



Right to Reply Delegation of Hungary

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In reply to the remarks of the distinguished delegation of the United States of America and the Human Rights Watch it must be underlined that Hungary recognizes the vital contribution of non-governmental organizations to the promotion of common values and goals. These organizations also play an important role not only in the democratic control of the government and shaping public opinion but also in addressing certain social difficulties and fulfil other community policy needs. Therefore, the right to freedom of association as well as other relating fundamental rights, such as the freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, are guaranteed by the Fundamental Law of Hungary in line with the norms of the Council of Europe. The Act on the organizations receiving foreign fund intends to enhance the transparency of funding of non-governmental organizations. It neither affects the basic rights associated with the freedom of association, nor hampers the access of associations to resources on the grounds of the nationality or the country of origin. It must be highlighted that the Act does not prohibit funding from abroad and the operation of NGOs either; it merely makes foreign funding, in conformity with the principles of democracy, transparency and does not constitute an administrative burden. Also, non-governmental organizations are not persecuted for receiving financial assistance from abroad but they purely have to inform the public over a certain threshold. The Venice Commission examined the act and based on its recommendations, the Hungarian Parliament amended the act.

The objective of the adopted legislative package in this June is to close legal loopholes through which certain organizations were aiding illegal migration and human trafficking under the guise of humanitarian assistance. It must be also highlighted that the adopted legislative package consist the modification of the Criminal Code in order to act against the organizers of illegal migration by establishing a criminal offence, strengthening the state border regime and extending police measures.