

## **Hungary's Sovereignty Protection Office targets Transparency International Hungary with investigation**

*- Transparency International Hungary's press release -*

Budapest, June 25, 2024

The Sovereignty Protection Office (SPO), on the 18th of June, formally notified Transparency International Hungary about "initiating a specific - and comprehensive - investigation" into our activities. The SPO said its move was based on an allegation that we are engaged in, and are supporting activities that are funded from "subsidies from abroad" and that "influence the decisions of the electorate". The SPO posed a total of 62 questions in their six-page official letter, giving us thirty days to respond.

Regarding this unexpected development, we would like to recall the position that we, together with other NGOs, have represented since the adoption of the Law on the Protection of National Sovereignty (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). We hereby reiterate our position that this law serves the intention of the government to intimidate citizens and civil organizations that are critical of the government, while it is disguised as allegedly protecting national sovereignty – this is against the Constitution of Hungary, as well as the fundamental values of the European Union. Our position is in line with the opinion of the European Commission, which started an [infringement procedure](#) against the Hungarian government in February.

Transparency International Hungary believes that it is no accident that our organisation has been targeted by the SPO. As a non-governmental organization fighting corruption, the success of our investigative, analytical and legal work, and perhaps even our mere existence threatens the regime of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who has been leading the most corrupt government in the European Union.

The investigation of the SPO is completely ill-founded and wrong. We consider the operation of the office, as well as the law establishing it, to be unconstitutional. Nevertheless, as an NGO thoroughly committed to transparency, we will respond to the questions by the office, within the given deadline. It must be noted, however, that had it paid a little more attention, the SPO could have noticed that the answers to most of their questions are available on our website and in our publications, accessible to everyone.

Transparency International Hungary considers the establishment and operation of the SPO, along with several provisions of the Law on the Protection of National Sovereignty to be incompatible with the Hungarian Constitution. Therefore, we have filed a constitutional complaint with the Constitutional Court, arguing that it is a violation of the fundamental right to a legal remedy and a fair trial that people and organisations subjected to the SPO's procedures cannot seek judicial or other legal remedies against the actions and declarations of the SPO. Furthermore, we believe that the investigation into Transparency International Hungary's activities is due to our marked criticism of the SPO, indicating that the procedure of the SPO violates the freedom of expression.

The letter we received from the Sovereignty Protection Office can be found [here](#), and the constitutional complaint submitted by Transparency International Hungary can be found [here](#).

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