

THE SOCIETY OF HUNGARIAN AUTHORS

Introduction

The Society of Hungarian Authors is currently the biggest and most prominent **independent literary association** in Hungary.

History

The Society was **established in 1997** to promote contemporary literature and democratic cultural policies. Its almost 400 members include some of the internationally most acclaimed Hungarian **writers as well as cultural journalists and cultural managers** from across Hungary, and also writers and critics of the Hungarian minorities and diasporas, along with international translators and scholars of Hungarian literature.

Members

Among the original members of the Society you can find **Imre Kertész, Péter Esterházy** or **Magda Szabó**, today we are representing such internationally well-known and established authors as **Péter Nádas, György Dalos, György Dragomán, Krisztina Tóth, István Kemény, Pál Závada** or **Orsolya Karafiáth** with many others.

BACKGROUND

One-window system

The majority of the Hungarian NGOs, companies from the cultural field, as well as freelancer artists apply to the National Cultural Fund (NKA – Nemzeti Kulturális Alap) on a yearly basis being **the largest governmental distributor of a significant part of the state's annual cultural budget**.

Supposedly independent

Although the National Cultural Fund is a supposedly independent organisation which gets most of its annual income from the National Lottery PLT, also from application fees, the decision maker "professional" committees are **mostly consist of delegates in the favour of FIDESZ cultural policy**, and despite the ever-growing money circulation of the national lottery the Fund **constantly decreasing the budget** of the different departments.

Opposition dried out

The above mentioned tendencies perfectly fit the efforts of the current Hungarian cultural policy to financially "dry out" the openly oppositional cultural NGOs while seemingly playing by the rules of democracy, free speech and the freedom of culture. This way **the economic decisions turn into political decisions** which obviously effect the everyday life of the Hungarian cultural field in general, **most heavily the independent sector**.

CURRENT SITUATION

33%

In 2022 the National Cultural Fund radically reduced the funding of the Society of Hungarian Authors **leaving the organisation with about 33% of its usual annual budget and even blocked the bank transfer for 6 months** reasoning with the then started economic crisis. With the help of some of our ongoing international projects, a local fundraising campaign, as well as local and international donations the board managed to save the Society from bankruptcy and kept the everyday operation alive.

0%

Receiving the latest news from NKA's literature committee meeting the board of the Society learned that for the year **2024 our budget will be cut entirely** creating a most likely impossible task for the Society to even survive. We have a strong belief that the **Hungarian government uses this situation to eliminate local independent civil societies, and the decision of giving the Society zero state fund is an obvious and open attack against the independent cultural scene of Hungary.**

Short & long-term solution

In the previous years realizing **the possible political and economic threat from the current Hungarian cultural policy** the board of the Society has been focusing more on private donations and international projects to save our operation. But still, an organization with this size and national and international importance **cannot survive without local Hungarian state funding.** Or at least this is what we have learnt until this point. But the given situation is different now we have an urgent need to look for other solutions. If there is a real need in the Hungarian and also European cultural field to have a 400 members representation of locally and internationally well-respected authors, the Society of Hungarian Authors **need to cut its strings completely from the current Hungarian cultural policy and turn into be a regional-based but internationally operating organisation.**

The Society of Hungarian Authors is looking for ideas, moral support, opportunities, short-term projects, instant accessible funds that can lead us through this situation and help us taking the next and necessary step towards being totally independent from the current national political-cultural power of our country.

FIGURES/ ECONOMICAL NEEDS

Minimum budget of safe operation / Average governmental funding in the past 3-5 year

Expense	Description	EUR/month	EUR/ year
Management	Board	500	6.000
Assistance	Administration, communication	300	3.600
Accountant	Bookkeeping, administration	200	2.400
Rent	Rent of seat, event venues	150	1.800
Programs	Artist fees, expert fees	950	11.400
Travel costs & accommodation	Local and international events	200	2.400
Other	Technical support, mailing, other supplies	200	2.400
TOTAL			30.000

Estimated non-governmental incomes for 2024 (EUR)

Membership fees	2.500
Private donations for Annual Awards	4.000
Other private donations	5.000
Ongoing international projects	5.000
TOTAL	16.500

CONTACT

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