

Report on the activities of the Equilibrium Institute in 2023

Towards a smarter, cleaner and
more successful Hungary



Equilibrium
Institute

Future for Hungary ▶▶

— Equilibrium Institute



DEAR FRIEND,

At the Equilibrium Institute, we believe it is important to **distinguish between the popular topics** that grab attention for a few moments, that are clickable in the 24/7 news cycle, that quickly trigger emotions and political passions, but that do not actually affect the future of our country, **and truly important policy areas**. That's why in 2023 we have again focused on the issues where we strongly believe that **good or bad decisions can be made now, in these months and years, that will have an impact for decades**. The advances in **artificial intelligence**, the changing global **energy market, inflation** at a high level compared to the last decade, **slowing** or even stagnating **economic growth**, the urgent need to adapt to **climate change**, and **the increasingly frequent - and spectacular - questioning of the post-Cold War world order** are all trends in the world today that will have a **profound impact on Hungary's medium-term destiny**.

That is why we have written and sent to all relevant **decision-makers a detailed package of policy proposals on renewing Hungary's energy system; on making Hungary a digital nation; on making our depopulating cities more attractive; and on strengthening Hungarian-owned small and medium-sized enterprises, which are key to improving our competitiveness**.

This is why we have prepared **our Megatrend Index in 2023 too**, which measures the successes and failures of Hungary compared to our competitors, modelled key macro trends in the Hungarian economy and **presented economic forecasts** on GDP, inflation, employment and the forint exchange rate, calculated **the costs of decarbonising Hungarian heavy industry** and **monitored the evolution of poverty in Hungary on a quarterly basis**.

The Equilibrium Institute turned three years old this **autumn**, but our mission has remained unchanged since our inception: ***“We are creating an alternative political-economic-cultural vision, and developing detailed policy proposals and strategies. We are in constant dialogue with key political, economic and cultural decision-makers. We will convince them of the importance of implementing our policy proposals and provide them with technical assistance.”***

This mission is, of course, carried out most of the time behind the scenes. **We meet with politicians from government and opposition parties, economic decision-makers, consult with experts and opinion formers, deliver hundreds of lectures and listen to hundreds of presentations**. But 2023 was more intense than ever: in a total of **33 cities in rural areas and in Budapest, 50 events and professional consultations were organised by the Equilibrium Institute**, and dozens of experts participated as speakers at conferences. **We were able to present our ideas** on education, the economy, health care and even suburbanisation to thousands of **people in person and hundreds of thousands through the media**. For the third year running, we held **our Hungary 2030 conference, which featured** opening speeches by key leaders of both the governing party and the opposition, symbolising an important core value of the Equilibrium Institute: the ability to engage in dialogue and peaceful disagreement.

We are honoured to see that more and more people are interested in us. **A dozen of our policy proposals have already been implemented at government or municipal level**. We already have more than **10,000 followers on so-**

cial media, and only in 2023 have we (also) been chosen as a **partner** by organisations such as **NATO, Google, the National Association of Entrepreneurs, the OTP Fáy András Foundation, the Association of Hungarian Local Governments, numerous Hungarian trade unions and NGOs, and dozens of independent think tanks abroad.**

In 2023, the Equilibrium Institute had a total of nearly 1,000 different TV, radio, online and print media appearances, including on Portfolio, Telex, 24.hu, Index, HVG, ATV, HírTV, Inforadio, county newspapers and Forbes.

We continue to believe that the most important source of our success is the **innovation created by our professional and value diversity.** In addition, our existing team has **been further strengthened in 2023, with new colleagues and advisors such as Diána Ürge-Vorsatz, one of Hungary’s leading physicist-climatologists, Vice-Chair of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and Réka Szemerkenyi, security policy expert and former Ambassador of Hungary to Washington.**

Please find below **our publication presenting the activities and achievements of the Equilibrium Institute in 2023.** We are pleased that we **have been able to maintain our full independence and the quality of our professional work in this increasingly difficult economic environment.** We appreciate any **feedback or suggestions you may have about our work.**

Thank you for your support, attention and ideas, and please follow us in 2024!

Best regards,

Tamás Boros

Executive Director of the Equilibrium Institute



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1. THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE'S POLICY PROPOSALS FOR 2023







In 2023, the Equilibrium Institute developed a set of **policy proposals on four broad themes** and presented its recommendations to decision-makers. Each policy publication is preceded by **many months of consultation with decision-makers and stakeholders**, taking care to incorporate relevant statistics, literature, the expertise of key experts and stakeholders on the issue, and the practical experience of stakeholders.

We always send our packages of proposals to the government, all opposition and governing party MPs, mayors, other political and professional decision-makers, and the media.

HOW CAN WE RENEW THE HUNGARIAN ENERGY SYSTEM BY 2030?

One of the most important European and national challenges of our century is to **ensure secure and sustainable energy**, which is essential for the economy and people's daily lives. As a result of economic growth and the technological revolution, the world, including **Europe and Hungary, is facing increasing energy demand**, while the main question of the present period is increasingly how to meet this demand. **The energy revolution and the green transition will bring about changes in the global economy on a scale comparable in importance only to the industrial or information revolution.** There are always winners and losers in such changes, and if Hungary wants to be in the former group, we need to accelerate the transition in the field of energy policy too - **which is why the Equilibrium Institute presented a package of policy proposals for a more sustainable energy strategy in 2023, following months of professional consultation and with the involvement of dozens of experts.**

In the package of proposals, we have sought and answered the following questions:

-  **What should be the mix of energy sources for electricity generation and final energy use in the next decade or two?**
-  **To what extent can we realistically increase the share of renewable energy in the energy mix over the next decade?**
-  **What to do with our high dependence on Russian gas?**
-  **What do we think about the future of nuclear energy?**
-  **How can we increase energy efficiency?**
-  **How can we prepare for the electrification that comes with decarbonisation?**

The Equilibrium Institute's key proposals for renewing Hungary's energy system:

▶ MORE AMBITIOUS EMISSION REDUCTIONS:

- ▶ Gas connections in new buildings should be banned from 2025 at the latest! By 2030, disconnect 200,000 households from the gas network!
- ▶ Radically reduce Russian nuclear dependence through alternative sources of supply!
- ▶ The Paks II investment must go ahead to guarantee our security of supply!

▶ THE INTENSIFICATION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY:

- ▶ Hungarian renewable energy law by 2024!
- ▶ Let's encourage the combined deployment of solar and wind energy with a targeted support scheme!

- ▶ Develop a national electricity storage concept!

- ▶ In the interest of sustainable geothermal energy use, we should not postpone the introduction of the obligation to inject back into the ground and develop multi-stage water recovery systems.

▶ REDUCING ENERGY DEMAND:

- ▶ At least 100,000 homes should undergo deep renovation every year!
- ▶ Encourage the spread of smart energy control systems!

▶ THE ELECTRICITY MIX IN 2030:

- ▶ By 2030, 30% of electricity used should come from imports, 36% from renewables, 28% from nuclear and 5% from natural gas.

Click on the QR code to download the full analysis in English!



I HOW TO HELP HUNGARIAN COMPANIES STRENGTHEN?

Our accession to the European Union has provided Hungarian businesses with an unparalleled breakthrough opportunity. Over the past two decades, Hungary has been one of the main beneficiaries of EU funds, while the state has also invested a significant amount of its own resources in enterprise development compared to other European countries. But the data so far show that we have failed to seize this historic opportunity. While **there has certainly been catching up, the productivity of domestic SMEs is still far below that of multinationals operating in**

Hungary or similar sized enterprises in the region, while very few domestic enterprises have managed to become international champions in a regional comparison. This is particularly surprising when we consider the amount of EU and budget resources we have spent on business support, or when we compare the extent to which Hungary has caught up with the progress of our closest regional competitors. **That is why the Equilibrium Institute has written a package of policy proposals to reform the state aid system.**

The Equilibrium Institute's key proposals to strengthen Hungarian companies:

▶ **LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT:**

- ▶ Consistent, intensive investment in the knowledge of Hungarians should become a priority national strategic goal!

▶ **INDIVIDUAL GRANTS:**

- ▶ Use the large individual grants for social and patriotic purposes - only support businesses in Free Enterprise Zones (FEZs)!
- ▶ Research and development funding should only be provided if domestic actors benefit from it!

▶ **GRANTS FOR A WIDER RANGE OF APPLICANTS TO STRENGTHEN HUNGARIAN SMES:**

- ▶ Lower funding rates in tenders - companies should be interested in their own success!
- ▶ Involve banks in the disbursement of subsidies!
- ▶ More public evaluation for redesignability!
- ▶ Let's use the resources of the EU cycles that are coming to an end to plan for the next period!
- ▶ Let's support companies in obtaining international certifications!
- ▶ Focus on long-term societal needs instead of sectoral focus!

Click on the QR code to download the full analysis in English!



I HOW DO WE BECOME A DIGITAL NATION?

This decade is about digital transformation: going beyond and building on the digitisation of data and operations, we need to thrive in a fundamentally new economic system and competition. It is not just about using our electronic devices and applications to do things more efficiently, but about the pervasive digitalisation that is radically transforming the way the economy and society works. **The spread of artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data and data science or cloud services** is creating new ways of creating value. New business models, new ways of doing business, new forms of services are emerging that require new skills and capabilities. Whether it's improving the customer experience, marketing or even the development and evaluation of new public policies by the state, the transformation will fundamentally affect every aspect of our lives. That is why **the Equilibrium Institute has written a package of policy proposals to accelerate Hungary's digital catch-up.** We organised a wide-ranging

consultation process, supported by Google, before and after the publication of the package.

The Equilibrium Institute's key proposals to accelerate Hungary's digital catch-up:

▶ **DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE:**

- ▶ Targeted, subsidised digital literacy development for those most in need!
- ▶ Reduce the IT skills shortage with a targeted scholarship programme!
- ▶ We encourage adults to take part in digital training with an individual training account and a tax credit!
- ▶ A digital literacy minimum at all levels of the education system!

▶ DIGITAL ECONOMY:

- ▶ **Mandatory digital minimum in business development!**
- ▶ **We provide targeted support to encourage digital development in small and medium-sized enterprises!**

▶ DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE:

- ▶ **Let's phase out the telecoms and utilities tax by 2024! In return, operators should make accountable, firm commitments to implement the necessary infrastructure improvements.**

▶ DIGITAL STATE:

- ▶ **Digital inclusion should be an institutionally reinforced public priority, with a clearly identifiable governmental representative!**

Click on the QR code to download the full analysis in English!



I HOW SHOULD WE MAKE OUR CITIES MORE ATTRACTIVE?

Urbanisation is a dominant trend in modern societies. However, between 1990 and 2022, the population of the Hungarian capital decreased by more than 300,000 and that of the other regional centres by around 200,000, with only four major Hungarian cities showing some growth. Current trends show that, without targeted public policy interventions, suburbanisation in Hungary, i.e. urban sprawl, shrinking centres and the expansion of single-function agglomerations with poor infrastructure, will continue in the coming decades. **The decline in the population of large cities is a process that goes beyond itself and has many unintended side effects, first and foremost:**

- ▶ **With the additional environmental pressures of increasing mass commuting.**
- ▶ **With the threat of urban slumming.**
- ▶ **With the deterioration of services in the big cities and their quality.**
- ▶ **The untapped potential of the urban 'cluster' of creativity.**




That's why the Equilibrium Institute has developed a package of policy proposals to tackle urban sprawl and make our cities more attractive.

The Equilibrium Institute's key proposals for making our cities more attractive:




▶ AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

- ▶ **Make the long-term rental of housing tax-free!**
- ▶ **Mandatory registration and form contracts in the private rental market!**
- ▶ **Tax permanently vacant dwellings and privately owned housing offices! Use the revenue to improve the municipal rental housing stock!**
- ▶ **Budapest should have a long-term tower block concept by 2028!**
- ▶ **Municipalities should increase the supply of housing by renting out permanently vacant properties!**

 **LIVEABLE CITIES:**

-  **Let's introduce clean zones in major cities!**
-  **Let's create greenways in Hungarian cities!**
-  **Let's set infrastructural minimum for major development projects**

 **INNOVATIVE CITIES:**

-  **Let's create Urban Development Centres in big cities for data-driven urban development!**
-  **Let's create community hubs for creativity and innovation clustering!**
-  **Let's increase the number of dormitory places by 50% by 2030!**

**Click on the QR code to download
the full analysis in English!**



2. CONFERENCES, POLICY PRESENTATIONS, CONSULTATIONS AND LECTURES OF THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE IN 2023

The Equilibrium Institute organised nearly 50 events and participated as a speaker in dozens of other conferences in 2023. We continued *our Hungary 2030 Club*, where leading politicians from the government and opposition parties in Hungary discuss the key policy challenges facing the country, convened our Economic Roundtable four times, where representatives of the most important sectors affecting the country's economy meet regularly, and organised events for dozens of mayors and leaders of domestic party foundations.

We met thousands of people in person and discussed the opportunities for Hungary's economic growth, strengthening the competitiveness of the Hungarian SME sector, the future of education, the acute issues of energy and climate change, the role of the state, digitalisation, suburbanisation and many other topics.

WE CONSULTED MORE THAN 500 ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DECISION-MAKERS IN 33 RURAL TOWNS

We continue to believe that **policy cannot be made without fieldwork and stakeholder involvement**. That's why in 2023, we continued our roadshow, **meeting more than 500 economic policy makers in 33 rural towns and cities**.





We consulted with local mayors, municipal representatives, business leaders and NGO leaders on three topics - the right division of tasks between the state and local governments, the development of the Hungarian SME sector, and energy saving and renewable energy. Our partners in the consultation series were the Association of Hungarian Local Governments (MÖSZ) and the National

Association of Entrepreneurs (VOSZ). As a result of the roadshow, we spoke to nearly 50 rural media, bringing the news of our policy proposals not only to national and metropolitan decision-makers, but also to decision-makers in the countryside. We thank our partners for their support in making our rural events happen.






I HUNGARY 2030 CONFERENCE

For the third time, the Equilibrium Institute organised its annual conference. At the event, we discussed Hungary's future with leading political and economic decision-makers.

The three main themes of the conference were the ideal energy mix for Hungary, digital literacy and improving the country's digitalisation, and the right role for the state in strengthening the Hungarian economy and Hungarian companies.

At the conference, we sought to answer the following questions:

-  What role do state and EU aid play in economic growth?
-  What is the ideal Hungarian energy mix?
-  How can Hungary become a digital nation?

In 2023, more than 150 leading political and economic decision-makers, ambassadors and journalists attended our event. The event was opened by Tibor Navracsics, Minister for Regional Development, Gergely Karácsony, Mayor of Budapest, and Tamás Boros, Executive director of the Equilibrium Institute.



These issues were discussed at the Hungary 2030 conference by well-known experts and decision-makers, such as Péter Lakatos, CEO of VIDEOTON; László Urbán, economist, banker, member of the Advisory Board of the Equilibrium Institute; Balázs Szepesi, economist, Head of the Mathias Corvinus Collegium's School of Economics and Entrepreneurship Research Workshop; Zsófia Beck, Managing Partner of Boston Consulting Group; Barbara

Botos, Travel Ambassador for Climate Affairs and Climate Diplomacy; **Diána Üрге-Vorsatz**, Vice-Chair of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and member of the Advisory Board of the Equilibrium Institute; **Pál Bíró**, Director of Google Hungary; **Ildikó Csejtej**, Director of the OTP Fáy András Foundation; and **Gabriella Vidus**, CEO of RTL Hungary.



The event was reported by [Telex.hu](#), [Portfolio](#), [Forbes Hungary](#), [Index.hu](#), [RTL Hungary](#), [Hirado.hu](#), [HVG](#), [Magyar Nemzet](#), [Világgazdaság](#), [Mandiner](#), [Népszava Online](#), [Magyar Hang](#), [HírTV](#) and others.



PANEL DISCUSSIONS WITH LEADING EXPERTS FROM HUNGARY PRESENTING OUR POLICY PROPOSALS

It has now become a **tradition to organise a panel discussion in the office of the Equilibrium Institute to coincide with the launch of each of our policies**. In 2023, we organised three such panel discussions, all of which received excellent media coverage.

▶ HOW TO RENEW HUNGARY'S ENERGY SYSTEM BY 2030?

Participants: Attila Holoda, energy expert, CEO of Aurora Energy Ltd; Dóra Csernus, Director for Climate and Environmental Policies at the Equilibrium Institute; John Szabó, research fellow at Institute of World Economics, KRTK; and Gábor Filippov, Research Director at the Equilibrium Institute.



Click on the QR code to read summary of the interview is available on Forbes (in Hungarian)!



▶ **HOW TO BE A DIGITAL NATION?**



Participants: Pál Bíró, Director of Google Hungary; Péter Csányi, Deputy CEO of OTP Bank, Head of the Digital Division; Krisztina Tajthy, Secretary General of IVSZ - Alliance for the Digital Economy and Gábor Filippov, Research Director of the Equilibrium Institute.

Click on the QR code to rewatch this discussion on our think tank's Facebook page (in Hungarian)!



▶ **HOW TO MAKE THE STATE MORE EFFICIENT?**



The participants were Éva Palócz, CEO of Kopint-Tárki; László Juhász, Managing Director of Boston Consulting Group; Géza Sebestyén, Head of the Economic Policy Workshop of Mathias Corvinus Collegium; Tamás Boros, Executive Director of the Equilibrium Institute and Gábor Filippov, Research Director of the Equilibrium Institute.

Click on the QR code to rewatch this discussion on our YouTube channel (in Hungarian)!



CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICY ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

▶ **NATIONAL ENERGY ROUNDTABLE**

The persistent rise in energy prices, the uncertainties in international markets caused by Russian aggression, economic stagnation and high inflation, as well as the increasingly visible effects of climate change have confirmed the Institute's view that **climate and energy policy is an inescapable priority policy issue in Hungary today.**







Therefore, on the initiative of the Association of Hungarian Local Governments, the National Association of Municipalities and the Association of Budapest Municipalities, we convened a series of professional consultations called the **National Energy Roundtable** to

propose solutions to the current energy market problems based on the knowledge of the most important professional and interest representation organisations and relevant market players.



The participants of the National Energy Roundtable reviewed the main short, medium and long term issues and worked together to develop a package of policy proposals that we put forward to decision-makers.

Proposals are set out below for six broad themes:

-  reducing the burden on local governments in the short term;
-  facilitating access to finance for local authorities;
-  institutional conditions for the long-term resilience of municipalities to crisis;
-  facilitate the spread of renewable energy sources;
-  encouraging investment in energy efficiency;
-  alleviate energy poverty.

The closing conference of the National Energy Roundtable was attended by **Gergely Karácsony**, Mayor of Budapest, **György Gémesi**, Mayor of Gödöllő, President of the Association of Hungarian Local Governments, and **Miklós Dukai**, State Secretary for Local Government, Ministry of Interior.



We presented the package of proposals to national and local policy makers in April 2023, in the hope that the measures will bring meaningful relief to local communities. Many of the proposals have been taken up by both government and local government leaders.

Click on the QR code to read the full package of proposals (in Hungarian)!



PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF ENERGY



We invited **Olga Khakova**, Deputy Director for European Energy Security at the Atlantic Council Global Energy Center in Washington, D.C., to Hungary to share her thoughts on the implications of the geopolitical situation since the Ukraine-Russia war for energy and climate policy. His interlocutors were **Diana Üрге-Vorsatz**, Vice-Chair of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group III, and **György András Deák**, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Strategic Defence Research, National University of Public Service. The discussion in English was moderated by **Dóra Csernus**, Senior Director of Climate and Environmental Policy at the Equilibrium Institute. The closed discussion was attended by dozens of decision-makers. We thank our partners for their support in making this event possible.

Click on the QR code to rewatch this discussion on our YouTube channel (in English)!



GREEN BONDS AND REDUCING EMISSIONS FROM HEAVY INDUSTRY

The Equilibrium Institute's project under the auspices of the European Climate Initiative (EUKI) is focusing on green bonds and reducing emissions from heavy industry in 2023.

Our consortium brought together decision-makers from the steel industry, construction, finance and government to discuss the potential of sustainable finance to reduce industrial greenhouse gas emissions. Following presentations by **our Director for Climate and Environmental Policies, Dóra Csernus, and our Chief Economist, Zsolt Becsey, Gábor Gyura, Sustainable Finance Advisor at the UN Environment Programme,** presented the opportunities of the green bond market. The discussion showed that in order to raise funds more effectively, the bidding culture in Hungary needs to be improved, and that it is advantageous for smaller companies to join forces in some form to enter the bond market.



The other participants of the discussion were **Barbara Botos** (Ministry of Energy), **Roland Fazekas** (Carboferr Kereskedőház Zrt.), **Gábor Gyura** (UNEP), **Bálint Szaniszló** (Erste Bank Zrt.), **Péter Kiss** (Amundi Fund Management Zrt.), **Tamás Tóth** (CIB Bank Zrt.), **Béla Váraljai** (ÓAM Ózdi Acélművek Kft.), **Zsigmond Pordán** (VOSZ), **Norbert Holczinger** (MNB).

At the end of the year, we organised another event to mark the end of the two-year project. At the professional

lunch, the Equilibrium Institute thanked the experts who had provided professional support throughout the project. **Following presentations by Tamás Boros, Director of the Equilibrium Institute and Dóra Csernus, Director of Climate and Environmental Policy, the participants again discussed the greening challenges and solutions related to heavy industry.**

The main conclusion of the discussion was that **decarbonisation of heavy industry would require a predictable regulatory environment, increased capacity to write tenders and a systematic industrial decarbonisation platform.** This is essential for the technology shift needed to green heavy industry, which is highly resource-intensive and therefore entails greater financial risk.

The panelists were **Barbara Botos** (Ministry of Energy), **Ferenc Galló and Ottó Magera** (SW Umwelttechnik Hungary), **Gábor Gyura** (UNEP), **Csaba Szabó** (MAVESZ), **János Hidi** (Cambridge Econometrics), **Roland Fazekas** (Carboferr Kereskedőház Zrt.), **László Sztankievics** (ÓAM), **Zsigmond Pordán** (VOSZ) and **Tamás Hoffmann** (Holcim Kft, Vice President of the Pécs-Baranya Chamber of Commerce and Industry responsible for the circular economy).

Click on the QR code to download the study (in English) prepared by the Equilibrium Institute in the framework of the project, which explores the possibilities of industrial decarbonisation in Hungary!



WE ORGANISED A SECURITY ROUNDTABLE WITH NATO

“NATO after the Vilnius Summit: an assessment from a Hungarian perspective” was the title of the second joint conference with NATO organised by the Equilibrium Institute. From the point of view of the immediate security and stability of Europe and the transatlantic community, few summits have had to answer more pressing questions than Vilnius. The discussion, jointly organised by NATO and the Equilibrium Institute, focused on whether the Vilnius Summit was indeed successful in providing strategic responses and whether it was indeed able to launch new processes to strengthen common security.



The discussion, which was attended by key Hungarian security policy makers and experts, therefore focused on two topics: the results of the Vilnius NATO Summit itself, and the consequences of the war in Ukraine and NATO’s reaction to the war in the Central and Eastern European region.



The event was attended by Gábor Gion, State Secretary for Strategic Planning and Human Resources of the Ministry of Defence, and Péter Sztáray, State Secretary

for Security Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Márton Ugrósdý, Deputy State Secretary; Tamás Harangozó, Member of Parliament; Márton Tompos, Member of Parliament; Lajos Kósa, Member of Parliament, Chairman of the Committee on Defence and Security; and Petr Lunak, Deputy Head of the Engagement Section at NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division, and experts Anton Bendarzsevszkij, Attila Demkó, András Rácz and Péter Tálás. The event was opened by Tamás Boros, Executive Director of the Equilibrium Institute. The roundtable discussion was moderated by Réka Szemerényi, Senior Advisor for Foreign and Security Policy of the Equilibrium Institute and former Ambassador of Hungary to the United States.



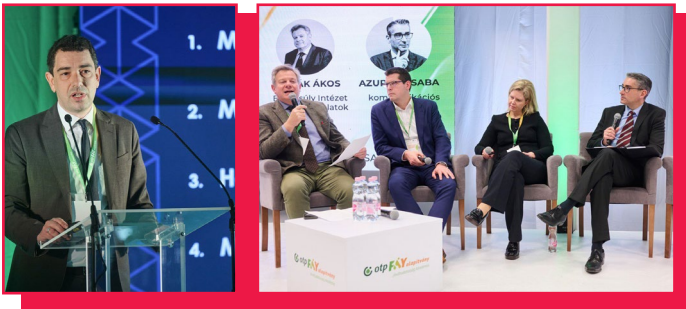
The event was streamed live on our Facebook page, with over 10,000 views. The press coverage following the event reached around 1 million additional readers.

Click on the QR code to watch the recording of the conference on our YouTube channel!



“EDUCATION AND COMPETENCIES OF THE FUTURE” CONFERENCE ORGANISED JOINTLY WITH THE OTP FÁY FOUNDATION

At the joint conference of the OTP Fáy Foundation and the Equilibrium Institute on the education of the future, we presented presentations by foreign and domestic experts on how technological development and globalisation are changing the expectations of the labour market. In this context, we presented how the purpose of education and learning may change in the future, and what development trends and transformations can be expected in education in Hungary and the world.



“The experience of the past decades shows that two factors can make a middle-income country stand out: finding oil or investing in education. The first is not an option for us, so the second way remains. Education is therefore not an end, but a means to become one of the richest countries,” said Tamás Boros, Executive director of our think tank, in his introductory presentation. *“We should not only compete in the number of Nobel Prize winners per capita, but also in the number of graduates per capita”*, concluded our Executive Director.

The key participants of the conference were **Lajos Aáry-Tamás**, Commissioner for Educational Rights; **Professor Auli Toom**, Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of Helsinki and President of the Finnish Association for Educational Research; **Michael Stevenson**, OECD Senior Adviser on Education; **Ildikó Csejtei**, CEO of the OTP Fáy Foundation; **Pál Bíró**, CEO of Google Hungary; **Péter Halácsy**, co-founder of Prezi and Budapest School; **Dr. Ilona Södervik**, Associate Professor of Digital Education at the University of Helsinki; **Ákos Kozák**, Director of Business Relations at the Equilibrium Institute; **Gábor Filippov**, Research Director at the Equilibrium Institute.



The conference was attended by hundreds of educators and economic and political decision-makers, and was covered by the country’s most influential media.

HOW TO MAKE THE STATE MORE EFFICIENT? PANEL DISCUSSION WITH EXPERTS FROM THE VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

For a stable democracy and the rule of law to work, the **state must be able to carry out its functions effectively**. Faced with the climate crisis, environmental destruction, digitalisation, robotisation and many new types of challenges, we must ask: **what is the role of the state in the 21st century? How can it fulfil its purpose most effectively? How do the Visegrad Group currently stand in terms of state efficiency and good governance?** These were some of the questions we sought to answer in our online round table discussion with our partners. Klára Votavová

(EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy), Maciej Sychowiec (WiseEuropa) and Ábel Ravasz (Matthias Bel Institute) wrote and spoke about the situation and challenges of the Czech, Polish and Slovak states.

Click on the QR code to watch the recording of the conference on our YouTube channel (in English)!



PRESENTATIONS BY THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE EXPERTS AROUND THE COUNTRY

In 2023, experts from the Equilibrium Institute will continue to be invited to give dozens of presentations at prestigious conferences.



In 2023, Tamás Boros was invited by the Smart Budapest Forum to give the opening keynote speech at the conference. In his speech, the director of the Equilibrium Institute spoke

about the threat of depopulation of Hungarian cities and the possibilities to prevent suburbanisation. *“Big cities and county capitals are more sustainable than suburbs - in Budapest, people consume much less energy, gas and electricity per capita than in the agglomeration and small towns, and they live 2-2.5 years longer than the national average,”* he said. For 2024, the Budapest Enterprise Agency has entrusted the Equilibrium Institute with the professional support of the Smart Budapest Forum.

Gábor Filippov, our Research Director, gave a presentation at the National Urban Conference, one of the most important multidisciplinary forums of the Hungarian urban development profession. The lecture and the subsequent round table discussion focused on the suburbanisation of Hungarian cities and the possibilities for the long-term development of Budapest. The presentation also included a presentation of the Equilibrium Institute’s policy proposal on suburbanisation. Other speakers at the conference

included Gergely Karácsony, the Mayor of Budapest; Dávid Vitézy, former State Secretary for Transport, and Balázs Fürjes, former Government Commissioner for Budapest Development.



The Equilibrium Institute has again supported the organisation of the Portfolio Sustainable World conference in 2023 as a professional partner, where Dóra Csernus, our Director for Climate and Environmental Policies spoke about the energy efficiency and emission reduction potential of buildings in the Green Infrastructure session. Further speakers were Ada Ámon (Budapest Municipality), Miklós Gyertyánfy (Granite Pole), Gábor Radványi (Futureal), Gábor Lévai (Green Brands Hungary).



The main topic of the conference, organised by the Association of Hungarian Local Governments, was the responsibility and scope of the government and local governments in the field of urban development. **Tamás Boros**, Executive director of the Equilibrium Institute gave a presentation entitled “How to make Hungarian cities

attractive”. The conference was attended by nearly 100 mayors and expert guests at the Royal Castle in Gödöllő.

Ákos Kozák, Director of Business Relations and Dóra Csernus, Director for Climate and Environmental Policies represented our think tank at the Jászság Managers Forum. In her presentation, Dóra Csernus stressed that the renewal of the Hungarian energy system is necessary not only for reasons of energy security, but also because of climate change.



Tamás Boros gave a presentation to trade union members on the possibilities of poverty reduction. The Executive director of the Equilibrium Institute spoke to 60 in-person and 40 online participants at a two-day professional conference of the Hungarian Union of Civil Servants and Public Service Workers (MKKSZ), where he presented the situation of poverty in Hungary based on the research of our think tank and the concept of automatic basic benefits proposed by our institute to replace the current social benefits. The aim of the conference, organised by MKKSZ was to demonstrate that a well-performing public administration is in the common national interest and that well-functioning public services and public administration are needed today more than ever.

Dóra Csernus, Director for Climate and Environmental Policies at the Equilibrium Institute participated in the 17th Annual Conference of Competitiveness Operational Programmes, which focused on the role of cohesion policy in the sustainability and digital transition in 2023. Moderated by Mandy Fertetics, corporate sustainability and responsibility expert, the event featured a fascinating

discussion on the integration of sustainability in corporate operations with Francisco Moraes Leitao Campos, Senior Economist at the World Bank, Gábor Orbán, CEO of Richter Gedeon Nyrt. and József Török, Investment Director of Blue Planet Venture Capital Funds Ltd.



Why is it important to have a shared dream and vision of a better Hungary? Is there a national minimum? How long are conflicts useful in politics? Besides the desire for immediate success, what are our long-term plans for Hungary? Why is education really important? **Our research director Gábor Filippov explored these questions, among others, as a guest of the Vétó programme in the Partizán studio.**



In 2023, Tamás Boros, Director of the Equilibrium Institute, presented the “Identity and Urban Marketing”

special award of the Urban Development Association. The winner was the Mayor’s Office of Óbuda - Békásmegyér, on behalf of which András Béres, Deputy Mayor, accepted the award. **For the Equilibrium Institute, urbanisation and data-driven public policy planning in cities is a priority policy area, therefore we were honoured to be invited.**

“Education for Competitiveness” was the title of a presentation by Tamás Boros at the American Chamber of Commerce. The AmCham Hungary organised a closed discussion on the future of education in Hungary on the occasion of the International Day of Education celebrated on 24 January. The aim of the event was to reinvigorate the debate on education and to give the American Chamber of Commerce a clearer idea of how it can encourage and support the improvement of the current education system. At the event, **Tamás Boros gave a presentation on the “How do we become a smart nation” policy proposal package developed by the Equilibrium Institute, outlining the current state of the Hungarian education system and the guidelines for reforming the domestic public education system.**



In addition to the above, the **Equilibrium Institute’s** experts have given presentations at the Mathias Corvinus Collegium, the Foundation for a New Republic’s “Where are Europe and Hungary heading?” conferences, the Hungary of Tomorrow Conferences, and to the management and staff of dozens of Hungarian companies and NGOs.

3. FORECASTS, INDEXES, SURVEYS OF THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE

The Equilibrium Institute believes deeply in the power of data - that it is worth looking objectively at the achievements and failures of a country or city, examining trends and making international comparisons. That's why

our think tank regularly publishes reports on Hungary's performance in the areas that matter most to us: from poverty reduction and economic growth to megatrends that are shaping the destiny of our country.

RESEARCH ON POVERTY

In order for policy makers, state institutions, charities and NGOs to respond adequately and in a timely manner to the current period of stagflation, they **need to be able to assess the proportion of poor people in Hungary and the economic expectations of the population more accurately and up-to-date than today.**

The Equilibrium Institute intends to contribute to this task by conducting **quarterly opinion polls, starting from November 2022, which are representative of the Hungarian population as a whole**, to estimate the current level of poverty and the expected trends. Accordingly, **four surveys were published in 2023.**

While official statistics show the extent of poverty in the country many months or even more than a year in advance, the Equilibrium Institute's quarterly reports draw on recent surveys from a few weeks earlier, allowing for quicker reactions by policy makers and an examination of improving or worsening trends within a given year. The partner of the research is FES Budapest.

Click on the QR code to download our latest research on poverty results!



MEGATREND INDEX 2023

The goal of the Equilibrium Institute is to make Hungary a more successful and livable country by 2030. Our vision and policy proposals bear in mind that in the **next decade, Hungary may lag behind not only Western European countries but also its regional competitors if it is unable to respond to the key trends and changes shaping the near future.**

That is why we created the Equilibrium Institute's **Megatrend Index** to assess economic, technological, environmental and social changes in Hungary and other EU countries. The Index looks at **education, digitalisation,**

the environment, health and social cohesion, based on objective figures that can be compared over time. The Megatrend Index was published for the third time in 2023.

Click on the QR code to download our 2023 Megatrend Index!



I THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE'S ECONOMIC FORECAST FOR HUNGARY

From autumn 2022, the Equilibrium Institute's economic forecast will be published regularly. The forecast is based on a modern, proprietary methodology using high frequency data. In the forecast, we have sought to present material that explores processes and dilemmas to a wider audience, rather than textbook analysis. For this reason, in addition to the usual macro sub-markets, we have included more readable highlights and highlighted the risks surrounding the forecast.

Our team has published two economic forecasts for 2023. The Hungarian economy is coming off an extremely

difficult year: Europe-record inflation, high interest rates, extremely volatile exchange rates, and four consecutive quarters of GDP contraction. **However, the hard times appear to be behind us: inflation and interest rates are falling, the exchange rate has stabilised, and growth is expected by the third quarter of 2023.**

Click on the QR code to download the full Winter Economic Forecast 2023 in English!



I “DECARBONISATION OF HEAVY INDUSTRY” REPORT

If Hungary wants to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, in line with the Climate Protection Act, it cannot avoid drastic cuts in emissions from heavy industry. **The new analysis of the Equilibrium Institute identifies and quantifies the barriers to emission reductions in the cement, steel and chemicals industries.**

In these industries, greenhouse gas emissions are significant not only because of the high energy demand, but also because of the technological characteristics of

the production processes. However, technological change requires substantial financial resources. **Can sustainable financing be the key to decarbonising heavy industry?** This central question is answered in our analysis funded by the European Climate Initiative (EUKI).

Click on the QR code to read the full analysis in English!



I VOSZ BAROMETER

The VOSZ (National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers) Barometer 2023, prepared by the Equilibrium Institute, is published quarterly in order to monitor the business sentiment among small and medium-sized enterprises in Hungary. Each quarter, 400 business leaders were asked about the outlook for the economy, problems affecting business, planned investments, inflation and salary increases. In addition to the standard topics, we also covered ad-hoc topics such as the digitalisation of companies, energy prices, wages and the sustainable operation of businesses.

The VOSZ Barometer is a calculated index showing the percentage of enterprises surveyed that have reached the maximum 100 points along the measured variables. In 2023, the business climate of domestic SMEs will show values between 55 and 61 percent.

You can find more information about the VOSZ Barometer by clicking on the QR code.



4. THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE'S MOST IMPORTANT ARTICLES IN 2023

In 2023, researchers from the Equilibrium Institute published articles and interviews on a wide range of topics on leading news portals. **Tamás Boros** wrote and interviewed on **suburbanisation trends and poverty issues**, while **Gábor Filippov** presented the potential of digital

Hungary and “greenways”. **Dóra Csernus** calculated the costs of “greening” Hungary’s heavy industry, and **Bertram Marek** dealt with a sadly neglected topic: the rights of the mentally disabled.

I BACK TO THE CITY! HOW TO STOP THE DEPOPULATION OF OUR CITIES?

Hungary’s big cities are becoming depopulated. Since the fall of communism, Budapest has lost 311,000 inhabitants, Miskolc 47,000, Pécs 32,000 and Szeged 19,000, and the trend has been worsening since the coronavirus epidemic. Within three decades, the population of Hungary’s regional centres will fall by a further 290 thousand, or 11%. Currently,

there are only four cities in the country (Sopron, Kecskemét, Győr, Nyíregyháza) with more inhabitants than 30 years ago. Only 5 of Europe’s 500 largest cities are in Hungary. **Why is suburbanisation harmful and how can we make our cities attractive again? These are the questions Tamás Boros answers in his article published in Telex.**

I HOW NOT TO MISS THE FUTURE?

The digital sector could add around HUF 8,000 billion to the Hungarian economy by the end of the decade - 13% of Hungary’s GDP last year. Meanwhile, automation will threaten the jobs of nearly half of Hungarian workers in the coming decades. The technological revolution is fundamentally transforming every aspect of our lives, and it

is not just a matter of convenience. Digital transformation is creating a new framework for our economic, political and everyday lives. **Gábor Filippov’s article on the G7 portal looks at where Hungary stands in terms of digitalisation and what we should do to be winners of change and not delay the future.**

I A LOT OF MONEY NEEDED TO STOP HEAVY INDUSTRY POLLUTING IN HUNGARY

Hungary has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. This is no longer “just” a climate policy imperative, but also an energy security one. Climate neutrality cannot be achieved without heavy industry, which is an energy-intensive industry that uses large amounts of fossil fuels as raw materials and energy

carriers. The resource requirements of the transition are high. But what is the order of magnitude? And how does this compare with the resources expected to be available? **These questions are answered in an article by Dóra Csernus in the Portfolio.**

I HOW CAN THE INDEPENDENCE OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES BE ASSERTED?

Imagine not being able to decide how we spend our own money, who we live with, who we vote for or what channel we watch on TV! According to the latest figures from the KSH, nearly 53,000 of our fellow citizens with intellectual disabilities are in this situation: they have been placed under full or partial guardianship. The former have been deprived

of all forms of autonomy, the latter have been restricted in certain matters. Although they are no longer legally obliged to do so, in practice the courts have not stopped depriving them of their freedom of choice. What can and should be done in this situation? **This is the subject of an article by our analyst Marek Bertram on 24.hu.**

I WE NEED AUTOMATISM INSTEAD OF CRUMBS OF HELP

While 25-30% of Hungarians struggle to make ends meet, the state is too fragmented, giving very small amounts to the poorest in a very bureaucratic way. What does the research of the Institute for Poverty Equality show and how

should the Hungarian system of assistance be changed? **Tamás Boros talked about these issues in an interview with Népszava.**

I THE MISSED ENERGY OPPORTUNITY FOR HUNGARY: GEOTHERMAL ENERGY

Hungary is a country rich in thermal waters due to its geography and geology. There are about 800 thermal water wells in Hungary, most of which are used for balneological purposes and form the basis of the spa culture. At the same time, the exploitation of thermal water has a significant

untapped potential from an energy point of view, according to a recent proposal by the Equilibrium Institute, **the energy extracted from it could triple by the end of the decade - this is the subject of an article by Dóra Csernus in Portfolio.**

I DO WE NEED MORE POLITICIANS IN 2050 HUNGARY?

Does the reader like politicians? Does the idea of a world without elected representatives horrify you? How many of us would be bothered if we retired them one by one the

day after tomorrow? That world may be closer than many of us think. Gábor Filippov writes about these questions in the HVG series «Hungary 2050».

I GOING GREEN INSTEAD OF CLOSING: HOW TO HELP GREEN HEAVY INDUSTRY?

Can we green the Hungarian heavy industry without cutting manufacturing capacity? Hungary has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, i.e. only as much as it can neutralise, for example through forests or artificial carbon capture technologies. For this to be more than just a dream and a little closer to reality, all sectors will need to drastically reduce their emissions.

Without industrial renewal, there can be no green transition. **But what can be done to ensure that the green transition is not a green shutdown? These are the questions Zsolt Becsey and Dóra Csernus write about in Portfolio.**

I SMALL STEPS TOWARDS A LONGER LIFE: URBAN GREENWAYS TO GET US WALKING ENOUGH

A more pedestrian-friendly, healthier Budapest would not require prohibitive additional infrastructure - as a minimum goal, in the medium term it would simply need more attractive pedestrian routes, a cleaner visual environment, more trees and shade. However, if we want to imagine an attractive, liveable, innovative and

orderly urban life in the face of climate change, we need a coherent urban transport development concept, in which the systematic promotion of walking is an emphasised transport alternative” - **Gábor Filippov writes on the topic of “greenways” in his article published in Telex.**

I HOW (NOT) WILL THERE BE LESS POOR IN HUNGARY?

There is much debate among experts about how exactly to define and measure poverty. But even so, authoritative surveys give a fairly accurate picture of the scale of the problem: at least 2.5-2.8 million Hungarians can be classified

as poor, and 0.8-1 million people are in extreme material deprivation, or deep poverty. **Gábor Filippov wrote about the causes of poverty in Hungary in Telex.**

I WHO WILL BE THE MOST VULNERABLE IN HUNGARY IN 2023?

While GDP per capita figures may give cause for optimism, other benchmark indicators show Hungary to be one of the poorest countries in the EU. This is the environment in which we enter 2023, which could see slowing growth, rising inflation and rising unemployment.

For this reason, we must pay particular attention to those who may be particularly vulnerable to economic trends. **Marek Bertram wrote on the social composition of the domestic poor in Telex.**

I A BASIC BENEFIT GUARANTEEING A MINIMUM LIVING WAGE WOULD HELP THE POOR

This article is the final part of a series on poverty in Hungary by Telex and the Equilibrium Institute, in which Tamás Boros proposes a radical overhaul of the social benefits system. “A regular basic benefit automatically allocated by the tax authorities to those living below the minimum subsistence level, guaranteeing a minimum

subsistence level but much lower than the minimum wage, would not only help the more than 2 million poor, but indirectly help all of our nearly 10 million fellow citizens” - **Tamás Boros writes about the basic living wage in his article published in Telex.**

5. THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

In 2023 the staff of the Equilibrium Institute participated in international conferences and signed new partnership agreements in seven countries, from Belgium to Poland

and the United Arab Emirates. The Institute is now working with its 18 foreign partners as part of a broad collaboration to make Hungary a more successful country by 2030.

I COP28 UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Our colleagues, Gábor Filippov, Research Director; Dóra Csernus, Director for Climate and Environmental Policies and Marek Bertram, Analyst, attended the **most important climate change event in the United Arab Emirates, the UN COP28 climate conference**. Diána Űrge-Vorsatz, a member of the Advisory Board of the Equilibrium Institute, also spoke at the climate conference in her capacity as Vice-Chair of the IPCC. Our Institute has also made valuable professional contacts. The Dubai Future Foundation is Dubai's largest think-tank on future policy challenges, and we are preparing exciting collaborations with its experts Dr Heba Chehade and Fatma Abulhoul Al Falasi on climate

adaptation, water management, smart cities and innovative urban planning.



I CENTRAL EUROPEAN ENERGY CONFERENCE

Dóra Csernus, Director for Climate and Environmental Policies of our think tank, chaired a roundtable discussion on building sector renewal at the **CEEC (Central European Energy Conference) international conference organised by the Slovak Foreign Policy Association in Bratislava**. Her panellists were Ján Ćiampor, Director of the Department of Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving, Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic; Éva Geróházi, Senior Researcher, Metropolitan Research Institute and Miroslav Lopour, Head of Deloitte Czech Republic Energy Strategy Group.



I GLOBSEC BRATISLAVA FORUM

Our Executive Director, **Tamás Boros** attended one of Europe's largest foreign and security policy events, the **Bratislava Forum** organised by Globsec. The event was attended by the French President **Emmanuel Macron**, President of the European Commission **Ursula von der Leyen** and **Roberta Metsola**, President of the European Parliament.



I WARSAW SECURITY FORUM

Tamás Boros, Executive Director of the **Equilibrium Institute** and **Réka Szemerkenyi**, Senior Advisor for Foreign and Security Policy of the **Equilibrium Institute** visited the **Warsaw Security Forum**, one of the world's leading security policy conferences. We have established several new partnerships in **Poland**, strengthening our think tank's international relations and expanding our knowledge. In 2024, we will be able to introduce more Polish experts to decision-makers and those interested in our work in Budapest.



6. THE VOICES AND FACES OF THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE

In 2023, the Equilibrium Institute had a total of nearly 1,000 media appearances, including on Portfolio, Telex, 24.hu, Index, HVG, ATV, HírTV, Inforadio, county newspapers and Forbes. Our annual conference, the NATO Conference and presentations of our policy proposals were well attended by the media, and in total we met more than half a hundred journalists in person.

All three of our rural consultation series have been consistently covered by regional and national media. In total, more than two million people were reached by articles, interviews, television and radio appearances.

In 2023, we have reached 10,000 followers on our Facebook page, and more than 1300 people are already following our think tank on LinkedIn.

Click on the QR code to explore all media coverage of the Equilibrium Institute!



THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE TEAM HAS EXPANDED AGAIN IN 2023!

We are proud to announce that **Diána Üрге-Vorsatz**, one of Hungary's leading physicist-climatologists and Vice-Chair of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has joined our Advisory Board.



Réka Szemerkenyi, Hungary's former Ambassador to Washington, has also joined the Equilibrium Institute's team as Senior Advisor for Foreign and Security Policy.





▶ **INTRODUCING OUR NEW CHIEF ECONOMIST!**

Barna Szabó, Chief Economist at the Equilibrium Institute. He has worked for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Bank of England, the central bank of the United Kingdom. He has helped build forecasting systems at more than half a dozen other central banks abroad. He was previously an analyst at the Prague-based macroeconomic consultancy OGREsearch. He specialises in macroeconomic modelling and forecasting. He holds a PhD from the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona.



▶ **INTRODUCING OUR NEW PROJECT COORDINATOR!**

Julianna Pásztor, Project Coordinator of the Equilibrium Institute. She holds a Master's degree in Sociology from Corvinus University of Budapest with a specialization in Global Social Studies. After graduating, she spent two years assisting an independent think tank on corruption in their research, communication and project management.



▶ **INTRODUCING OUR NEW OFFICE MANAGER!**

Melinda Wesselényi, Back Office Manager of the Equilibrium Institute. Previously, she worked as an assistant and then as an office manager in Hungarian and foreign SMEs in various sectors, mainly with a focus on HR.

7. OUR NEW PARTNERS IN HUNGARY AND WORLDWIDE

In 2023, we have established a number of new partnerships, bringing the total number of organisations we work with to 18 abroad and dozens at home. We are proud to present the 2023 partners of the Equilibrium Institute:



CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Washington DC



EUROPEAN CLIMATE FOUNDATION

The Hague



EUROPEAN CLIMATE INITIATIVE

Berlin



EUROPEAN POLICY INSTITUTES NETWORK

Brussels



EUROPEUM - INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN POLICY

Prague



ÉFOÉSZ

Budapest



FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG BUDAPEST

Budapest



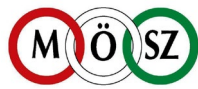
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Hungary



INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABLE FINANCE CENTRE

Prague



HUNGARIAN ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES

Gödöllő



OTP FÁY FOUNDATION

Budapest



RUSI

United Kingdom



TALAP CENTER

Kazakhstan



TRANS-SPED

Budapest



VOSZ

Budapest



WISE EUROPA

Warsaw

OUR COLLEAGUES

TAMÁS BOROS

Executive director and co-founder of the Equilibrium Institute

Tamás Boros is the executive director and co-founder of the Equilibrium Institute. He serves as a member of the Scientific Council of a leading European think tank, the Brussels-based Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS). He is the co-founder and co-owner of Policy Solutions, a consultancy and research institute. He is a recurring guest on a variety of political talk shows and often comments about public affairs for leading international media. He previously worked for the European Commission and the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an expert on communication and EU affairs. His research focuses on Hungarian and EU political communication and populism.



ÁKOS KOZÁK

Director of Business Relations and co-founder of the Equilibrium Institute

Ákos Kozák is the director of business relations and co-founder of the Equilibrium Institute. Previously, he served as the director of the GfK Hungária Market Research Institute for nearly 30 years. He is the former president of the Hungarian Marketing Association. Formerly, he was also a lecturer at the Budapest Business School and is currently an academic research fellow at the Cyber Economics Research Centre. He is the author or co-author of numerous academic studies on market research. He is the 2008 recipient of the Gábor Klauzál Award (the most prestigious Hungarian state award in the area of trade). He is an expert in futures research and consumer studies and holds a PhD in the sociology of consumption.



GÁBOR FILIPPOV

Director of Research

Gábor Filippov is the director of research at the Equilibrium Institute. Previously he worked as an expert advisor in the Hungarian National Assembly and then as a political analyst and senior analyst at the Hungarian Progressive Institute. His analyses and op-eds have been published by numerous domestic and international media outlets, and he is frequently invited to talk about politics on television and radio shows. His research focuses on the European and the Hungarian far-right, on the histories of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and their present-day manifestations, as well as the workings of contemporary authoritarian regimes.





DÓRA CSERNUS

Director for Climate and Environmental Policies

Dóra Csernus is the director for climate and environmental policies at the Equilibrium Institute. As an expert in environmental issues, she has worked for the Ministry of Environment and Water, the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Future Generations and the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, representing the Hungarian position in different EU, UN, and OECD fora. She later worked as Director for International Policy Development at Klímapolitika Research and Consultancy Ltd, and as an independent expert in climate and environmental issues. Her main focus is on climate policy, air-quality control and water policy.

RÉKA SZEMERKÉNYI

Senior Advisor for Foreign and Security Policy

Réka Szemerkényi is the former Ambassador of Hungary to Washington and a leading geopolitical expert in trans-atlantic security with over 20 years of experience in a variety of government, academic and private sector capacity. She is the former Executive Vice President of the Washington think-tank CEPA, the Center for European Policy Analysis. Her government roles include her mission as Ambassador of Hungary to the United States and being National Security Policy Advisor to the Prime Minister of Hungary. Her business experience include being Senior Advisor to the Chairman and CEO of MOL Group, the Hungarian Oil and Gas Company and Consultant of the World Bank.



BARNA SZABÓ

Chief Economist

Barna Szabó is the chief economist at the Equilibrium Institute. He worked for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Bank of England, and counselled more than half a dozen other central banks on building forecasting systems. Previously, he worked for OGRsearch, a Prague-based macroeconomic consultancy. He specialises in macroeconomic modelling and forecasting and holds a PhD in Economics from Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona.



BERTRAM MAREK

Analyst

Bertram Marek is an analyst at the Equilibrium Institute. He holds a BA in Political Science from ELTE, an MA in Communication and Media Studies from BME and an MSc in Political Psychology from the University of Kent. He is currently pursuing his PhD at ELTE PPK. His research focuses on the relationship between nostalgia and system criticism. Previously, he worked as a junior analyst at NielsenIQ. He is a fellow of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

LÁSZLÓ KENYERES

Project manager (Business Relations Segment)

Business Project Manager at the Equilibrium Institute. He was previously a fellow at the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) and later a social statistician, where he researched household income and expenditure structures. Later, he gained experience in the financial and energy sectors as a programme manager and leader of enterprise-wide customer-centric transformations. Recently, he has been involved in methodological and technological developments of various research approaches and satisfaction measurements. His focus is on building multi-source integrated databases to support data-driven decision-making.



JULIANNA PÁSZTOR

Project coordinator

Julianna Pásztor is the project coordinator at the Equilibrium Institute. She holds a Master's degree in Sociology with a specialization in global social studies from Corvinus University of Budapest. After graduating, she worked for an independent think tank on corruption, supporting their research, communication and project management for two years.

MELINDA WESSELÉNYI

Head of Secretariat

Melinda Wesselényi is the head of the secretariat at the Equilibrium Institute. She previously worked as an assistant and then as an office manager in Hungarian and foreign SMEs in various sectors, mainly with a focus on HR.



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