



**OPENING DOORS  
FOR EUROPE'S CHILDREN**

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**STRENGTHENING FAMILIES. ENDING INSTITUTIONAL CARE.**

**HUNGARY**



## **2018 COUNTRY FACT SHEET**

For the last 30 years, deinstitutionalisation (DI) has been part of the Hungarian child welfare and protection system. During this time, there have been significant developments in family- and community-based care. However, children in Hungary are still entering care principally because of poverty and due to the lack of community-based preventive and early intervention services. 36,1 % of Hungarian children are living at risk of poverty and/or social exclusion and 40,000 to 50,000 children are regularly or occasionally starving. Hungary is one of the 12 Member States that was recognised by the European Commission as a country with the identified need for deinstitutionalisation reform. However, Hungary's Action Plan for Social Inclusion does not include measures for the transition from institutional to family- and community-based care. Civil society in Hungary is concerned that the EU funds for deinstitutionalisation of children are not used towards strengthening the child welfare system, strengthening families, gatekeeping or reunification efforts but prevailingly for the modernisation of children's homes, building smaller institutions or placement into foster care.

According to the Ombudsman, 36,1% of children aged 0-17 years old are at risk of poverty and social exclusion<sup>1</sup> and 30% of the children are separated from their families for financial reasons<sup>2</sup>. However, the support services in the community are severely under-resourced and often non-existent, especially in rural, remote and poor areas where needs are the highest. Local authorities tend to refer clients to institutional care – under the financial authority of national Government – rather than invest in community-based services.

<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People\\_at\\_risk\\_of\\_poverty\\_or\\_social\\_exclusion](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion)

<sup>2</sup> Presentation of Dr. Zsuzsanna Györffy at the Child Rights Conference of the Ombudsman's Office, 16 November, 2017, Budapest

## KEY RECOMMENDATION TO THE EU



**TAKE ACTION TO INTRODUCE INDEPENDENT MONITORING ON THE USE OF EU FUNDS BASED ON A UNIFIED METHODOLOGY FOR THE OUTCOME MEASUREMENTS BY DESIGNATED INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS, SERVICE USERS AND NGOS WITHOUT RELYING ON THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S JUDGMENT AND NOMINATION OF THE EVALUATORS**

Although foster care is widespread – over 60% of children in alternative care lived in foster families in 2016, their support and remuneration is very limited. Often the allowance provided for children is not covering even the basic needs of children.

As part of the deinstitutionalisation reform, Hungary established approximately 400 small group homes (SGHs) across the country. Each SGH has a capacity to accommodate 12 children. It is of concern, though, that the majority of SGHs are located in remote areas with no proper transportation and opportunities available for children to access basic services or mainstream/vocational education.

There is a lack of special programmes or adequate equipment to address children's complex developmental needs. Other factors such as proximity of a facility to the biological family are not taken into consideration and make reintegration even more difficult.

In many instances, staff in the SGHs is underqualified, staff numbers fluctuate, supervision of staff is needed and the burnout rate is high. Given the low standard of care, children often run away. The prevalence of violence and substance abuse are also widespread.

In 2017, Hungary issued two calls for proposals for children's deinstitutionalisation under the Operational Programmes focusing on the "replacement of children's homes, resettlement of children's homes and modernization of children's home". Despite the existing challenges regarding small group homes for children as described above, the Hungarian government seems to continue investments in this form of alternative care. The "Compass – Home for Children" (EFOP-2.1.1-16-2016-00009) project involves increasing child protection services from 600 to 800. The first infrastructure development under this project – a "20-person special home for children" consisting of three housing units for the education of boys with various psychological problems – will be completed by 2019.

## KEY RECOMMENDATION TO THE MEMBER STATE



**TAKE ACTION TO ELABORATE A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY ON DEINSTITUTIONALISATION OF CHILDREN, IN LINE WITH THE UN GUIDELINES ON ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR CHILDREN AND THE COMMON EUROPEAN GUIDELINES ON TRANSITION FROM INSTITUTIONAL TO COMMUNITY-BASED CARE**



**CSALÁD, GYERMEK, IFJÚSÁG**  
**KIEMELKEDŐEN KÖZHASZNÚ EGYESÜLET**  
**FAMILY CHILD YOUTH ASSOCIATION**

## OPENING DOORS NATIONAL COORDINATOR IN HUNGARY

Family Child Youth Association since its foundation in 1993 has been supporting the rights, welfare, and protection of children and family strengthening, helping professionals, raising awareness, conducting research and publishing materials accordingly. Participating in several EU and domestic projects, providing training, adapting good practices, translating and publishing materials in different related areas. To find out more visit [www.csagy.hu](http://www.csagy.hu)

The Opening Doors for Europe's Children campaign supports national efforts to develop child protection systems that strengthen families and ensure high-quality family and community-based alternative care for children, by leveraging EU funding and policy and building capacity in civil society.

It is a partnership between 5 international organisations and civil society across 16 European countries. For more information go to [www.openingdoors.eu](http://www.openingdoors.eu)