

TIMELINE OF GOVERNMENTAL ATTACKS AGAINST HUNGARIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

17 NOVEMBER 2017

Since the elections in 2010, the current governing party has systematically **undermined the rule of law** in Hungary, seriously **disrupting the system of checks and balances**. The adoption of the new constitution without the consent of the opposition and the widely criticized media regulation were followed by legislative steps weakening independent institutions (e.g. the Constitutional Court, the judiciary and the Ombudsman system) and violating human rights (e.g. the right to fair trial) in mass numbers. These legislative steps were accompanied by the early removal of leaders of independent institutions and the “court-packing” of the Constitutional Court. As shown by the international criticism e.g. on behalf of the European Union and the Council of Europe, several rules adopted by the governing majority were not in compliance with democratic values and international standards. The **series of governmental attacks against Hungarian NGOs**, which organisations operate by their nature as checks and critics of the state power and fight for reinforcing the rule of law and ensuring the protection of human rights, is another step in the process aimed at **establishing an “illiberal state”**.

These attacks included **condemning public statements by high-ranking state officials** (including the Prime Minister) alleging that some NGOs are closely linked to political parties and/or serve “foreign interests”; an **illegitimate state audit** into the use of the EEA/Norway Grants NGO Fund; **criminal procedures** launched against members of the consortium of NGOs distributing the EEA/Norway Grants NGO Fund; a **police raid** of their offices (later found unlawful by the investigation judge); and the **suspension of their tax numbers**. Even though the official proceedings launched as part of the governmental attacks against the Hungarian consortium of NGOs distributing the EEA/Norway Grants NGO Fund and organisations supported by the NGO Fund ceased or were terminated (without any criminal charges brought) by the beginning of 2016, **critical and threatening statements** from the government and the governing parties against human rights and watchdog NGOs continued. In fact, these got even stronger in 2017, now primarily targeting NGOs supported by the Open Society Foundations. Finally, in April 2017, governing party MPs submitted the **Bill on the Transparency of Organisations Receiving Foreign Funds** (the “Lex NGO”) to the Hungarian Parliament, setting out that organisations receiving foreign funds over a yearly threshold of 7.2 million HUF (app. 23,000 EUR) will have to register at court and will have to label themselves as organisations receiving foreign funds on their website and in all their publications, while including sanctions in case of non-compliance. In spite of domestic objections and severe concerns voiced by several international stakeholders, the Bill was adopted by the Parliament and entered into force in June 2017.

BACKGROUND MATERIALS

- ✓ [Communication brief](#) on the government attacks in relation to the EEA/Norway Grants (2013–2016)
- ✓ English [translation](#) of Act LXXVI of 2017 on the Transparency of Organisations Receiving Foreign Funds
- ✓ [What is the problem with the Hungarian law on foreign funded NGOs?](#) (Hungarian Helsinki Committee – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, 9 October 2017)
- ✓ [Analyses](#) of the Bill on foreign funded organisations (Lex NGO), April 2017
- ✓ [An Illiberal State in the Heart of Europe](#) (Eötvös Károly Policy Institute – Mérték Media Monitor – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union – Hungarian Helsinki Committee – K-Monitor, October 2017)

<p>14-15 August 2013</p>	<p>NGOs “serving foreign interests” are listed by government-friendly newspapers; it is alleged that the “crew” of György Soros has an “outstanding role” in distributing the money in the framework of the EEA/Norway Grants NGO Fund. Allegations are declined both by the Ökotárs Foundation (which leads the Hungarian consortium of fund operators) and the Norwegian government.</p>
<p>17 August 2013</p>	<p>The spokesperson of the governing party Fidesz echoes the newspapers’ above allegations. Later on, in a civil procedure launched against the spokesperson and the Fidesz by an NGO, they do not even try to substantiate the spokesperson’s statements.</p>
<p>8 April 2014</p>	<p>The head of the Prime Minister’s Office claims in a letter to the Norwegian government that the Ökotárs is in his view closely linked to an opposition party. Allegations of political influence are again rejected by the Ökotárs and Norway.</p>
<p>11 April 2014</p>	<p>It turns out that Századvég Foundation, an important background institution of the government, also participated in the tender for the position of fund operator with regard to the NGO Fund, but was not considered impartial and was not selected.</p>
<p>30 April 2014</p>	<p>Senior representative of the Prime Minister’s Office calls the operators of the Hungarian NGO Fund “party-dependent, cheating nobodies”.</p>
<p>6 May 2014</p>	<p>The head of the Prime Minister’s Office requests from Norway in vain that the NGO Fund in Hungary is “suspended”, and indicates that the government wishes to enter into negotiations as to the new fund operator.</p>
<p>21 May 2014</p>	<p>The government requests the Government Control Office (GCO), a state agency vested with the right to audit state money, to launch an audit into how the NGO Fund is managed. The secretariat of the donor countries (the Financial Mechanism Office, FMO) states that the audit is in breach of the respective agreements.</p>
<p>28 May – 1 June 2014</p>	<p>It comes to light that a governmental list has been prepared about potentially “problematic” NGO projects under the EEA/Norway Grants, corresponding with the list of NGOs cited by newspapers in August 2013. A governmental list of “left wing” and “incompatible” evaluators also emerges.</p>
<p>2 June 2014</p>	<p>The GCO carries out an on-site audit at three members of the consortium of fund operators and demands that certain documents are handed over. The Norwegian authorities express their strong concern about Hungary’s actions.</p>
<p>12 June 2014</p>	<p>After a high-level state meeting, Norway expresses that halting the GCO’s audit is one of the preconditions for lifting the earlier suspension of the EEA and Norway Grants. (Payments to Hungary under the EEA and Norway Grants scheme were suspended in May 2014 because Hungary has breached the respective agreements.)</p>
<p>16 June 2014</p>	<p>Even though the FMO asked the GCO earlier to address further requests to the FMO instead of the fund operators, the GCO requests another set of documents from the Ökotárs, which does not comply with the request after the FMO asks it not to.</p>

<p>25-27 June 2014</p>	<p>A government-friendly newspaper falsely states that an audit report prepared by Ernst & Young supports the state's accusations. The government refers for the first time to the possibility that the Ökotárs may have committed a criminal offence.</p>
<p>June 2014</p>	<p>The GCO requests, with a very short deadline, project documentation and organisational materials from 58 NGOs supported by the NGO Fund. Some of the NGOs question the legal basis of the audit, but comply with the request (taking also into account that the GCO may suspend their tax numbers in case of non-cooperation). Four NGOs decide to make project documentation available on their websites instead of submitting it to the GCO.</p>
<p>21 July 2014</p>	<p>The GCO sends another request for documents to Ökotárs, now threatening to impose fines and/or to suspend the organisation's tax number in case of non-cooperation. The new documents concern also the NGOs supported. The Ökotárs questions why these documents are necessary to achieve the stated goal of the investigation.</p>
<p>23 July 2014</p>	<p>Upon the complaints of NGOs the Ombudsperson of Hungary concludes that the interpretation of Norway shall be also taken into account with regard to the audit of the funds. However, the Ombudsperson did not take any further action.</p>
<p>26 July 2014</p>	<p>In the speech declaring that he and his government build an "illiberal state", the Prime Minister says that their efforts in that regard are obstructed by civil society organisations, and refers to NGOs as "paid political activists who are trying to help foreign interests".</p>
<p>August 2014</p>	<p>A criminal procedure is launched against the Ökotárs on the suspicion of fraud by an individual; the underlying criminal offence is altered to fraudulent misuse of funds later on.</p>
<p>3 September 2014</p>	<p>It is announced that the GCO initiated a criminal procedure on the suspicion of "unauthorized financial activities", supposedly against the Ökotárs, which states that it has indeed given loans to NGOs from its own capital to help with the financing of their EU-projects, but did not derive any benefit from it, this activity was included in its public reports, and is not related to the EEA/Norway Grants NGO Fund.</p>
<p>4 September 2014</p>	<p>The National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (DPA) obliges the Ökotárs to disclose the list of non-supported applicants and the justification for not supporting them to a government-friendly television channel.</p>
<p>8 September 2014</p>	<p>Offices of fund operators Ökotárs and DemNet are raided by the police, who show up in disproportionately high numbers; homes of certain staff members are searched. The police especially seize documents concerning the 13 "blacklisted" NGOs, giving rise to suspicions that the criminal procedure was used to access documents the GCO could not. The Norwegian Minister of EEA and EU Affairs states that the police raid was "completely unacceptable".</p>
<p>11 September 2014</p>	<p>The scope of the GCO's audit is extended to funds received by the Ökotárs in the framework of the Swiss-Hungarian Cooperation Programme and from other state budget</p>

	sources.
<i>15 September 2014</i>	In his speech delivered at the opening of the autumn session of the Parliament Prime Minister Viktor Orbán suggests that NGOs apply double standards .
<i>18-24 September 2014</i>	The tax number of fund operators is suspended . Later, fund operators request a judicial review of the decision suspending their tax numbers.
<i>23-24 September 2014</i>	U.S. President's statement on Hungary intimidating NGOs is labelled as being without any factual basis by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
<i>1 October 2014</i>	A representative of the Prime Minister's Office says that the reason behind the U.S. President's above statement is that American political circles fear for their "network" in Hungary .
<i>22 October 2014</i>	The GCO publishes its audit report , containing generalized and highly questionable critical conclusions. Later on, Norway states that the NGO Fund donors will not accept the GCO's audit report and engage in discussions based on it, and will base their evaluation of the NGO Fund on an independent audit instead.
<i>12 November 2014</i>	The GCO initiates criminal procedure on the basis of the report and requests an extraordinary tax audit on the basis of its findings.
<i>15 December 2014</i>	The Prime Minister states in an interview that he would back legislation to force NGOs funded from abroad to be specially registered , because it's important to know "who's in the background" of such groups.
<i>16 December 2014</i>	The Prime Minister's Office decides to carry out an own investigation regarding the use of the Swiss NGO Fund , and that until that investigation is over, no payments can be realized from the Swiss NGO Fund.
<i>19 January 2015</i>	The Ökotárs informs the press that state investigations are extended to NGOs only receiving grants from the NGO Fund : two such NGOs are investigated by the national tax authority, while the prosecutor's office investigates the lawfulness of the operations of another two such NGOs (these are not criminal investigations).
<i>23 January 2015</i>	A court decision concludes with regard to the police raid of consortium members in September 2014 that the ordering of the searches and seizures conducted in the offices of consortium members and homes of Ökotárs representatives has been unlawful .
<i>11 February 2015</i>	An independent evaluation , conducted by a consulting company commissioned by the FMO concludes e.g. that the "selection of the current Fund Operator in Hungary has been an excellent one" and that it is "of critical importance that the NGO Programme in Hungary continues its implementation independently from the Government and operated by the current consortium".
<i>20 February 2015</i>	The head of the Prime Minister's Office states that NGOs should not only account for where their money comes from, but also for their leaders' personal assets .
<i>23 February 2015</i>	The court sets a date for the hearing in the case of the suspension of three consortium members' tax numbers, and suspends the application of the tax authority's respective

	decision until the end of the court procedure, allowing the NGOs to continue their operation.
28 May 2015	The court proceeding in the tax number case of the fourth consortium member decides to suspend the court procedure and files a request to the Constitutional Court for the constitutional review of the decision suspending the organisation’s tax number and of the government decree on the GCO.
28 May 2015	An independent accounting company commissioned by Norway to review the NGO Fund’s distribution in Hungary concludes that the handling of the fund and the evaluation mechanisms in place complied with the respective regulations.
28 May 2015	The National Anti-Corruption Program for 2015–2018 is published, which foresees severing rules on NGOs regarding their transparency and examining the possibilities of widening the scope of civil society leaders obliged to submit a declaration of property.
30 June 2015	The prosecutorial investigation into the lawfulness of the operation of seven NGOs who received funding from the NGO Fund is concluded and finds only administrative irregularities regarding three NGOs (others have ceased to operate or the legal basis of the investigation ceased).
5 October 2015	The Constitutional Court rules that the legal provision on the basis of which the tax number of the consortium members was suspended is constitutional. The decision was delivered with a 4-1 vote. In her dissenting opinion, one of the CC judges claims that the challenged provision renders judicial review formal and void and therefore violates the right to a fair procedure.
7 October 2015	The criminal investigation against Ökotárs and 17 other NGO’s is terminated by the tax authority’s investigative unit, partly because no criminal offence has been committed, and partly because the continuation of the investigation is unlikely to yield any result.
21 October 2015	The head of the Prime Minister’s Office claims in an interview that despite the termination of the investigation, he is of the view that Ökotárs carries out its activities in an unlawful manner when it distributes the funds discriminatively.
30 October 2015	The Prime Minister says in a radio interview that the flooding in of migrants is enhanced by those activists “who support everything that weakens the nation states”, and that this Western way of thinking and network of activists may best be hallmarked by the name of George Soros.
6 November 2015	An MP of the coalition partner of Fidesz sends an open letter to a number of NGO’s supported by the Open Society Foundations (OSF), stating that George Soros regards it his task to eliminate the borders of sovereign countries so that refugees could have an easier access to Europe, and asking the NGOs to clarify whether it is fair to presume that they support George Soros’s ideas.
24 November 2015	The FMO and the Hungarian government conclude an agreement about lifting the suspension of EEA/Norway Grants funds for government projects, an express condition of this agreement being that the Hungarian government terminates all proceedings against organisations handling and receiving grants from the NGO Fund, and that it guarantees that it would not launch any more such proceedings against these NGOs.

9-11 December 2015	The suspension of the disbursement of funds to Hungary under the EEA/Norway Grants scheme is lifted.
11 December 2015	The head of the Prime Minister's Office makes anti-NGO statements at the delegate congress of Fidesz , including that there are NGOs which are paid to demonstrate and advocate for certain causes and who enjoy the support of George Soros.
January–February 2016	Procedures launched by the National Tax and Customs Administration into NGOs are closed by January–February 2016 without any result , the tax authority stating that no further official proceedings would be launched on the basis of the investigations.
16 February 2016	The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders points out after his visit to Hungary that human rights defenders in the country “are increasingly working in a rather polarised and politicised environment,” and criticises attempts to delegitimize defenders and undermine their peaceful and legitimate activities through criminal defamation and excessive administrative and financial pressure.
20 May 2016	The Prime Minister states in an interview that organisations sponsored by George Soros are a “background power,” who were not elected by anyone, but “they still constantly aim to gain political influence”.
25 May 2016	A news portal enjoying state subvention lists NGOs supported by George Soros, referring to them as “Soros network,” expressing concerns about the transparency of these NGOs’ financing. The list of NGOs corresponds with the earlier lists that appeared in relation to the government attacks against the NGOs receiving support through the EEA/Norway Grants NGO Fund.
25 May 2016	The head of the Prime Minister's Office states that the “entire domestic pro-migrant civil sector belongs to the sphere of influence of Soros,” claiming that his opinion is based on reports of the national security services. After called before the Parliament's National Security Committee regarding this issue, he states that no NGOs are under surveillance by national security services.
8 June 2016	The Eötvös Károly Policy Institute (EKINT, one of the organisations listed earlier as part of the “Soros network”) reports that an electronic device attached to telephone and internet cables has been found in its offices, which, according to an expert opinion, is suitable for data transmission.
11 June 2016	The government spokesperson states in an interview that NGOs linked to George Soros had a positive role after the transition, but nowadays they have crossed the line and try to intervene with the life of Central and Eastern European societies through illicit measures.
29 June 2016	A final court judgment concludes that the Fidesz had violated the Hungarian Helsinki Committee's (HHC) right to a good reputation. The lawsuit was launched by the HHC in 2015, after Fidesz had stated that the HHC is a “fake” NGO, which “executes the political orders” of international actors and tampers with data concerning asylum-seekers.
29 June 2016 and 6 October 2016	On 29 June 2016, the Supreme Court decides in a lawsuit launched by the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU) in 2014 that the GCO shall disclose on whose instruction the GCO's state audit and investigation into NGOs was launched. The documentation acquired

	based on the above court decision shows that the state audit of the GCO into NGOs was launched on the basis of the instruction of the Prime Minister himself.
26 September 2016	MP Szilárd Németh, Vice President of the Fidesz and of the Parliament's National Security Committee announces that he has requested the National Security Committee and the national security services to inspect the organisations “cooperating with the Soros network” , and states that these NGOs participate in politics unlawfully, with “black money”.
14 December 2016	The submitted legislative agenda of the Parliament for 2017 spring foresees the amendment of the law on civil organisations and the scope of those obliged to submit a declaration of assets.
15 December 2016	The Prime Minister claims in an interview that in 2017 states will aim to “drive out” Soros and the powers symbolized by him from their countries , and it will be revealed where the money comes from, what secret service connections there are, and what kind of interests NGOs represent.
10-11 January 2017	MP Szilárd Németh, the Vice President of the Fidesz states that “the Soros empire’s fake civil organisations [...] have to be rolled back with every means, and [...] they have to be swept out of here” , and that the Fidesz will support legislative efforts such as the planned law prescribing that NGO leaders have to submit a declaration of assets. The next day he specifically names the HCLU, the HHC and Transparency International Hungary (TI Hungary) as the NGOs that have to be “swept out”, claiming that these NGOs want to have a say in politics without “legitimate participation”.
11 January 2017	An MP of the coalition partner of Fidesz states that there are NGOs which, even though they are registered as civil organisations, have primarily political goals, and even though they may not receive public funds, they may be corrupted, so the suggestion that NGO leaders should submit a declaration of assets may be justified .
12 January 2017	MP Szilárd Németh refers to national security risks with regard to the activities of the HCLU and the HHC in relation to refugees, and says that those NGOs about whom it turns out that “they serve the interests of foreign powers and the international big business as opposed to Hungarians, have nothing to do here”. Meanwhile, the head of the Prime Minister’s Office states that “sweeping out” NGOs as such is not on the government’s agenda, but those who want to influence politics have to undertake publicity .
13 January 2017	The government spokesperson suggests in relation to NGOs funded by George Soros that people calling themselves human rights defenders and civils fraternize or cooperate with terrorist and human trafficking organisations . He also states that as far as its content goes, the government agrees with the statements of MP Szilárd Németh , and that even though the NGOs in question were not elected by anybody, they still form opinions and try to take concrete political steps.
10 February 2017	The Prime Minister says the following in his annual state of the nation speech: “in 2017 we will also need to take up the struggle against international organisations’ increasingly strong activists. [...] It is a problem that foreign funding is being secretly used to influence Hungarian politics . [...] We are [talking about] paid activists from international organisations and their branch offices in Hungary.” The Prime Minister also states that “the organisations of George Soros are working tirelessly to bring hundreds of

	thousands of migrants into Europe”.
17 February 2017	The head of the Fidesz parliamentary group says that the Fidesz plans to submit a Bill to the Parliament with the aim to ensure the transparency of the Hungarian branches of international organisations , the reason behind the planned Bill being that “the Hungarian voters should know if these organisations want to exert influence in Hungary by using foreign funding”.
20 February 2017	In his speech opening the Parliament’s spring session, the Prime Minister announces that a “national consultation” will be held about five threats to Hungary, including “illegal migration” and the “foreign influencing attempts” .
21 February 2017	It is reported that at the parliamentary group meeting of Fidesz the NGOs supported by the OSF , and specifically the HCLU, the HHC and TI Hungary were named as the target group of the envisaged Bill on the foreign funding of NGOs . According to sources, a new registry category, the “organisation supported from abroad” may be introduced for those NGOs whose foreign funding exceeds a certain sum or proportion.
21 February 2017	It is reported that even though the Prime Minister’s Office claimed that the Hungarian government will have a veto power with regard to the selection of the Hungarian organisation managing the funds from the EEA/Norway Grants NGO Fund, Norway states that those managing the distribution of the NGO Fund will be selected by the donor countries instead.
1–9 March 2017	The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Ministry of Human Resources essentially refuse HCLU’s request that a public consultation is held on the envisaged law on NGOs (i.e. that the text is published before submitted to the Parliament and there is a possibility to comment on it per standard procedure in the case of Bills prepared by Ministries).
5 March 2017	Ministry of Human Resources’ Secretary of State responsible for relationships with churches, nationalities and the civil society says that his opinion about HCLU and other organisations linked George Soros is “devastating” and bluntly refuses to meet HCLU in relation to the envisaged law on NGOs.
10 March 2017	Government spokesperson states after criticism is voiced by human rights defenders over an amendment further tightening Hungarian asylum laws that a known “choreography” recurs: NGOs financed from abroad criticize the Hungarian government unfoundedly , and members of the Brussels bureaucracy and the left-wing and liberal parties there react to that criticism “accordingly”.
14 March 2017	The Vice President of the Fidesz says that TI Hungary, HCLU and HHC are not civil organisations , “they serve foreign interests from foreign money” , and they are busy “trying to bring down the democratically elected national government”. He also claims that, on the basis of what he heard from national security services in the Parliament’s National Security Committee, EKINT receives more money from George Soros than it admits in its public financial reports .
23 March 2017	Government spokesperson states that only those organisations are problematic which form an international network and are financed from abroad , and that these NGOs shall make their operation fully transparent, since in certain cases they carry out a policy totally contradicting the interests of an EU Member State or the EU as a whole .

<p>24 March 2017</p>	<p>After the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) rules in the case <i>Ilias and Ahmed v. Hungary</i> that Hungary violated the rights of the HHC's asylum-seeker clients, head of the Fidesz parliamentary group says that the HHC's arguments presented in the case has been "mendacious", that the HHC "has seen an opportunity here to gain [money] to the detriment of the Hungarian state", and that "it seems that the migrant business has started" also at the HHC.</p>
<p>27 March 2017</p>	<p>Spokesperson for the Fidesz parliamentary group announces that they are initiating a discussion with the participation of the five parties in the Parliament about the planned Bill on NGOs funded from abroad. He adds that Soros-organisations make a lot of money on the "migrant business" and add that "we also have to step up against the foreign agent organisations operating with funds received from Soros".</p>
<p>28 March 2017</p>	<p>After the ECtHR grants the HHC's request to indicate interim measures in the case of the HHC's nine vulnerable asylum-seeking clients, stalling their transfer from open reception facilities to the transit zone on the border, the Ministry of Interior attacks the HHC in a statement, claiming that "the latest overzealous action by the [HHC] is clearly an unprincipled attempt to attack the reinforced legal border barrier".</p>
<p>30 March 2017</p>	<p>Head of the Prime Minister's Office states at a press conference that the HHC became a political organisation, it carries out openly political work, and "hunts down" applicants, adding that he "hopes that this is not about business", and suggests the HHC that it should offer the just satisfaction awarded in the HHC's <i>Ilias and Ahmed v. Hungary</i> case to the Hungarian Interchurch Aid. At the same press conference, the government spokesperson says, referring to the interim measures indicated by the ECtHR in one of the HHC's cases, that if a ruling may be issued by the ECtHR upon the initiative of the HHC within one day that shows well "what is going on [in Strasbourg]".</p>
<p>31 March 2017</p>	<p>The Prime Minister says the following in relation to the HHC's win before the ECtHR in the case <i>Ilias and Ahmed v. Hungary</i>: "These NGOs [...] have nothing to do with civil society organisations [...]. As regards money, the cat's out of the bag, because it's emerged that these international networks are rather keen on money. So there's also a well-established migrant business in operation [...]."</p>
<p>31 March 2017</p>	<p>The Fidesz parliamentary group calls upon the Government to deny paying the HHC the just satisfaction awarded by the ECtHR in the HHC's <i>Ilias and Ahmed v. Hungary</i> case. The spokesperson of the group says in relation to that that the "migrant business" shall not be financed from the money of the Hungarian people, that the judgment in the above case shows that the "international migrant business exists" and "Soros-organisations are involved in it up until their necks", and calls it outrageous that after human traffickers also Soros-organisations "would like to make money on immigration".</p>
<p>28 March – 4 April 2017</p>	<p>A law amending the rules of operation for universities accredited abroad is tabled and adopted by the Parliament within one week, targeting the Central European University (CEU), funded by George Soros in 1991, making it impossible for the CEU to continue its operations as an institution of higher education in Budapest.</p>
<p>1 April 2017</p>	<p>Government reports that the national consultation announced by the Prime Minister earlier has been launched, its questionnaire containing questions saying that "certain international organisations encourage the illegal immigrants to commit illegal acts" and that "more and more foreign-supported organisations operate in Hungary with</p>

	the aim of interfering in the internal affairs of our country in an opaque manner”.
5 April 2017	Responding to an opinion piece by the HHC’s co-chair, Fidesz issues a statement with the title “Hungary has to defend itself from the attacks of Soros-organisations” , saying that these organisations are openly inciting for the violation of Hungarian laws, and that all Hungarians have to know “who the men of George Soros are, and what funds and what interests stand behind the organisations funded from abroad”.
5 April 2017	Vice President of Fidesz claims that the only aim of the envisaged Bill on NGOs is to ensure transparency regarding the funding received by NGOs from abroad. He adds that NGOs have no right to conceal the real amount of funds they receive , and that in the course of the “migration crisis”, the organisations supported by George Soros attacked the Hungarian government harsher than ever before, in many cases implicitly encouraging people to break the Hungarian rules.
6 April 2017	Responding to a journalist’s question as to which “international organisations encouraging the illegal immigrants to commit illegal acts” the national consultation questionnaire refers to, the head of the Prime Minister’s Office submits that in his view the HHC “calls upon those waiting in the transit zone to step up against the Hungarian laws” at the Hungarian-Serbian border, which “harms Hungary”.
7 April 2017	MPs of the Fidesz submit Bill T/14967 on the Transparency of Organisations Receiving Foreign Funds to the Parliament (“NGO Bill”), which would require Hungarian NGOs which receive foreign funds over a certain yearly threshold to register themselves with the courts separately and to label themselves as organisations receiving foreign funds on their website and in their publications, and would foresee sanctions in case of non-compliance.
9 April 2017	Christian Democrat MP alleges in relation to HHC’s <i>Ilias and Ahmed v. Hungary</i> case that the ECtHR is under the influence of George Soros , given that the Hungarian judge is the founding dean of the CEU, founded by George Soros.
9–10 April 2017	As a reaction to a large-scale demonstration against the law targeting the CEU , the Vice President of the Fidesz states that the protest was “schemed” by the “agent organisations” funded by George Soros , due to the planned NGO Bill, while a Christian Democrat MP talks about the “triumvirate” of Brussels, Soros and the Strasbourg court , who want to make money through the “migrant business”.
12 April 2017	EC College of Commissioners debates about developments in Hungary, and decides with regard to the NGO Bill that the EC will closely monitor the process and will revert to the matter on the basis of an analysis of the legal issues at stake.
12 April 2017	Fidesz representative Gergely Gulyás states that the NGO Bill is not about stigmatizing, but about transparency, and that the violation claimed by NGOs as caused by the envisaged registration requirement is “ exaggerated and illusory ”.
12 April 2017	Thousands protest in Budapest against the NGO Bill and the law targeting the CEU in the framework of a demonstration organised by NGO campaign network Civilizáció.
15 April 2017	The Prime Minister says that the NGO law “will clearly show” people “to be operating with foreign funding, serving foreign interests, and following instructions from abroad” , and that “through his organisations in Hungary (...) George Soros is spending

	endless amounts of money to support illegal immigration”.
19 April 2017	The DPA states in its opinion that the NGO Bill may indeed be a “useful and appropriate tool” to ensure that NGOs are not used in the “influencing attempts” of “foreign interest groups”, but suggests that information on funding by economical actors, the Government and political parties could also be made public.
19 April 2017	Fidesz representatives continue to insist that the NGO Bill is only about transparency (even though the Bill does not enhance the already existing transparency of NGOs) , with the Vice President of the Fidesz also stating in the parliamentary debate of the Bill that it does not bring along any kind of stigmatisation.
20 April 2017	Secretary of State of the MoJ says that the NGO Bill is criticized only by foreign funded organisations which oppose the Government regarding the “migrant issue” , adding that migration seems to be “very profitable” also for human rights defenders.
20 April 2017	The MoJ invites some NGOs to discuss the NGO Bill, but the parliamentary debate over the Bill commences already before the meeting. Five NGOs state after the meeting that their standpoint remains the same: the NGO Bill is not suitable for discussion, and it should be withdrawn.
23 April 2017	The spokesperson of the Fidesz parliamentary faction claims falsely , before the respective deadline is over, that certain NGOs have rejected the FOI request of a government-friendly newspaper. In October 2017, the HCLU wins lawsuit against the journalist demanding information beyond public interest data from them.
25 April 2017	When civil society representatives protest silently at the parliamentary committee’s session discussing the NGO Bill, the chair of the committee suspends the session and summons the Parliamentary Guard to remove them (which finally does not happen).
26 April 2017	In his speech given in the European Parliament, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán claims, while giving the false impression that transparency of NGOs is not ensured in Hungary, that the government wants “nothing else but to be able to know of NGOs what kind of money and what kind of interests are behind them”.
28 April 2017	The head of the Prime Minister’s Office claims that mandatory registration of NGOs as required by the NGO Bill will be entirely different than submitting a report to the National Judicial Office under the current rules (which reports also contains information on funds received from other states, international organisations and NGOs, and are being published on the National Judicial Office’s website).
28 April 2017	The Prime Minister says the following in an interview, referring to the case <i>Ilias and Ahmed v. Hungary</i> : “an organisation funded by Soros sued Hungary for not following the correct procedure in relation to these two Bangladeshi men (...). [E]xpert opinion was supplied by another Soros organisation, and in the court a group of judges delivered a ruling under the supervision of a judge who teaches at a Soros university. Clearly we have been encircled. Here there is a well-constructed system , resulting in a ruling that we Hungarians should pay the legal costs – in other words give money to Soros-organisations [...]. Behind these we have revealed that in fact one can see a networked operation at work. ”
April 2017	As part of the “Let’s stop Brussels!” campaign, the Government launches a television ad that specifically targets the HHC , saying that “an organisation financed by George Soros

	is launching lawsuits against our homeland in support of Brussels”.
<i>April–May 2017</i>	International stakeholders , including Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe Expert Council on NGO Law, and three UN Special Rapporteurs to the voice concerns with regard NGO Bill . The European Parliament condemns the Bill in a resolution on 17 May 2017, and the Venice Commission also criticizes the NGO Bill in a preliminary opinion.
<i>13 and 27 June 2017</i>	The NGO Bill is adopted as Act LXXVI of 2017 on the Transparency of Organisations Receiving Foreign Funds (hereafter: “Lex NGO” or “NGO Law”) by the Parliament on 13 June 2017, and enters into force on 27 June 2017.
<i>14 June 2017</i>	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade says that it is “ a legitimate demand on the part of the Hungarian people to know who finances civil organisations from abroad , and if they have nothing to be ashamed of then it is difficult to understand exactly why they are unwilling to reveal the identity of their foreign financiers”.
<i>16–20 June 2017</i>	The Venice Commission adopts its opinion on the NGO Law, concluding that the “context surrounding the adoption” of the law “may render such provisions problematic, raising a concern as to whether they breach the prohibition of discrimination”, and that the amendments made to the draft law before its adoption “do not suffice to alleviate the Venice Commission’s concerns” that the law “will cause a disproportionate and unnecessary interference with the freedoms of association and expression, the right to privacy, and the prohibition of discrimination” .
<i>June–July 2017</i>	Several affected NGOs declare that they will not register as an “organisation receiving foreign funds” . The HCLU, the HHC and Civil Liberties Union for Europe write a joint letter to the EC Vice-President, urging the EC to act to protect NGOs and the rule of law in Hungary.
<i>11 July 2017</i>	Parliamentary Secretary of State Károly Konrád submits to the press that foreign funded organisations “often encourage illegal immigrants to simply break the law, are supporting the illegal crossing of borders and are cooperating with human smugglers” , claiming that this “represents a risk to public safety and national security”, and cites this as the cause for the NGO Law.
<i>13 July 2017</i>	The European Commission launches an infringement procedure against Hungary for the NGO Law by sending a letter of formal notice to Hungary, claiming that the NGO Law does not comply with EU law because (i) it interferes unduly with fundamental rights as enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, in particular the right to freedom of association; (ii) it introduces unjustified and disproportionate restrictions to the free movement of capital; and (iii) it also raises concerns as regards the respect of the right to protection of private life and of personal data.
<i>August 2017</i>	23 NGOs submit a constitutional complaint to the Hungarian Constitutional Court , claiming that the Lex NGO violates articles of the Fundamental Law of Hungary on the right to private life, on the right to assembly, on the right to freedom of speech and on the prohibition of discrimination, and request the Constitutional Court to abolish the NGO Law for its unconstitutionality.
<i>September–October 2017</i>	The Prime Minister says in the Parliament that the Brussels bureaucrats are implementing the “Soros plan” , and announces that governing parties have asked the

	Government to launch a national consultation on the “Soros plan” . A question of the eventually launched national consultation mentions two NGOs , the HHC and Amnesty International by name in a negative context .
<i>4 October 2017</i>	The formal letter of the European Commission of 13 July 2017 regarding the NGO Law is followed by a reasoned opinion, the second step in the infringement procedure .
<i>6 October 2017</i>	The Prime Minister says the following in relation to the infringement procedure against Hungary regarding the Lex NGO: “if you read the Brussels bureaucrats’ submission related to the Hungarian NGO law, all you can say is that across the whole of Europe it’s a complete laughing stock . An intelligent lawyer wouldn’t even bother dealing with it, because they’d get their fingers burnt. The document smells so strongly of being produced in response to a political directive , and it contains arguments which are so inconsistent, that a lawyer couldn’t even discuss it seriously, with a straight face.”
<i>October 2017</i>	The HHC , one of the NGOs specifically targeted by the Government and refusing to register as a foreign funded NGO, reports that within a few months, all of its cooperation agreements , aimed at monitoring the enforcement of human rights in immigration and police detention facilities and in penitentiary institutions, has been terminated by the authorities , after decades of cooperation and more than 2,000 monitoring visits.
<i>24 October 2017</i>	The Prime Minister reiterates at a discussion organized by the Passauer Neue Presse that a large international network is attached to George Soros , and while Hungary fought to protect the border, these organisations attacked the military, helped migrants entering the country illegally, and aided them in crossing the border unlawfully .
<i>26 October 2017</i>	The head of the Prime Minister’s Office announces that the Minister of Interior will have to prepare a report on whether the manipulation attempts of the Soros-organisations carried out during the immigration crisis had any effect in Hungary , and that he himself, as minister supervising the intelligence services, is preparing a report on what George Soros managed to achieve in Brussels against the Hungarian people .
<i>27 October 2017</i>	The Prime Minister says in an interview that, with the involvement of Hungary’s national security services, the wider public must be informed about the “Soros network” , which is attempting to influence life in Europe. Such revelations, he says, would enable Hungarians to find out who is seeking to influence their lives, and why and how they are doing it, noting that it is also important to identify those Hungarians who, operating from Hungary, are prepared to cooperate with the network in this process .
<i>October 30 – 2 November 2017</i>	It is reported that the prosecutor’s office has not launched a procedure yet against those NGOs who failed to register as “organisations receiving foreign funds”, with the prosecutor’s office claiming that they could act only upon request. A few days later, the youth chapter of the Fidesz coalition partner Christian Democratic People’s Party announces that it will report NGOs refusing to register to the prosecutor’s office .