

## Statement

### **Regarding intimidating political campaigns that violate children's fundamental rights**

The Hungarian Child Rights Coalition published and sent recommendations<sup>1</sup> to political parties participating in the elections and media representatives in January 2026 concerning political communication that respects children's rights. The recommendation drew politicians' attention to the fact that involving children in political campaigns is not self-evident, and **campaigns are primarily a space for adults**. Due to their age and development, children are not fully capable of assessing the significance and consequences of political messages. Children cannot be agents of political interests, and **campaign tools that build on fear, deterrence, violent, or traumatizing content should be especially avoided**, as children are particularly vulnerable due to their age.

We have observed with concern that political parties participating in the electoral campaign have essentially disregarded the coalition's recommendations in recent times, and children appear as tools of emotional manipulation during the campaign.

The Coalition already emphasized<sup>2</sup> the negative effects of war-themed posters on children in 2024, during the European Parliament elections. At that time, we did not imagine that the fear and traumatization of children could be intensified with a manipulative and intimidating, aggressive war-themed video created with artificial intelligence that seriously endangers children's emotional security.

On February 18, 2026, the Fidesz Budapest Facebook page shared a **video created with artificial intelligence in which a little girl's father is shot in the head at the front**. This intimidating campaign video can cause **significant psychological burden** for children, **increase their anxiety levels, and trigger lasting fear reactions**. All of this can undermine their sense of emotional security and adversely affect their mental well-being and development. The publication of the campaign video is **contrary to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19** of which states that every state has the obligation to take all necessary measures to protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect, or maltreatment.

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<sup>1</sup> Coalition recommendations for political communication respecting children's rights (January 2026) <https://gyermekjogicivilkoalicio.hu/gyermekjogi-nyilatkozatok/ajanlasok-politikai-kommunikaciohoz/>

<sup>2</sup> Coalition statement condemning war posters (2024) <https://gyermekjogicivilkoalicio.hu/a-gyermekjogi-civil-koalicio-tiltakozasa-a-haborus-plakatok-ellen/>

The Coalition's recommendation makes clear that **campaign messages that build on threats, deterrence, violent content, or emotionally burdensome content for children should be especially avoided.** Such communication directly increases children's anxiety, sense of fear and vulnerability, and indirectly increases social anxiety and aggression. The use of violent, intimidating campaign tools destroys children's emotional security and violates their fundamental children's rights. Adults who surround them, especially parents, can do the most against children's vulnerability. An honest conversation can help children become more resilient against manipulation and become responsible citizens.<sup>3</sup>

**Children are not tools:** neither in real form nor in artificially generated form can they be used for political campaign purposes. It is essential to emphasize that children generated by artificial intelligence are also capable of producing the same or very similar negative effects because they equally represent the objectification and exploitation of children.

**Children must have access to reliable information,** and false or distorted information generated by artificial intelligence also violates this right. Therefore, particular care must be taken to avoid manipulation affecting children and to ensure transparency. Campaign tools that intimidate children and increase anxiety cannot have a place in public spaces, media, or online platforms, on social media; these must be removed immediately. Tools that are contrary to children's rights and the most basic ethical norms cannot be accepted or supported.

**The Coalition therefore calls on the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights to issue a public statement** pursuant to Section 1(2)(a) of Act CXI of 2011 on the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, as the ombudsman responsible for the enforcement of children's rights.

**We call on political parties, nominating organizations, and candidates to comply with the basic rules of political communication that respects children's rights.** In particular, they should refrain from campaign tools that endanger children's mental health and safety. They should not use or share content, including videos generated by artificial intelligence, in which children appear or which are capable of having an intimidating effect on children.

**Children have the right to have their rights and human dignity respected even during the campaign period!**

Budapest, February 27, 2026

**On behalf of the organizations of the Hungarian Child Rights Coalition:**

- Bagázs Public Benefit Association
- Family, Child, Youth Public Benefit Association

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<sup>3</sup> See the Coalition's recommendations for parents regarding children's participation in political campaigns (January 2026): [https://gyermekjogcivilkoalicio.hu/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/GYJCK\\_ajánlások\\_szülőknek\\_kampány\\_20260113.pdf](https://gyermekjogcivilkoalicio.hu/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/GYJCK_ajánlások_szülőknek_kampány_20260113.pdf)

- Élményakadémia Association
- Főnix Movement
- Gyerekesély Public Benefit Association
- Hintalovon Children's Rights Foundation
- Igazgyöngy Foundation
- Jogismeret Foundation
- Kék Vonal Child Crisis Foundation
- Hungarian Helsinki Committee
- Hungarian Terre des hommes Foundation "Lausanne"
- Hungarian Women's Interest Advocacy Association
- Hungarian Pedagogical Society - Korczak Community of Child Protectors
- Women for Women Together Against Violence Association (NANE)
- Polgár Foundation for Equal Opportunities
- Rosa Parks Foundation
- Hungarian Association of Social Workers
- Social Professional Alliance (3Sz)
- Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (TASZ)
- UNICEF Hungary
- Validity Foundation
- Világszép Child Protection Foundation

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**As Observer Organizations:**

- Civil Public Education Platform
- Network of Human Rights Educators