerikai-kormany>

<sup>242</sup> Border Hawk. (September 15, 2025). EU Bankrolling Media NGO Behind Smear Campaigns Against Trump, European Candidates After USAID Funding Cut. Source: <https://borderhawk.news/eu-bankrolling-media-ngo-behind-smear-campaigns-against-trump-european-candidates-after-usaid-funding-cut/>

<sup>243</sup> <https://rumble.com/v6aj3g7-occrp.html>

<sup>244</sup> Brussels Signal. (September 10, 2025). EC paid €600,000 to activist journalists. Source: <https://brusselssignal.eu/2025/09/ec-paid-e600000-to-activist-journalists/>

<sup>245</sup> <https://wolnesady.org/en/>

2025. Between 2017 and 2019, there was no significant U.S. funding or public disclosure thereof, but after 2020—with the launch of the Central Europe Program (CEP)—first the NED and then, in 2023, USAID supported projects involving the organization.

In 2022, USAID relaunched its support programs in Central Europe under the banner of “strengthening democratic institutions and independent media.”<sup>246</sup> In 2023, Wolne Sady also received U.S. funding and, together with Prof. Zbigniew Hołda’s Legal Defense Association, launched a legal education project called the European Court League.<sup>247</sup> Funding for the project was provided by USAID (through Dexis Consulting) and the German Heinrich Böll Foundation.<sup>248</sup>

According to the NGO Transparency database, the organization also received EU funding totaling €24,500 between January 2023 and January 2025.<sup>249</sup> The organization received this funding under the title “Rule of Law in Europe for Lawyers” from the CERV fundfund.

What makes the project interesting is that it covers the countries included in USAID’s Central European program and examines the independence of the judicial system. Recently, research has also been conducted on Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary.<sup>250</sup> It is worth noting that Michal Wawrykiewicz and Tineke Strik (Netherlands, Greens) also participated in their event on January 15, 2025, and they believe that further pressure must be placed on our country to reform the judiciary. Tineke Strik and Michal Wawrykiewicz were part of the delegation from the European Parliament’s LIBE Committee that visited Budapest in April 2025. Subsequently, as rapporteur (Strik) and shadow rapporteur (Wawrykiewicz), they submitted a new report condemning Hungary to the European Parliament in November 2025.<sup>251</sup>

### 3.7. Legal Instruments of the European Union

The European Union plays multiple roles in the issue of foreign-funded attempts to influence politics. It simultaneously funds media outlets and political activist organizations, acts as a regulator, and possesses extensive tools to restrict political opinions appearing in social media. The European Digital Services Act has created broad opportunities for the European Commission to exert pressure on social media platforms to restrict certain users’ freedom of speech or the dissemination of certain content.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Centre for European Reform. (March 11, 2025). Filling the USAID gap: How Europe can step up to support democracy.

Source: <https://www.cer.eu/in-the-press/filling-usaid-gap-how-europe-can-step-support-democracy#:~:text=In%202022%2C%20USAID%20restarted%20its,Romania%2C%20Slovakia%2C%20and%20Slovenia>.

<sup>247</sup> European Court of Justice League. Source: <https://ecs.gda.pl/wydarzenia/europejska-liga-sadowa/#:~:text=Projekt%20realizowany%20jest%20przez%20Stowarzyszenie,Rozwoju%20Mi%20C4%99dzynarodowego%20%28USAID>

<sup>248</sup> Niezależna. (February 27, 2025). American taxpayers’ money helped topple the Polish government.

Source: <https://niezalezna.pl/polityka/pieniadze-podatnika-z-usa-pomagaly-obalic-polski-rzad-elon-musk-reaguje-na-doniesienia-gazety-polskiej/538303#:~:text=W%202023%20roku%20%2E%80%9EWolne%20S%20C4%85dy%20%80%9D,dotycz%20C4%85cyc%20demokracji%20i%20praw%20cz%20C5%82owieka%20%80%9D>

<sup>249</sup> NGO Transparency. Source: <https://ngostransparency.eu/>

<sup>250</sup> ICJ. (January 17, 2025). EU: Judicial independence in Member States discussed at the European Parliament. Source: <https://www.icj.org/eu-judicial-independence-in-member-states-discussed-at-the-european-parliament/>

<sup>251</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20251120IPR31492/parliament-sounds-the-alarm-over-hungary-s-deepening-rule-of-law-crisis>

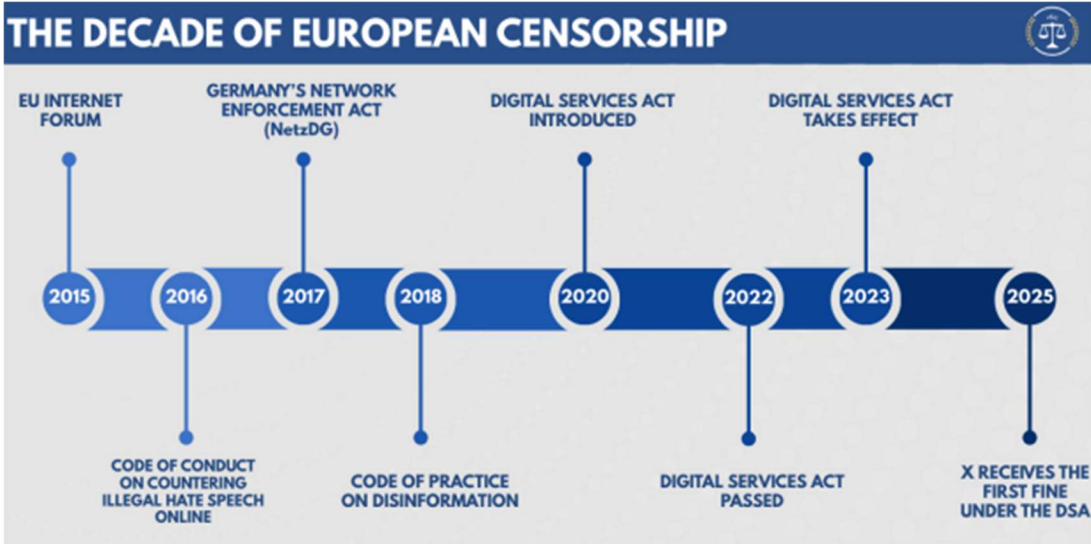
<sup>252</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/HU/legal-content/summary/digital-services-act.html>

Starting in the fall of 2025, political advertising on social media platforms was restricted, while Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, announced that media outlets deemed trustworthy by the European Commission would have access to significant EU funding. In November 2025, the draft EU Democracy Shield was also presented,<sup>253</sup> the objectives and description of which resemble the political intervention projects announced by the Biden administration for Hungary: 1) protecting the integrity of the information space; 2) strengthening our institutions, free and fair elections, and a free and independent media; 3) supporting social resilience and civic activism.

The EU penalty imposed on social media platform X<sup>254</sup> reveals that the European Commission is demanding access to user identities, the platform’s algorithm, and its advertising system. The U.S. House Judiciary Committee released reports in the summer of 2025 and February 2026,<sup>255</sup> in which it highlighted the EU’s censorship practices. These reports revealed that the EU had abused the Digital Services Act and used it to curtail free speech not only in EU countries but also in the United States.

In February 2025, the U.S. House Judiciary Committee contacted major technology companies to investigate how foreign censorship laws infringe upon Americans’ right to free speech. According to the evidence uncovered, the European Union has been waging a decade-long campaign to gain control over global online narratives.

“The Foreign Censorship Threat, Part II: Europe’s Decade-Long Campaign to Censor the Global Internet and How It Harms American Speech in the United States” revealed that the European Commission successfully pressured major social media platforms to change their global content moderation rules, thereby directly interfering with American online public life and freedom of the press. Since 2020, the European Commission has regularly pressured the platforms in more than 100 closed-door meetings to change their globally applicable content moderation rules and censor content more aggressively. The timeline below shows the main milestones of the relevant legislation:

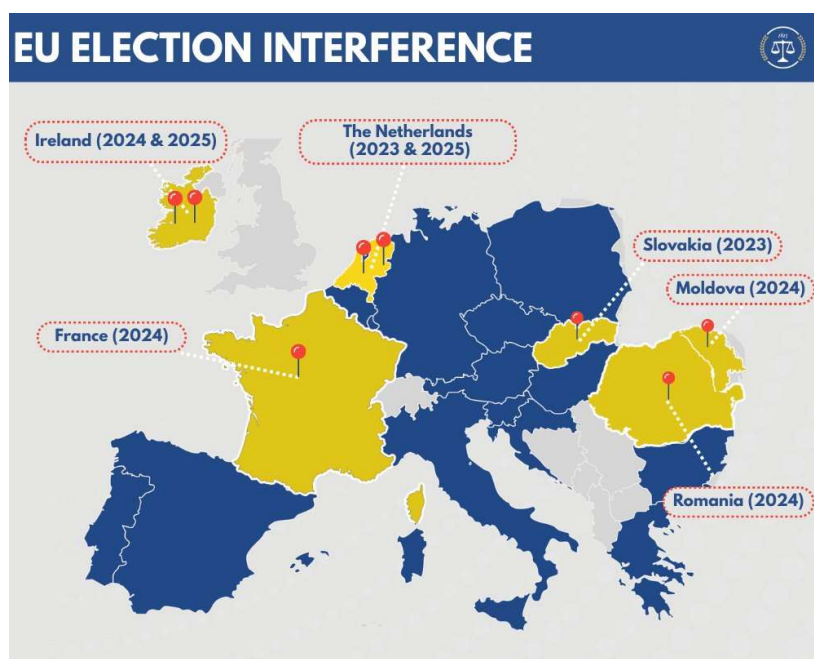


<sup>253</sup> [https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/european-democracy-shield-and-eu-strategy-civil-society-pave-way-stronger-and-more-resilient-2025-11-12\\_en](https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/european-democracy-shield-and-eu-strategy-civil-society-pave-way-stronger-and-more-resilient-2025-11-12_en)

<sup>254</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_25\\_2934](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_2934)

<sup>255</sup> [https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/2025-07/DSA\\_Report%26Appendix%2807.25.25%29.pdf](https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/2025-07/DSA_Report%26Appendix%2807.25.25%29.pdf)

In response, major social media platforms have censored factual information and political expression regarding some of the most significant political debates of recent times—including the COVID-19 pandemic, the mass migration crisis, and issues related to transgender people—claiming they are fighting hate speech and disinformation.<sup>256</sup> The report found that the **European Commission has interfered in at least eight elections** held in six European countries since 2023. The Commission met with social media platforms prior to the elections with the aim of pressuring them to censor political content.<sup>257</sup>



On February 4, 2026, the House Judiciary Committee also held a hearing titled “Europe’s Threat to American Free Speech and Innovation: Part II.”<sup>258</sup> In his opening remarks, Chairman Jim Jordan highlighted the role of the U.S. State Department’s Global Engagement Center (GEC), which served as a driving force behind global opinion control and used taxpayer funds to build an alliance with the Brussels bureaucracy to restrict free speech. Lorcán Price, an attorney and legal advisor at ADF International, spoke about the dangers of the Digital Services Act (DSA), noting that the law’s “vague definitions” allow Brussels institutions to subject American companies to European ideological control, thereby essentially violating the U.S. Constitution’s protection of free speech in the digital realm. At the end of the hearing, Jim Jordan emphasized that protecting free speech requires international cooperation. The goal of DOGE and the congressional investigations is to cut off the financial resources of these censorship networks.

<sup>256</sup><https://judiciary.house.gov/media/press-releases/new-report-exposes-european-commission-decade-long-campaign-censor-american>

<sup>257</sup><https://judiciary.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/republicans-judiciary.house.gov/files/2026-02/THE-FOREIGN-CENSORSHIP-THREAT-PART-II-2-3-26.pdf>

<sup>258</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAlzQQhn36Q>

## CONCLUSION

Hiding behind the banner of supporting democracy, combating foreign disinformation, the rule of law, and the fight against corruption, the American left has created an industrial-scale network of political activist organizations. They used American taxpayers' money to first finance the preparation of intervention programs, then their implementation, as well as the production of democracy reports. Thus, from grants labeled as "development aid," they created a circular, never-ending funding system that supports political activist organizations. These organizations have a financial interest in exaggerating and perpetuating perceived threats to democratic values, as this justifies the existence of political intervention projects and ensures the continued financial support of members of the global left-wing political activist network.

The American left has also used these foreign policy intervention tools for domestic political purposes, against Donald Trump and his movement. Consequently, the new U.S. administration is consistently attempting to dismantle this fragmented and organizationally sprawling network of political corruption.

The American left's international political ambitions were fueled by political revenge against Donald Trump's international allies, including Hungary, as reported by U.S. government sources on official platforms.

USAID and other organizations providing government funding have been reorganized by the new U.S. administration, but have not been completely abolished, and the review process has been only partial. The U.S. legislature has continued budgetary support for the National Endowment for Democracy, an organization that also provides funding to political activist groups in Hungary.

Foreign government funding for political projects in Hungary clearly runs counter to the spirit of Hungarian law, which prohibits the foreign financing of political parties. The ban on foreign party financing protects Hungarian public life from foreign manipulation. The protection of Hungarian sovereignty cannot be effective if foreign funding can freely flow to other political actors for political purposes.

At the same time, the Brussels elite actively supports the organizations of the global left-wing political corruption network, and has established funding programs parallel to those in the United States, and provides them with financial support.

It is in Hungary's fundamental interest to continue assisting in the exposure of this corrupt network in cooperation with the United States and to prevent further funds from being provided to the network from Brussels during the new EU budget cycle.