RECOGNISE · RESIST · RISE UP

Democratic Commitment Declaration

for women's safe and equal participation in public life

Hungary

Prepared by:

JÓL-LÉT Foundation, the Hungarian implementing partner of the +3R project (Recognise, Resist, Rise Up - Tackling Gender-Based Violence against Women in Politics).

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Co-funded by the European Union

Co-funded by the European Union, CERV 101195093. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the granting authority. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

1. The Declaration

We, the undersigned - politicians, political and strategic advisers, campaign experts, media professionals and journalists, business decision-makers, civil society leaders, elite athletes, artists and others who influence public discourse in Hungary - acknowledge that violence against women in politics is not an individual grievance, but a systemic barrier to democratic participation.

According to the +3R research, the phenomenon is structural. Silence entrenches the norm. We therefore choose to speak out and make concrete commitments.

I commit not to perpetrate or excuse political violence, violence in public life or intimate partner violence against women, not to remain silent when I witness it, and to take active steps towards a safe and equal democratic space.

Specifically, I commit to:

1. **Public repudiation.** I will publicly repudiate gender-based attacks, harassment and smear campaigns in my own political, professional or business environment, even when the perpetrator is my ally, client or colleague.
2. **Internal norms.** I will consciously shape standards of conduct in my professional environment, organisation, staff or business: I will not tolerate harassment or gender-based discrimination, and I will work to ensure that these principles are also upheld in the organisation's operations.
3. **Refraining from smear tactics.** In political campaigns and in my communications and advisory work, I will refrain from gender-based, defamatory, sexualising or sexist statements, even when they might appear tactically effective.
4. **Support for institutional reforms.** By signing, I support institutional measures that promote women's safe participation in public life, for example the establishment of an independent complaints mechanism within Parliament.
5. **The principle of democratic recognition.** I acknowledge that women's work in public life deserves visible recognition, and that such recognition is inseparable from safe participation.

2. Why is the Declaration needed?

Violence against women in politics (VAWP) is systemic in Hungary, yet institutionally invisible. It is not a matter of isolated serious incidents, but of recurring patterns that restrict women's democratic participation.

What the +3R research shows

The Hungarian +3R research and the comparative study covering five countries confirm that psychological and online violence are experienced by the overwhelming majority of women representatives. In Hungary, 91 per cent of respondents reported online violence, and 91 per cent reported psychological violence.

According to the records of the Office of the National Assembly, the Ministry of the Interior and the National Media and Infocommunications Authority for 2010-2024, not a single procedure concerning gender-based political harassment was initiated. Formal equality alone does not provide protection.

A significant part of the phenomenon occurs in a grey area: comments about the body, interruptions, exclusion from informal decision-making, and defamatory or sexualising campaign tactics. These are rarely punishable and are therefore often regarded as a 'natural part of politics'. Silence entrenches this norm.

Why now?

The beginning of a new parliamentary term shapes political culture. What we institutionalise now will become the norm in the long term. The deadline for transposing the EU Directive on combating violence against women (2024/1385) is 14 June 2027. The Declaration does not replace legal and institutional reforms, but offers those who shape public life an opportunity to make an accountable commitment.

3. The five commitments - what do they mean in practice?

The Declaration is not a symbolic gesture. The five points set out what signatories can do within their own sphere of influence.

1. Public repudiation

It is not enough to condemn violence ‘in general’. It matters when signatories speak out even when the perpetrator is on their own side. This commitment places standing up against violence above personal or political loyalty.

2. Internal norms

According to the research, attacks often come from fellow representatives, staff or campaign teams. Change begins within signatories’ own spheres of decision-making and responsibility: in the parliamentary group, office, business or newsroom. Institutionalisation may take the form of a written policy, a complaints channel or a clear leadership expectation.

3. Refraining from smear tactics

A gender-based, sexualising campaign tactic attacks a woman not as an opponent, but as a body and a role. This is unacceptable even when it is ‘effective’. This point also addresses communications and advisory professionals, not only elected office-holders.

4. Institutional reforms

Individual conduct is not enough if there is nowhere to report an incident. The Declaration therefore highlights one concrete institutional measure: an independent and confidential parliamentary complaints mechanism. This can be established through an amendment to the Rules of Procedure or a decision by the Speaker, without amending legislation.

5. Democratic recognition

Recognition of women’s achievements in public life cannot be separated from their ability to participate in public life safely and as equals. Signatories commit to upholding this principle.

4. Signing, target and publicity

Who can sign?

The Declaration is addressed to those who influence public discourse in Hungary: politicians, representatives of parties and parliamentary groups, political and strategic advisers, campaign experts, media professionals and journalists, business decision-makers, civil society leaders, elite athletes, artists and other public figures. In Hungary's changing public life, norms are not determined only in Parliament.

Signing the Declaration may not be used to conceal or relativise past or present violent, harassing or degrading conduct, or as public self-justification by a signatory. The campaign reserves the right to refuse to publish a signature, or to remove a signatory from the public list, in the event of credibly documented conduct that is incompatible with the values of the Declaration.

In addition to individuals, political parties, parliamentary groups and other organisations may also endorse the Declaration. No separate documentation is required for organisational endorsement.

How is it signed?

For an individual signatory, the signatory's name, position and organisational affiliation will be displayed; for an organisational endorsement, the organisation's name and the name of its representative will be displayed.

The Declaration and the list of signatories will be published on the websites, in the press materials and on the social media channels of JÓL-LÉT Foundation and Hősnők Tere. The full text will be available for download as a standalone document.

The Declaration expresses a moral and public commitment and does not create any legal or contractual obligation.

Target

The target of the Hungarian campaign is at least 200 public signatories by the end of 2026.

Where will it be published?

The Declaration and the list of signatories will be published on the websites, in the press materials and on the social media channels of JÓL-LÉT Foundation and Hősnők Tere. The full text will be available for download as a standalone document.

What do we not ask of signatories?

We do not ask signatories to campaign, donate or take a party-political position. We ask them to uphold the five commitments in their own environment and to make their commitment public.

5. Legal background

The Declaration is neither legislation nor a contract. Its normative foundations are:

• the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention (signed by Hungary in 2014 but not ratified);

• the EU Directive on combating violence against women (2024/1385), transposition deadline: 14 June 2027;

• the relevant offences and provisions of Hungarian law in force (including Sections 195, 216, 222, 226-227 and 332/A of the Criminal Code; Section 10 of the Equal Treatment Act).

Violence against women in politics is not a separate category in Hungarian law. Its prevention and handling therefore require legal, institutional and behavioural change at the same time.

Signature section

I, the undersigned, declare that, in my own name or as the representative of the organisation indicated, I accept the above commitments and will endeavour to uphold them. I consent to the signatory's name, position or organisational affiliation, or, in the case of an organisational endorsement, the organisation's name and the name of its representative, appearing in the public communications of JÓL-LÉT Foundation and Hősnők Tere.

Form of endorsement:

☐ individual

☐ organisational

Name of signatory or representative:	Organisation / affiliation / position
Date	Signature

Contact: JÓL-LÉT Foundation • +3R Project • Hősnők Tere ahosnoktere@gmail.com +36 20 973 2803