



**SOVEREIGNTY
PROTECTION OFFICE**

REPORT ON THE OPERATION OF THE SOROS NETWORK IN DEBRECEN

**Foreign-funded network building in Hungary's
second most populous city**

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FOREIGN-FUNDED NETWORK BUILDING
IN HUNGARY'S SECOND MOST POPULOUS CITY

SUMMARY

The Soros network's pressure strategy in the city of Debrecen

Debrecen is the country's second most populous city, an industrial, agricultural and university centre, its importance is unquestionable not only from the point of view of national strategy, but it is one of the most important bastions of rural Hungary also because of its social and institutional stability. Together with other settlements with similar characteristics, it has become a prime target of the Soros network's influence and pressure organisations after 2010. The network's national leaders have developed a comprehensive strategy for the political, social and cultural transformation of the city.

They recognised that Debrecen attracts economic and infrastructure investments of international significance, for which there is considerable competition between the countries of the European Union. The network actors also saw that the cultural and social transformations brought about in the county seat could pave the way for political change. Although their objective may have been to undermine regional support for the government by diverting and blocking these developments, they have ultimately put Hungary at an economic competitive disadvantage and caused social damage. The attempt to infiltrate Debrecen fits in with the Soros structure's ambition shared with the opposition parties, which became general after 2014 and is based on the idea that the only way to defeat the government perceived as being against the interests of the foreign financiers is through rural big cities and their agglomeration.

In a previous report, the Sovereignty Protection Office uncovered the activities of the Ökotárs Foundation as a national fund distribution organisation of the Soros network¹ and described its organisational and personal network of connections. On this basis, it identified an entity organised around a local-regional distributor in the Northern Great Plain region which receives significant foreign and direct EU funding. The centre of this circle within the network is located in Debrecen, where its activities are concentrated.

Over the past fifteen years, the Hungarian network under the influence of George Soros and the American globalist elite has built a significant bridgehead in Debrecen. Its pressure activities cover the economic, social and political life of the city. The national weight of the Debrecen group is confirmed by the local activities of former US Ambassador David Pressman, who appeared at several events of local pressure organisations,

¹ Source: szuverenitasvedelmihivatal.hu/dokumentumok/az-okotars-tevekenysegenek-hatas-a-magyar-szuverenitasra.pdf

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and in other cases held closed-door meetings with their leaders. In the days before his departure, the ambassador rewarded the Debrecen network press with additional funds.

It can be stated that the network's decision-makers see rural big cities of the same importance as Debrecen as the most important battleground for elections, and therefore, from 2020 onwards, local lobbyists have made increasingly spectacular efforts to disinform the public life of the city and transform its general public sentiment. They have had access to all the necessary means of implementation, their financial situation has improved and stabilised. They have provided the opposition parties with an audience and a support base, and have been involved in organising their demonstrations. **The activity of pressure groups during the 2024 European Parliament election campaign and the conflicts they took on demonstrate that they are using the resulting publicity to promote political forces.** This fact foreshadows that they may try to influence the 2026 Hungarian parliamentary elections according to external interests.

The organisations in Debrecen presented in the report – even without the Civil College Foundation – received HUF 1.207 billion in funding between 2018 and 2023. Around 57 per cent of the funding came directly from foreign fund distribution organisations. The Soros Open Society Foundation provided the largest amount of funding to the organisations under inquiry, HUF 521.4 million, accounting for 75.9 per cent of the foreign funds. The second largest amount of foreign funding, HUF 20.2 million (2.9 per cent), came from the US Embassy. Additional funding was received during the period under inquiry from MitOst e. V., a Berlin-based NGO, which contributed HUF 18.8 million (2.7 percent). Based on the data available, the proportion of funds from abroad, but coming to Debrecen from a domestic member of the Soros network, roughly covers the remainder, so it can be said that the network organisations in Debrecen receive almost exclusively foreign funds, either directly or indirectly. In addition, the direct “micro-donations” distributed by the Ökotárs Foundation under the EU CERV programme are considered domestic funds.

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The bulldozing tactics of pressure organisations

From 2016 onwards, the network actors' goals have become clearly political², as their mission has changed: to crowd out political representation perceived as hostile from local governments, and then from the parliament. The network actors have changed gear: from soft power to hard power. The network press has given voice to the social and political conflict-generating issues they have built, making local political pressure organisations the main means of bulldozing the public sphere and crowding out the opponent's agendas and issues ahead of the parties allied with the foreign interest groups supporting them.

The subordinate organisations funded by the network and their staff are prepared to implement the tactical elements through training programmes. They then exert pressure on local government bodies and the societies of rural cities through activist recruitment, abusive requests for public interest data, a series of local referendum initiatives, ongoing social media and press campaigns, and street demonstrations in conjunction with parties with country-wide coverage. Using this system, they secure the narrative advantage that the debates and clashes are not between competing parties in the first instance, but – in a manner that seems disproportionate from the outside – between “civil society actors” and the political forces in power, perceived as oppressive. They present their activities as a noble cause, David's battle with Goliath, in an attempt to divert attention from the intentions of the foreign great power financiers, which can be political, social and economic.

It is this prepared, cultivated ground that the parties invade, thereby gaining a disproportionate presence and activist capacity in relation to their social support. This leads to the systemic anomaly that the network's foreign funders directly and indirectly finance the campaigning activities of parties.

² In 2016, Bernadett Sebály from the Civil College Foundation gave a presentation on the pretext of community organisation at the event of the Hungarian European Women's Forum Association. As one of the network's leading coordinators, she said that after the change of government in 2010, they decided to take a different direction and abandon their “compromise-seeking” approach.