

The Civil Advocacy Network – for protecting the rights of civil organizations that provide social services for disabled people – **C.A.N.** operates in Hungary since 2006 and is a bottom-up collaboration of civil organizations dedicated to provide social services to disabled people nationwide. Comprised of 66 organizations, today it is able to participate in helping the lives of nearly 5000 disabled people. The main goal of the network is to improve the efficiency of protecting and representing the rights and interests of civil organizations that help disabled people. It aims to reach a level where civil providers are able to operate their services under the same conditions with the government and church run institutions. The purpose is to achieve a system where all types of providers have equal opportunities in service operations by functioning under the same material and personnel conditions.

In Hungary state aid is regulated by the Finance Law. In September 2012, C.A.N. and its partner organizations had to face the fact that in the amendments nr.T/7655 of the Finance Law 2013 does not contain state aid in any form, nor does it appear in any budget line or figure listed for civil providers. Therefore C.A.N. sent multiple letters to the Ministry of Human Resources, the Ministry of Government Administration and Justice, the Ministry of National Economy and all respective ministries, ministers and state secretaries. The intention was to initiate dialogue and learn about the plans of the government for the civil institutions in the year of 2013, whether they will receive any state aid or there will be no support provided for them in any form. Unfortunately there was no response communicated in return. C.A.N. tried to schedule an appointment through phone calls, but neither answer nor meeting date was given.

C.A.N. set up a general meeting, where more than 50 percent of the members participated and agreed on striving together for the survival and maintenance of the institutions established and operated by the civil organizations. They collectively agreed that the government along with the leadership of the country do not see the homes and their beneficiaries therefore they do not see the importance of their activities. They agreed on the necessity of a demonstration which makes them visible.

A decision was made that for a period of two weeks, there will be various organizations coming each day to visit the Parliament personally – scheduling appointments for tourist visits as private individuals - presenting their disabled members in visibility vests.

The campaign was launched on November 12, 2012. Its motto: *“Disabled people shall be LINEless and LIFEless together with all the Hungarian civil social providers who care for them with exemplary proficiency and efficiency.”* The majority of organizations rented buses to travel to Budapest each day with approx. 40-80 disabled people: blind, deaf, autistic, intellectually disabled and people in wheel chairs arrived together with their helpers to walk through the Parliament in visibility vests. The activity was coordinated by 4 volunteer young people, who were there during the whole day escorting, waiting and directing them. After the visit photos were taken of them in front of the office building of the Hungarian Parliament, holding a sheet of paper in their hands saying: “I am not invisible”.

In order to organize this demonstration, C.A.N. requested the permission of the Budapest Police Headquarters in advance and received authorization for the entire length of time since it was reported aforesaid. C.A.N. also reported that in case the visibility demonstration will not achieve its desired outcome, another public appearance is planned to take place on December 5, for the sake of presenting the importance of the institutions and services provided for disabled people by civil organizations.



Ministry of Human Resources and Civil Advocacy Network Agreed Public Press Conference

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www.kormany.hu

“People with disabilities do not need the visibility vest anymore in the future, because the decision makers see them!” Joint press release of the Ministry of HR and Civil Advocacy Network.

In the area of social service the non-government providers accomplish a work of great significance. A consistent and secure operation of their services are for the benefit of the whole society, therefore we consider it very important to provide a sustainable, transparent and reasonable financing.

In 2012 civil organizations receive more than 21 billion HUF normative financing for services provided in social, child welfare and child protection institutions. In the year 2013 the same financial source is available which is necessary for the secure and consistent operation of civil social providers. Along with the normative support, at the beginning of the year the ministry gave 400 million HUF special aid in order to grant secure operation for the civil sector.

This government provided first time 95 million HUF support on separated budget line for the institutions most in need that care for the autistic. Outside of the aids that are financed from domestic budget, the government is executing a much greater investment than before in order to improve the life situation of disabled people. Within the framework of the New Széchenyi Plan helping with nearly 40 billion HUF by means of tenders in the sector, from the early development to the employment of people with reduced capacity, via physical and info-communicational accessibility, including renovation and modernization of buildings.

Moreover, for each group of disabilities there are special tendering opportunities available in order to help them more effectively.” Said Miklós Soltész, Ministry of Human Resources, Minister of State with responsibility for Social, Family and Youth Affairs on the meeting held this morning in the Ministry together with the Presidency of Civil Advocacy Network Association.



Photo: Gergely Botár

Attila Fülöp, Deputy Secretary of State with responsibility for Family Affairs and for Politics for Equal Opportunities said the quantified amount of financing task per service that replaces the normative support will not be less, moreover, regarding certain services, the civil organizations may even plan with a greater amount in the future.

As it is known, the C.A.N. initiated dialogue with the Ministry by their lobby action called “We are not invisible citizens”, representing those 66 civil organizations that provide care for nearly 5000 people with disabilities, thus holding back families from drifting into extreme poverty and the exclusion of families who raise disabled people.

It is considered to be an important result that structures of still working families were spared, providing contributory and taxpayer citizens for the society.



Photo: Gergely Botár

Henriette Nelhübel, President of C.A.N. said she was satisfied with the results of the meetings. By this she sees the secure function of member organizations of the C.A.N for the year 2013.

The Office of the Secretary of State makes serious efforts that – in the narrow sense - the organizations which provide social services for disabled people - and in wider sense – the families that raise disabled people would continually receive professional care and the operation of institutions would be undisturbed.

The C.A.Network suspended their demonstration planned for December 5, 2012 at Kossuth square, until the Parliament's acceptance of the respective amendments.