

Act LXXXIX of 2023 on the Hungary Helps Program¹

Effective: 21.12.2024 -

Hungary expresses its solidarity with those communities facing humanitarian crises or other situations threatening the basic conditions of human life and is committed to assisting them in a spirit of humanity. As a member of the international community, Hungary is committed to addressing global challenges, establishing, and maintaining peace and security, and ensuring sustainable economic development. Hungary must also contribute to reducing and preventing migratory pressures on Europe, while protecting the security of the Hungarian people.

Hungary is committed to ensuring religious freedom as a fundamental human right, which is also the basis for peace and security. The Hungarian Parliament has expressed its solidarity with religiously persecuted minorities around the world through the [Parliamentary resolution No. 36/2016 \(XII.19\)](#) on condemning the persecution of Christians and acts of genocide in the Middle East and Africa and support for the persecuted. Considering that Christian culture is the basis of Hungarian values, Hungary pays special attention to the support of persecuted Christian communities.

Bearing in mind the relationship between sustainable development, development cooperation, peacebuilding, and the prevention of conflicts and humanitarian aid, Hungary gives high priority to cooperation with developing countries and to supporting vulnerable communities directly and locally, which contributes to addressing the root causes of conflicts, as well as to increasing resilience to future crises and strengthening stability, thereby helping vulnerable communities to remain in their area and return to their homeland. Taking into account the country's carrying capacity, the Hungary Helps Program aims to integrate and coordinate Hungary's international development cooperation, international humanitarian aid and activities to strengthen the stability in vulnerable countries, with a view to complementing and supporting the implementation of these activities. The Hungary Helps Program enables the professional delivery of development cooperation and ensures that aid reaches the victims of humanitarian disasters and vulnerable communities quickly and efficiently. In view of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Union's development policy and humanitarian aid principles, and in order to ensure the effectiveness of Hungary's activities as a member of the international community in solidarity, in the framework of international development cooperation, international humanitarian aid and strengthening the stability of vulnerable communities, the National Assembly passes the following Act.

1. General provisions Section 1

- (1) Hungary shall implement its international development cooperation, international humanitarian aid and stability-building activities primarily through the Hungary Helps Program (hereinafter referred to as the Program).
- (2) Unless otherwise provided by law, the Program shall include all measures of Hungary which are part of official development assistance, and which are reported to the Development Assistance Committee (hereinafter referred to as DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (hereinafter referred to as OECD).
- (3) The Program also includes:
 - a) the implementation of Hungary's international development cooperation activities in accordance with its international obligations, reflecting its national interests, considering its foreign policy and external economic priorities,

- b) the implementation of Hungary's international humanitarian aid activities on the basis of international humanitarian law, international refugee law and international human rights conventions, in line with EU policies,
- c) the implementation of Hungary's stability-enhancing activities by providing assistance to vulnerable communities locally,
- d) in addition to humanitarian aid and international development activities, to implement all activities aimed at improving the situation of persecuted Christian communities, including research, documentation, awareness-raising, and information activities to this end.

Section 2

- (1) The provisions of this Act shall apply to the Program and, in the course of its implementation, to Hungary Helps Agency Non-profit Private Limited Company (hereinafter referred to as "Agency").
- (2) The provisions of this Act shall also apply to international development cooperation, international humanitarian aid and stability support activities by
 - a) public administration bodies,
 - b) public bodies falling within the central subsystem of public finances,
 - c) budgetary bodies managed by public bodies, and
 - d) other public law bodies.

Section 3

For the purposes of this Act:

1. *donation*: a grant, whether in cash or in kind, without consideration and without any obligation to account for or reimburse, awarded on the basis of an individual decision, for a specific purpose, in which case the beneficiary shall inform the Agency in writing of the results of the professional implementation.
2. *donation letter*: a unilateral legal declaration in writing to make a donation;
3. *grant for a specific purpose*: a grant which may be used exclusively for the purpose of achieving the objectives of the Program;
4. *protracted crisis*: a situation of protracted danger to the life, limb, health or livelihood of a community or other large group of people caused by recurrent or ongoing natural or civil disasters or by the combined effect of several civil crisis factors, in particular the collapse of livelihoods and the lack of institutional capacity to cope with the crisis;
5. *grant subject to accounting*: a grant made by the Agency from the Program's resources, subject to accounting, to ensure that the funds are used for the intended purpose;
6. *faith-based organisation*: organisations which organise or direct the religious activities of a Christian or other religious community, as well as international organisations with a religious commitment whose activities are aimed at providing humanitarian aid or strengthening stability in a vulnerable country;
7. *humanitarian crisis*: an emergency situation caused by a natural or civil disaster that poses a direct threat to the life, limb or health of a community or other large group of people;
8. *beneficiary*: in the case of a donation, the recipient of the donation; in the case of a grant subject to accounting, the recipient of the grant;
9. *non-monetary benefit*: the transfer, assignment, or transfer for use, whether permanent or temporary, of a transferable item of pecuniary value, an intellectual creation or a right of pecuniary value, in whole or in part, or the provision of services, including technical assistance, advice, training or the organisation of an event, which may be provided free of charge or for no consideration, including the organisation of a procurement procedure;
10. *international development cooperation*: assistance provided to beneficiary partner countries which are eligible for official development assistance on the basis of the OECD DAC list of eligible countries, through the means specified in this Act, with the aim of combating poverty and promoting human and minority rights, sustainable development, international security, and stability, excluding the tasks arising from Hungary's international financial relations;
11. *international humanitarian aid*: contribution to saving human lives and alleviating suffering in humanitarian crises, humanitarian emergencies and protracted crises caused by natural and civilisational disasters;
12. *voluntary contribution*: any contribution, whether in cash or in kind, made voluntarily to the Agency on the basis of an offer by a natural person, whether national or foreign, a legal person other than a central budget body or an entity without legal personality, which may be used to provide donations and grants;

13. *stability-enhancing activities*: helping vulnerable communities to remain in their areas, contributing to Programs and projects aimed at restoring and improving living conditions, protecting freedom of worship, and promoting spiritual and built cultural heritage;
14. *support*: a grant, whether in cash or in kind, awarded to a beneficiary for a specific purpose, without compensation or reimbursement and subject to an obligation to accounting, on the basis of a legal act or an individual decision, by means of a call for proposals or outside any other tendering procedure;
15. *technical assistance*: a non-monetary grant awarded within the framework of the Program, in particular for research, education or training activities, professional advice and expert cooperation, support for information and cooperation activities, support for tasks relating to the communication and publicity of the Program, support for tasks relating to the implementation, evaluation, audit, monitoring and followup of the activities supported;
16. *religious institution*: a social organisation which organises or manages the religious activities of a Christian or other religious community;
17. *vulnerable communities*: people and communities in need who are exposed to humanitarian crises caused by natural and civilisational disasters, persistent poverty caused by climatic and economic conditions, or persecution or discrimination.

2. Coordination and implementation of the Program

Section 4

- (1) The Program and the activities set out in Section 3 shall be coordinated by the Minister responsible for Assisting Persecuted Christians and Implementing the Hungary Helps Program (hereinafter referred to as the Minister).
- (2) The Minister shall perform the tasks related to the donations and grants subject to accounting provided under the Program through the Agency.
- (3) State bodies, central budgetary bodies, public corporations included in the central sub-system of public finances, budgetary bodies managed by public corporations and other public law bodies (for the purposes of this Chapter hereinafter referred to as "Organisations") may, in accordance with the rules of public finances, perform their tasks relating to donations and grants in the framework of their statutory activities in the field of international development cooperation, international humanitarian aid and stability-building through the Agency.

Section 5

- (1) The Government shall operate an interministerial committee to coordinate the Program and ensure the coherence of policies for development.
- (2) In order to plan the Program and ensure policy coherence for development, the Minister shall, in cooperation with the ministries concerned and in consultation with civil society, prepare a policy strategy for a period of at least four years, within the framework of which geographical and sectoral priorities for international development cooperation activities shall be defined.
- (3) In the course of the coordination of international humanitarian aid, the Minister pays particular attention to the implementation of the international humanitarian aid strategies and policies adopted by the Government.

Section 6

- (1) In implementing their international development cooperation activities, the Organisations may cooperate with civil society organisations and other social partners, in accordance with the principle of social participation.
- (2) The Organizations may involve in the implementation of international development cooperation activities such economic operators that are engaged in practices that comply with international standards from the sustainability, environmental and social points of view and that operate in accordance with the principles of international development effectiveness.
- (3) In the case of international disaster assistance, the Minister responsible for disaster relief shall, in cooperation with the Minister, ensure coherence with international humanitarian aid.

3. International Development Cooperation

Section 7

International development cooperation (hereinafter referred to as cooperation for the purposes of this Chapter) shall be implemented through accountable, transparent, and traceable use of resources, increasing the efficiency of their use and ensuring the sustainability of the means and methods used for their implementation and the results achieved, primarily through bilateral or multilateral cooperation with beneficiary partner countries, faith-based organisations and other economic operators.

Section 8

(1) Cooperation shall be implemented by means of grants, grants subject to accounting, non-repayable aid, and soft loans.

(2) Hungary may also implement its cooperation through membership fees and voluntary contributions to international organisations and funds for international development.

Section 9

(1) Cooperation shall be implemented in accordance with the needs, requirements and development objectives of the beneficiary partner countries and may complement their own efforts.

(2) In view of the reciprocal nature of cooperation, support may be provided within the framework of cooperation for programs and projects which serve to fulfil Hungary's international development commitments, and which also generate domestic economic, and trade stimulating effects or otherwise provide benefits for Hungary.

4. International humanitarian aid

Section 10

(1) International humanitarian aid (for the purposes of this Chapter, hereinafter referred to as aid) may be provided during a humanitarian crisis, in accordance with the needs of the situation, irrespective of the social, economic, and political conditions of the country receiving the aid.

(2) When providing the aid, the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence shall be respected.

Section 11

(1) The aid shall be provided by means of a donation made on the basis of a letter of donation.

(2) Hungary may also provide aid through membership fees and voluntary contributions to international organisations and international humanitarian aid funds.

Section 12

(1) When providing aid, the needs and requirements arising from humanitarian crises and protracted crises caused by natural and civilisational disasters shall be considered.

(2) Donations may be granted in the framework of providing aid in particular for the following purposes:

- a) purchase of equipment, goods, or services to respond to a humanitarian crisis or to mitigate the consequences of a humanitarian crisis,
- b) construction and temporary operation of crisis centres and refugee camps, and
- c) health care costs, in particular for the provision of medical and nursing staff, medicines, medical equipment and psychological treatment for traumatised victims.

5. Stability-enhancing activity

Section 13

Stability-enhancing activity (for the purposes of this Chapter, hereinafter referred to as activity) shall be implemented by ensuring transparent and traceable use of resources, increasing the efficiency of their use, and ensuring the sustainability of the tools and methods used for implementation and the results achieved, in particular by involving the beneficiary international and local organisations.

Section 14

- (1) The activity may be implemented by means of a donation made on the basis of a letter of donation or by means of a grant subject to accounting.
- (2) Donations under this activity may be made to regions where natural or civil disasters or social, economic, and political conditions prevent or significantly impede the provision of accountable aid.

Section 15

- (1) The activities are implemented in line with the needs and demands of vulnerable communities.
- (2) In particular, donations or grants may be made under this activity for the following purposes:
 1. reconstruction, renovation and operation of buildings and infrastructure destroyed by natural or civilisational crises, in particular hospitals, schools, built religious and cultural heritage, residential buildings,
 2. creation and operation of programs to help local communities to remain in their area,
 3. establishing and operating programs to assist the return of displaced families,
 4. provision and improvement of medical care, the procurement and delivery of medical supplies, goods, and services,
 5. provision of expert assistance,
 6. building and supporting health, training, and education facilities,
 7. education, training, advanced training and support for textbooks and teaching aids,
 8. provision of a scholarship program in Hungary,
 9. enforcement of human and minority rights,
 10. promoting the free exercise of religion and preserving the values of persecuted Christian and other religious minorities,
 11. protection of cultural heritage,
 12. activities to eradicate poverty,
 13. activities to create sustainable development,
 14. creation and implementation of vocational training and scholarship programs aimed at creating local employment,
 15. promoting international peace and security
 16. raising humanitarian and development awareness, and
 17. promoting interfaith dialogue and supporting the role of churches and faith-based organisations in conflict resolution.

6. Beneficiaries of the Program

Section 16

- (1) The beneficiaries of the program supported within the framework of international development cooperation may be partner countries or organisations of such countries that are eligible for official development aid as defined by the OECD DAC.
- (2) Beneficiaries of the program may be active in a country or region affected by natural and civil disasters or protracted crises, and may include:
 - a) religious, educational, child welfare, cultural and social institutions, NGOs, business associations, relief organisations and other local cooperatives,
 - b) foreign government bodies, and
 - c) regional, local or minority governments.

- (3) No grant or donation may be awarded to a person, group or other organisation which, through its links, activities or communications, may be associated with terrorism, war crimes, crimes against humanity, human trafficking, money laundering, illicit support for migration, or which is subject to an obligation to freeze funds or economic resources, or to an economic, commercial or financial embargo, declared in accordance with an obligation of Hungary under international law or imposed by an act adopted by the European Union.
- (4) The beneficiary shall declare before the aid is granted that it does not fall within the scope of Paragraph (3) and that the aid and the donation do not serve a purpose prohibited by Paragraph (3).
- (5) The beneficiary
- a) in the case of a donation, shall be obliged to inform the donor in writing, as specified in the donation letter, of the use to which the donation has been put and, if the beneficiary fails to comply with this obligation, the beneficiary may be required to repay all or part of the amount of the donation,
 - b) in the case of a grant subject to an accounting, to report and account to the grantor.

7. Resources for the Program and the Agency

Section 17

The Act on the Central Budget provides for the financial resources necessary for the operation of the Program and the Agency.

Section 18

- (1) The Minister shall make the funds available for the operation of the Program accessible to the Agency as a subsidy. The Agency may make payments to additional beneficiaries in the manner specified for each specific sub-task.
- (2) In terms of the reporting obligations relating to the subsidy referred in Paragraph (1) and the subsidy granted to the Agency by other budgetary bodies, the Agency may support its report with auditor's report instead of supporting documents.
- (3) The procurement and registration of non-monetary contributions and donations of assets under the Program may be made through the Agency .
- (4) For the purpose of implementing and financing the Program, the Agency may submit applications to international organisations, funds and organisations and funds of the European Union.

Section 19

The Agency may organise charitable, voluntary fundraising and other social Programs, international conferences, and events in order to achieve, finance and publicise the objectives of the Program. **Section 20**

The Program may be funded by a)

voluntary contributions,

b) central budget support,

c) financial contributions from European Union organisations, funds, other international organisations, and institutions,

d) grants from other states, foreign governments on the basis of a special agreement, and e) other revenue.

8. Raising international development awareness Section 21

The Minister, the Minister responsible for public education and the Minister responsible for higher education may cooperate in order to increase domestic social support for international development cooperation, international humanitarian aid and stability-building activities, in particular in raising the awareness of the young generation, strengthening the role of volunteering, and promoting education for global responsibility.

9. The Agency

Section 22

- (1) The Agency is a public benefit 100% state-owned non-profit private limited company with a public service mission, which performs the functions of a public body in the field of donations and grants subject to accounting under the Program.
- (2) The ownership rights over the Agency are exercised by the ministry headed by the Minister (hereinafter referred to as the owner).

Section 23

The CEO of the Agency or any person having an employment or other legal employment relationship with the Agency may not be a person who meets any of the conditions set out [in Section 48/B of Act CXCV of 2011](#) on Public Finances ([hereinafter referred to as Áht.](#)), or an officer of a political party or an organisation engaged in direct political activity.

Section 24

The Agency may provide donations and grants subject to accounting only with the prior approval of the Minister.

Section 25

- (1) Domestic natural persons, legal persons and organisations without legal personality may, on the basis of their voluntary contributions to the Agency, receive the benefits provided for in [Act LXXXI of 1996](#) on Corporate Tax and Dividend Tax and [Act CXVII of 1995](#) on Personal Income Tax for donations to public benefit organisations.
- (2) No political party or organisation engaged in direct political activity shall be entitled to provide the Agency with a donation.
- (3) If data, facts, or circumstances indicating money laundering or the financing of terrorism emerge in connection with persons, organisations, and their benefits as referred to in Section 20 a), c) or d), the Agency shall not accept the contribution.
- (4) If a voluntary contribution offered or conditioned for a specific purpose does not correspond to the purpose of the Program, the Agency shall reject it and return the voluntary contribution accepted.
- (5) If a voluntary contribution offered or conditioned for a specific purpose has been accepted, but it is impossible to use it in accordance with the instructions of the provider of the voluntary contribution, the Agency shall request a new instruction from the provider of the voluntary contribution, stating its proposal for use. In the absence of further instructions, the Agency shall return the voluntary contribution less the Agency's certified costs.
- (6) The Agency shall record the following data relating to the persons referred to in Section 20 (a), (c) and (d) and their contributions, in order to ensure that the contributions can be checked and, where appropriate, returned, as soon as the Agency becomes aware of them, and the following data are communicated by the provider of the contribution:
 - a) the name of the provider of the contribution,
 - b) the address or registered office of the provider of the contribution,
 - c) the telephone number and e-mail address of the provider of the contribution,
 - d) the tax identification number, tax number or other means of identification corresponding to the taxable status of the contributor,
 - e) bank details of the payment or transfer, in particular the name of the financial institution holding the account, the name of the payer or account holder, the amount of the benefit, the communication from the provider of the contribution,
 - f) instructions on how to use the contribution, and
 - g) any other information that the Agency considers necessary, other than personal data.
- (7) The Agency shall keep the personal data referred to in Paragraph (6) for a period of 5 years.
- (8) The provisions of Paragraphs (2) to (7) shall, as far as possible, also apply in respect of a non-monetary contribution offered without consideration by a person referred to in Section 20 (a), (c) and (d).

Section 26

Where the grants available through calls for proposals published by international organisations, funds and European Union bodies are subject to the provision of a co-financing, the Agency may submit the application subject to the approval of the holder of the ownership rights, including a commitment to provide a cofinancing.

10. Operation and tasks of the Agency

Section 27

The Agency shall perform certain tasks related to the provision of donations and grants subject to accounting, in particular it shall:

- a) assess donation and grant claims,
- b) prepare and implement donation programs and issue donation letters,
- c) prepare calls for proposals and deeds for grants subject to accounting,
- d) manage the application procedures,
- e) evaluate applications and grant requests,
- f) perform monitoring tasks related to the use of donations and grants made,
- g) enforce the rights deriving from letters of donation and deeds of grant subject to accounting,
- h) keep records of donations and grants awarded,
- i) perform the tasks related to scholarship programs,
- j) perform the duties relating to the management of receivables; and
- k) implement aid programs.
- l)
- m)

11. Transparency

Section 28

- (1) The Minister shall submit a report to the Government on the activities of the Agency in relation to international development in the previous year by 31 October of each year.
- (2) Once a year, the Government shall report to the Parliament on its activities carried out within the framework of international development cooperation once a year. The Agency shall publish the report on its website.
- (3) The Agency shall keep records of the beneficiaries of donations and grants, the claims and individual applications for donations and grants, and also the income and expenditure.
- (4) If the fulfillment of a request for access to data related to targeted benefits provided under the Program or legal transactions concluded under the Program
 - a) jeopardizes the enforcement of Hungary's foreign policy and foreign economic interests free from unauthorized external influence, or its national security interests, or
 - b) its defense intereststhe request for access to data meeting the conditions set out in this paragraph shall be denied for a period of five years from the date of its creation-
- (5) The decision on whether to grant a request for access to data shall be made
 - a) in regard to paragraph (4) a), by the minister responsible for foreign economic affairs,
 - b) in regard to paragraph (4) b), by the minister responsible for foreign economic affairs, after consulting the minister of defense.

Section 29

The economic operator involved in the implementation of international development cooperation activities shall be subject to [Section 3\(1\) \(1\) \(b\) \(ba\) of Act CXCVI of 2011](#) on National Property and [Section 50\(1\) \(c\) of the Public Finances Act](#).

12. Prequalified organisations Section 30

Prequalified organisations shall ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of the Program by their continuous availability.

Section 31

- (1) An organisation may be prequalified if it meets the following criteria:
 - a) it has been engaged in international humanitarian aid activities for at least five years and can provide evidence of its results,
 - b) has the human, technical and logistical capacity, and international experience to carry out international humanitarian aid activities,
 - c) is capable of permanent cooperation given its activities and organisation,
 - d) is considered a transparent organisation pursuant to [Section 3 \(1\) \(1\) \(1\) \(c\)\) of Act CXCVI of 2011](#) on National Property,
 - e) it has no public-law debt,
 - f) according to its articles of association registered with the court, fa) its scope is international, or fb) its object and classification according to its purpose are international activities.
- (2) An organisation providing international humanitarian aid may submit a declaration of intent to the Minister in order to be prequalified as an international humanitarian aid organisation.
- (3) The Minister shall issue a letter of classification to the prequalified organisation.
- (4) The chief executive officer of a prequalified organisation shall notify the Minister without delay if the organisation ceases to provide international humanitarian aid or does not meet the conditions set out in Section 33.

13. Final provisions

Section 32

- (1) The Government is empowered to establish the following by decree:
 - a) the forms of cooperation provided for in Section 6 (1),
 - b) detailed rules on the uniform formal requirements for the presentation of the Program, the elements of the uniform image and the use of the Hungary Helps trademark,
 - c) forms of international humanitarian aid activity,
 - d) the detailed rules for the prequalification procedure for organisations involved in the implementation of international humanitarian aid and the rules for the participation of prequalified organisations in international humanitarian aid; and
 - e) rules on the content of the application submitted, the costs eligible for budget support, the currency of the budget support and the closure of the supporting activity.
- (2) The Minister shall be empowered to establish the following by order:
 - a) the forms of international development cooperation activities,
 - b) the forms of activities to promote stability; and
 - c) the rules for reporting on the use of the donation and the measures to be applied in the event of noncompliance.

Section 33

This Act shall enter into force on 1 January 2024.

Section 34

The policy strategy pursuant to Section 5(2) shall be drawn up for the first time by 15 October 2025 for the period beginning in 2026.

Section 35¹

Section 36²

Section 37³

Section 38⁴

¹ Section 35 was repealed pursuant to Paragraph 12 (2) of Act CXXX of 2010.

² Section 35 was repealed pursuant to Paragraph 12 (2) of Act CXXX of 2010.

³ Section 34 was amended by Paragraph 207 of Act LXXXIV of 2024

⁴ Section 35 was repealed pursuant to Paragraph 12 (2) of Act CXXX of 2010.