



MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

DR. KRISZTINA BERTA

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R.u.r.: BM/14404-2/2015.

**To the Members of the Steering Committee, the
Members of the Criteria and Standards Subcommittee
and the Support Unit**

Budapest, 31 August 2015

With reference to the letter of concern submitted on 8 July 2015, I am sending the official response of Hungary attached to this letter.

In order to prepare a comprehensive response, I have contacted all authorities and ministries concerned. As you will see, the response consists of chapters that cover all main concerns of the letter of concern and its annex.

We find it important to highlight that while the letter of concern suggests that there is a general attack against civil society organizations in Hungary, the Government and the relevant public authorities only wished to examine the operation of a small group of civil society organizations against which a suspicion of mismanagement has risen. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that when we are discussing certain procedural steps and measures, they are related to a small group of NGOs and should not be understood as measures affecting the civil society in general.

The annex of the letter of concern implies non-existing causal links and undue treatment but falls short of voicing factual and concrete accusations and of recommending viable steps that could be taken by the Government. The letter asks the OGP to call on the Government to stop investigation and on-going court procedures. Clearly, criminal investigations and court proceeding are subject to the law and the relevant authority or court, and therefore, its termination cannot be ordered by the Government.

We believe that a balanced assessment of the everyday operation of civil society organizations and the cooperation and relationship between the Government and civil society organizations can only be made through careful examination of the facts, the relevant legal provisions, and the opinions of all stakeholders. We also hold that judging the lawfulness of coercive or other legal measures ordered and executed during a criminal procedure is exclusively a question of legal interpretation and not one relating to public politics. Thus, we hope that the attached detailed response will help to resolve the disputed issues and will explain key legal and circumstantial factors that were not considered in the letter of concern.

The Government of Hungary, as it has been before, is open and ready for a constructive dialogue but refuses to be depicted as an actor whose aim is to squash civil society organizations.

Should there be a need for further clarification or additional information regarding the Hungarian response or any other related issue, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,


Krisztina Berta

