



Solidarity with Hungarian social workers and the Hungarian professional association 3Sz and its member organisations

The Executive Board of the German Association for Social Work (DGSA) has repeatedly spoken out against restrictions on democracy and attacks on professional social work in Europe. The introduction of a care policy with training programmes that deviate from professional standards, and the defamation of civil society organisations, are alarming signs of an intensifying authoritarian trend. In view of the planned parliamentary vote on a new ‘agent law’, we reaffirm our solidarity with our colleagues in Hungary and support their demands.

The Hungarian governing coalition Fidesz-KDNP is seeking to impose comprehensive restrictions on civil society organisations with its planned ‘Sovereignty and Transparency Act’. If this law is passed, NGOs – including professional social work associations – could be defamed as foreign agents, registered, and threatened with massive sanctions. A newly created ‘sovereignty protection authority’ would impose upon them extensive controls and restrictions. Our Hungarian colleagues and human rights organisations warn of the dangers to democracy, freedom of expression and to the professionalisation of social work in Hungary.

Social work is based on the work of diverse (types of) organisations that is measured against professional standards. Small, independent social work organisations often emerge from civil society engagement and provide new impetus. Social workers and organisations in Hungary are already under increasing pressure. The passage of the draft law in parliament would represent a massive encroachment on the independence and capacity of social work in Hungary. The DGSA Executive Board stands alongside professional social workers, social work researchers and trade unionists in Hungary.

- For the protection of human rights and the independence of social work: We call on the Hungarian government to respect the international definition and ethics of social work and to guarantee the free exercise of the profession.
- For the protection of civil society organisations: Democracy thrives on critical voices and independent associations. The blanket defamation as ‘foreign agents’ and the impending legal restrictions are unacceptable.
- For international networking and support: We call on our members and all partner organisations to continue to show solidarity with colleagues, associations and professional societies and to publicly address developments in Hungary.

Solidarity among social workers is a fundamental basis for asserting common interests and driving social change. 3Sz, the Hungarian Union of Professional Organisations in social services, is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. The DGSA Executive Board stands firmly alongside Hungarian social workers and their professional associations. We would like to thank all colleagues who, despite

difficult conditions, are committed to defending social justice and fundamental democratic values, and we assure them of our continued support.

On behalf of the Executive Board of the German Society for Social Work,

Prof. Dr. Claudia Steckelberg

Prof. Dr. Christian Spatscheck

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The **German Society for Social Work (DGSA)** is the scientific professional association for social work and represents around 1,500 members. Founded in 1989, it is dedicated to promoting the discipline and profession of social work. The board members are: Prof. Dr. Claudia Steckelberg and Prof. Dr. Christian Spatscheck (chairs), Prof. Dr. Stefan Borrmann (secretary), Prof. Dr. Kathrin Aghamiri, Prof. Dr. Miriam Burzlaff, Prof. Dr. Julia Franz, Prof. Dr. Anne van Rießen (assessors) and Wolfgang Antes (treasurer).

(Translation from German: Júlia Wéber, Neubrandenburg University of Applied Sciences; Editing: Tim Morley)