

Direkt36 Transparency Report

2023

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Basics

Direkt36 is a non-profit **investigative journalism center** in Hungary. Our mission is to those in political and economic power to account and expose wrongdoings and injustices. Our method is based on persistent questioning and systematic investigative work. What we learn is then shared with the public in an objective way, based on solid facts. We are independent of all political and economic interest groups, and **our professional decisions are made free from any outside influence**. Our most important source of income is our audience: **thousands of people have joined our community of supporters** over the course of our operations.

The publisher Direkt36 Nonprofit Ltd. is a **public benefit, not-for-profit enterprise**, where no dividends can be paid to owners. The company's funds are used for our operations, to achieve our goals. When financial resources are available, we add new staff, carry out higher-cost investigative projects and build up reserves.

This report summarises the most important events and achievements of 2023. For more information, please contact us at info@direkt36.hu.

Our investigations

On our partner site Telex, the most read article was *Database exposes Hungarian oligarchs hiding huge fortunes*, in which we uncovered the hidden owners of a number of private equity funds. On our own site, the most popular article was the English version of *Thousands of hospital patients are dying from terrible infections. Instead of addressing the situation, the government is working to cover it up*.

These were the most read Direkt36 articles on Telex.hu:

1. [Database exposes Hungarian oligarchs hiding huge fortunes](#)
2. [Thousands of hospital patients are dying from terrible infections. Instead of addressing the situation, the government is working to cover it up](#)
3. [How Viktor Orbán angered his closest friends in Europe](#)
4. [Leaked files reveal panic at Russian-led bank in Budapest](#)
5. [Until now, it was a secret how Hungarian hospitals were dealing with infections. Direkt36 has created and now publishes their ranking](#)
6. [The secret history of Viktor Orbán's favorite company](#)
7. [A businessman known for yachting with Hungarian minister Péter Szijjártó was a member of a group of Fidesz activists destroying opposition's posters](#)
8. [Inside the surprise change at the top of Hungary's nuclear plant](#)
9. [Hungary could become a European hub for Chinese chemicals, leaked documents reveal](#)
10. [The owners of private equity funds, which hide huge wealth, have been removed from the state register, after Direkt36 published an article about them](#)

What made 2023 special was that we made our first long-form documentary. It was part of our investigation called the Semmelweis Project into the hidden problem of hospital-acquired infections. The film "Washing our hands" had nearly 100,000 views on YouTube in the weeks after its release. The series of articles, produced as part of the project and written by Zsuzsanna Wirth and Kamilla Marton, won the Transparency-Soma Award for the best Hungarian investigative article of the year. The series of articles was also shortlisted for the European Press Prize, the most prestigious press award in Europe, in the investigative category.



Support from private individuals

Thanks to the support of individuals, Direkt36's independence is guaranteed, the financial basis of our operations is stable and we have reserves to draw on in the event of a crisis or a radical change in external conditions. Anyone who supports us can be sure that Direkt36 will still be there in five years' time, upholding the same values and doing the same work as it does today.

In 2023, we received **more than 65,5 million forints** (approximately 171,500 EUR)* from so-called **micro-donations** - regular or one-off contributions from individuals, typically between HUF 500 (1.3 EUR) and HUF 60,000 (157 EUR) each. The amount was made up of 17,948 donations, which means that a donation averaged about HUF 3,650 (9.5 EUR). Donations from individuals covered more than 60% of Direkt36's total annual budget for the year.

Direkt36 is published by a private limited company and therefore cannot directly collect personal income tax 1% donations. However, the Foundation of Independent Journalists has been working with us for years, we campaign together during the tax filing period, and, in accordance with the information provided in the campaign, a significant part of the 1% donations they receive is given to Direkt36 as a grant for investigative articles, as decided by the Foundation's board. This source is playing an increasingly important role in the funding of our work: in 2023, we received HUF 12,131,577 (31,762 EUR) from the Foundation of Independent Journalists.

*In this report, we use the 2023 annual mean exchange rate of the Hungarian National Bank (1 EUR = 381,95 HUF)

Institutional grants

Outlets like Direkt36, which perform tasks essential to democracy on a non-commercial basis, can receive grants from a number of international foundations and other organisations. (It is a peculiarity of the Hungarian situation that there is no domestic organisation with a social purpose to which outlets like ours could turn for support. It is also a local - though not unique - peculiarity that independent press outlets are maliciously attacked on the pretext of otherwise completely transparent funding.) As Direkt36 has been carrying out high-quality, high-impact investigative work for almost ten years, with clear objectives and principles, and a lean and transparent management, we have received support from several institutions over the years. We only accept this from institutions that do not interfere in any way with our work.

In 2023, we received funding for Direkt36 from the following institutional sources:

- a three-year grant from the Sigrid Rausing Trust in London ended in October 2023, and we successfully applied for a further three-year grant,
- the Brussels-based Civitates Foundation supported us for three years (until the end of 2023),
- The Foundation for Democracy & Pluralism in Båstad, Sweden, supports Direkt36 for two years (until June 2024),
- OCCRP, one of the world's leading international investigative networks, has been a long-standing professional partner and will provide financial support for our activities through a six-month programme in 2023-24.

These funds can only be used for the supported activity - in our case investigative journalism - and of course they must be accounted for under strict conditions. However, when it comes to the specific topics our staff is working on, and the actual content of our investigations, the institutional supporters learn them no earlier than individual supporters - from our insider newsletter, one day before the article is published.

Costs

Direkt36 cost close to HUF 106 million (277,523,000 EUR) to run in 2023. This year, around 60% of this was covered by micro-grants received from individuals. The vast majority of our expenditure - over 74% in 2023 - was staff costs, i.e. staff salaries and related taxes and contributions. In addition to the costs of running the office and the financial, legal and IT services we use, we also spent a significant amount of money in 2023 on the production of our documentary film "Washing our hands". Spending on marketing and advertising was around 3% of total costs.



Other issues

In compiling our transparency report, we have tried to ensure that all relevant information is included and that it is clear, concise and transparent itself. The annual financial statements of Direkt36 Nonprofit Ltd. can be found on our website:

<https://www.direkt36.hu/en/beszamolok/>.

We are happy to answer any further questions you may have about our operations and management - please send us an e-mail. Address: info@direkt36.hu.



The Direkt36 team at the time of publishing this report: András Szabó, Szabolcs Panyi, Patrik Galavits, Kamilla Marton, András Pethő, Péter Nádori, Ágnes Gólya, Zsuzsanna Wirth, Dániel Szőke, Borbála Pál

The graphic in the report was created by Péter Somogyi / Szarvas, Telex.
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