

POLICY PROPOSAL - 2024 No.2

HOW SHOULD WE INCREASE THE ENERGY SECURITY OF HUNGARIAN MUNICIPALITIES? II.

The Equilibrium Institute's
policy proposals to strengthen
the resilience of local governments



Equilibrium
Institute

How should we increase the energy security of Hungarian municipalities? II.

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1. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

By the end of 2022, municipalities in Hungary were facing a crisis beyond compare, **resulting from the persistent rise in energy prices, the prolonged inflation, and the international market uncertainties caused by the Russian aggression**. From one month to the next, Hungarian municipalities encountered seemingly unmanageable extra costs, which not only put their budgets at risk, but also the provision of the most basic public services for which they were responsible. As the situation has influenced everyone, irrespective of their worldview or party affiliation, it has become clear that **finding a solution would also require broad cooperation** and joint professional work, free of political interests.

At the initiative of the Hungarian Association of Local Governments, the Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities and the Association of Budapest Local Governments, the Equilibrium Institute, Hungary's independent think tank, convened a series of professional consultations under the name of National Energy Roundtable, in order to **develop common solutions to common challenges**, drawing on the knowledge of the most important professional and advocacy groups, and relevant market players. The Roundtable resulted in a comprehensive package of policy proposals which led to the implementation of several energy measures reducing the burden on municipalities.

Seeing the potential in further cooperation, **the Equilibrium Institute has decided to continue working**

with municipalities in the field of energy. Between autumn 2023 and spring 2024, the Institute visited 15 locations across the country to discuss key energy challenges with decision-makers from local and surrounding municipalities. On the one hand, the think tank has developed a proposal package titled [*How should we increase the energy security of Hungarian municipalities*](#), which was discussed with local decision-makers at each location. On the other hand, the Equilibrium Institute invited external experts with extensive practical experience to propose concrete solutions for municipalities to reduce energy use and to shift away from fossil fuels.

The aim of the Equilibrium Institute is to **help municipalities in tackling the most pressing problems related to this crisis with concrete, tangible policy proposals**, which pave the way towards the long-term resilience of municipalities.

Below are the proposed solutions that emerged during the six-month-long series of consultations, each addressing real-life practical problems that affect many municipalities. Representatives from over 70 municipalities attended the 15 locations, and **we had the opportunity to consult with more than 150 local government decision-makers**. The diversity of the municipalities involved and the broad range of experiences shared have allowed for these proposals to be relevant in the case of many other municipalities in terms of tackling the energy crisis and the green transition.



2. COMMON CHALLENGES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Just like Hungarian society as a whole, local governments have faced a number of pressing challenges resulting from the energy crisis that unfolded in the fall of 2022. These challenges had only expanded with new ones by the spring

of 2024. Some of these challenges present new obstacles to the implementation of proposals previously outlined by the Equilibrium Institute, while others have not been addressed in the past.

I 2.1. CHANGING REGULATIONS

Well-founded planning is greatly complicated by the occasional rapid changes in the regulatory environment and support schemes. Experts agree that there is a need for a more predictable solar energy accounting regulation, detailed wind energy deployment regulation to support medium-term planning, and the improvement of the new geothermal development support scheme. These are crucial to ensure a predictable return on invested tax funds and market investments in renewables.

In the meantime, the renewal of street lighting systems is becoming ever more urgent, as the European Union is phasing out conventional, so-called gas-discharge lamps by 2027, prohibiting their manufacturing or selling in the EU. This means that municipalities that do not switch to LED systems by that time will not be able to buy light sources and other components within the EU to power their street

lighting. Without adequate preparation, **there is also a risk that the market will be flooded by the LED conversion demand of thousands of municipalities as the deadline approaches.** The sudden surge in demand for street lighting upgrades would create a turbulent market environment, with insufficient capacity for design, manufacturing and construction, and the cost of materials and services could be subject to severe inflationary pressures.

Experts estimate that 10 percent of the 3155 municipalities in Hungary have converted fully to LED street lighting, and currently 23 percent of all street lighting points have LED luminaires. Based on the findings of the survey conducted during the consultations, a similar pattern emerges: only 20 percent of the surveyed municipalities have completed the modernization of public lighting.

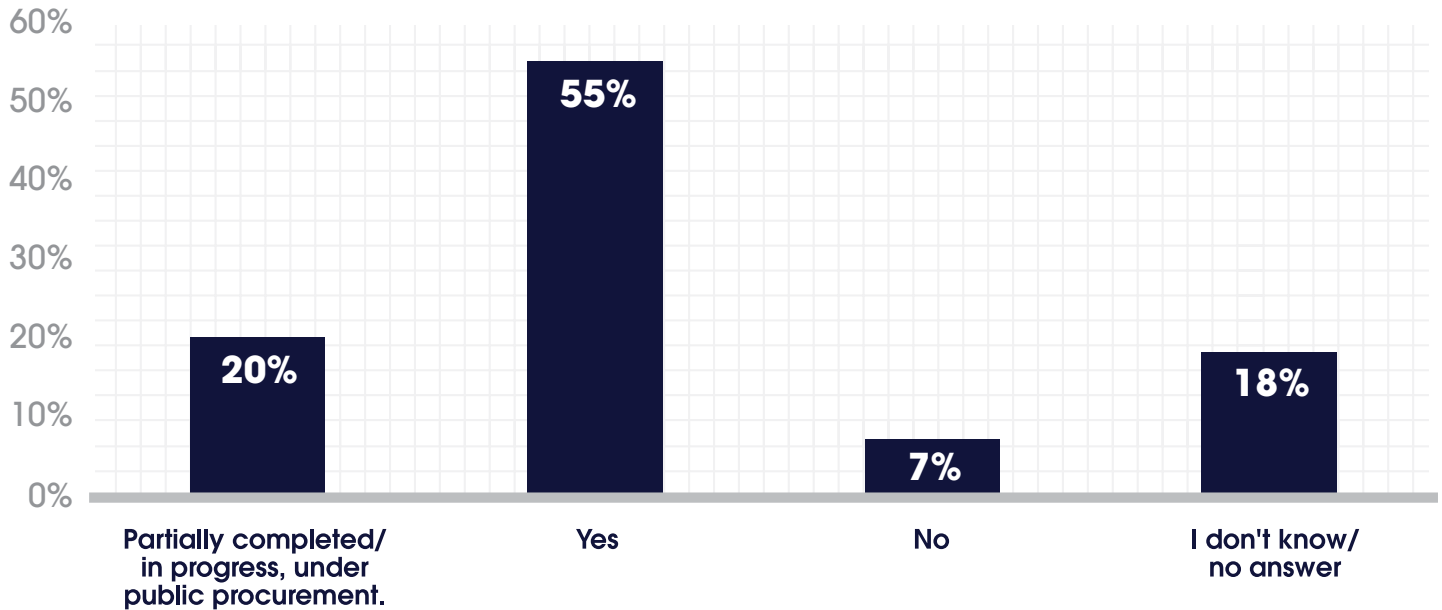


Figure 1: Does the municipality plan to upgrade street lighting luminaires? (Source: consultation series conducted by the Equilibrium Institute between October 2023 and March 2024).

Perhaps even more urgent than the modernisation of street lighting is the **modernisation of indoor lighting** in municipal buildings: **compact fluorescent light sources**, which are used in the majority of existing indoor luminaires, **were phased out** in the European Union **in autumn 2023**. This means they can no longer be manufactured, and once existing stockpiles are depleted, their distribution will cease entirely within the Union.

The energy efficiency of the Hungarian building stock is extremely outdated, which contributes significantly to wasteful energy consumption, harmful emissions, and the country's persistent energy dependence. This represents a risk at the level of security, of economic competitiveness, of climate and environmental policy, and politics, and these risks need to be mitigated as soon as possible. The amount and timing of funding for building renovation

is unpredictable, hindering even those renovations that might take place without specific incentives, as no one wants to miss out on a potential subsidy scheme. **However, the majority of properties in urgent need of modernization are those whose owners would be unable to renovate without state support. For their motivation and assistance, it is particularly urgent to develop and implement a transparent renovation roadmap.**

Considering these factors, there is a need for a uniform or even parallel state incentive system for the modernization of street lighting, the energy-efficient renovation of buildings, and the expansion of renewables. Such a scheme must be predictable so that property owners can plan their opportunities and necessary steps well in advance.

I 2.2. CHANGES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

In the wake of the energy crisis the rapid increase in costs was accompanied by a sudden decline in available resources. As energy prices surged and inflationary pressures intensified, municipal finances faced additional

challenges, primarily in the form of solidarity tax, which has led to particularly severe or even near-bankruptcy situations in many municipalities.



The challenge of soaring energy prices, which had been at the peak of the problem pyramid of municipalities since winter 2022, was joined by the issue of local government wages in 2023; it became increasingly difficult

to recruit and retain professionals with the skills and experience needed to assist local governments with the energy transition.

I 2.3. LACK OF ENERGY EXPERTISE

With the energy crisis it became clear that no larger municipality can do without the expertise of qualified energy experts – yet smaller municipalities are increasingly in need of such help as well. However, the majority of local governments simply do not have the resources to employ energy experts, which can be particularly disadvantageous when smaller municipalities apply for energy-related funding but lack the necessary expertise.

However, the lack of resources is not the only obstacle to hiring energy experts – there is also a shortage of qualified professionals in the country. Moreover, the majority of qualified energy professionals prefer to work in the private sector, where they typically earn much higher salaries.

I 2.4. LACK OF STANDARDS IN BUILDING RENOVATION

In many cases, there is no common standard for products used in building renovation, and customers are not familiar with the different product types, which leads to a **lack of trust**. The **lack of common standards** makes it difficult to identify the responsible party(ies) and to enforce the

warranty in the event of a construction problem, further reducing willingness to undertake renovations. This issue could only be addressed by agreements between manufacturers of the same type of products.

I 2.5. THE END OF THE ERA OF CHEAP ENERGY

Local governments must prepare for the fact that the exceptionally favorable global energy market conditions of the 2010s will not return. Moreover, they must bid farewell to the sector's relatively predictable trends. **Effective management of future shocks will only be possible if**

municipalities develop flexible, responsive, and adaptive energy systems. Otherwise, Hungarian municipalities may face many more crisis situations in the future, similar to the one in 2022.

3. THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE'S POLICY PROPOSALS FOR INCREASING THE CRISIS RESILIENCE OF HUNGARIAN MUNICIPALITIES

▶ LET'S TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION, KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND NETWORKING!

In times of crisis, the role of coordination and knowledge transfer is even more important than usual. Experiences of the consultations show that **mayors and local decision-makers who were able to use their formal or informal inter-municipal connections and communication channels were better able to respond to the challenges posed by the energy crisis.**

An important takeaway from the consultations was that a new expert opinion, an idea borrowed from another municipality's experiences, or even a ready-made solution can often break decision-makers out of a deadlock. **Institutionalised networking, and the communication and knowledge exchange it enables are valuable resources that all municipalities should make use of in the long term.**

Networking can take many forms, such as regional associations or municipal partnerships (e.g: Hungarian Association of Local Governments, Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities, Hungarian Association of Cities with County Rights, Association of Climate-Friendly Municipalities, Hungarian Chief Gardeners Association, Balaton Association, Hungarian Village Association, National Association of Small Municipalities, Urban Development Association), but often informal knowledge exchange can already lead to substantial results

– a good example of this is when larger municipalities organise professional forums for local authorities in their area. **Establishing and deepening such solution-oriented collaborations would greatly contribute to the dissemination of best practices and the enhancement of municipalities' responsiveness.**

▶ LET'S INTEGRATE GREEN ENERGY CONSIDERATIONS INTO DECISION-MAKING!

The green transition, reducing energy consumption, increasing energy efficiency and the spread of renewables is not only good for the climate, but also increases the resilience of local governments, for instance by helping them deal with the energy crisis. Szombathely and Miskolc, for example, had already appointed a green advisor before the crisis broke out, who took part in all economic negotiations and decisions, or at least channelled sustainability considerations into decision-making. This helped immensely in managing the energy crisis more effectively. Integrating green energy transition considerations also reduces energy dependency and energy costs, and has environmental and climate policy benefits.

Additionally, municipal policies also influence the reactions of residents living in the community. If the local government cuts back or rationalises its energy use, the population will also show more willingness to adapt to the new situation caused by the crisis, and can draw specific and partly adaptable ideas from the example set by the municipality.



MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD EMPLOY ENERGY EXPERTS, INDEPENDENTLY OR IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER MUNICIPALITIES!

Currently, many municipalities lack the professional knowledge that would prepare them to deal with the ever-changing energy environment, to negotiate with suppliers and to professionally implement their own energy investments. In this regard, three practical measures could make a tangible improvement:

Beyond a certain municipality size, **an urban energy expert position or an organisational unit responsible for energy should be mandatory.** This would enable local professional support in energy efficiency matters for both the municipal institutional network and the population.

Let's support the establishment of a **national energy expert database**, from which municipalities lacking a full-time energy expert can hire or contract one on an as-needed or temporary basis!

Let's support the work of energy experts by **introducing energy management systems!** Analysing electricity, gas, district heating, and water consumption, detecting and managing outliers, and analysing off-peak consumption would help establish more rational, hence cheaper energy consumption.

The establishment of an energy expert position is important everywhere. However, as has been mentioned, **not all municipalities can afford to employ an energy expert**, while **there is also a lack of energy experts on the market.** A potential solution to the first issue could be for the municipality to specifically apply for funding to establish and maintain a municipal energy advisor position. **Even so, regardless of the availability of funding, both issues can be addressed in the following way: smaller municipalities collaborating together or with a larger municipality to employ an energy expert collectively. This way, costs can be shared, and a small number of advisors can assist multiple municipalities.** Steps in this direction have already been taken in Siófok, for example.

According to the survey conducted during the consultations, 16 percent of municipalities had employed an energy expert, another 21 percent planned to do so, while 63 percent of municipalities did not have such plans. Among the latter, there may be several municipalities that simply cannot afford this additional expense on their own.

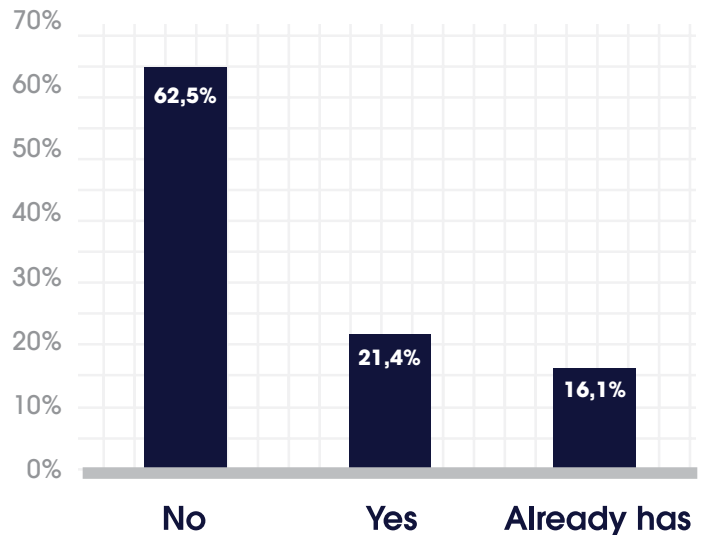


Figure 2: Does the municipality plan to hire an energy expert? (Source: consultation series conducted by the Equilibrium Institute between October 2023 and March 2024).

LET'S TRAIN MORE ENERGY EXPERTS!

The shortage of energy professionals must be addressed promptly. If there are municipal employees who have an affinity for the energy field, let's support their training!

To alleviate the shortage of professionals, there should be an opportunity for municipal officials to participate in postgraduate training programs – ideally **with partially state-supported financing – in energy management engineering or energy management specialist training!**

Let's make possible as soon as possible the participation in **specialised training of those employees who, due to their positions, can inherently influence energy consumption** (technical colleagues), as well as those responsible for energy procurement.

Many types of comprehensive training programs are currently in operation in Hungary, ranging from courses that do not require prior qualifications to those requiring a specialised university degree. **In addition to these, market-**

based courses are also available online, which can be completed in 1-2 days and offer substantial assistance at relatively favourable prices. Employees from different municipalities can also take part in such courses together, thus reducing the costs per municipality.

▶ SMART USERS FOR SMART SYSTEMS!

Let's educate municipal employees and local residents about energy efficiency, renewable energy, green transition, and energy independence! Consider organising half-day employee training sessions: employees who understand and grasp the relevant processes are much more inclined to contribute actively to advancing the

energy transition compared to those who simply follow instructions without full comprehension. Such employee training sessions have been organised, for example, in Pécs, providing usable models. Municipalities, either collaborating with other municipalities or independently, should develop training modules and informational packages based on the experiences of such initiatives.

Prior to the consultations, nearly 60 percent of the surveyed municipalities had not considered implementing municipal energy education. This proportion decreased to around 40 percent in the survey following the consultation series.

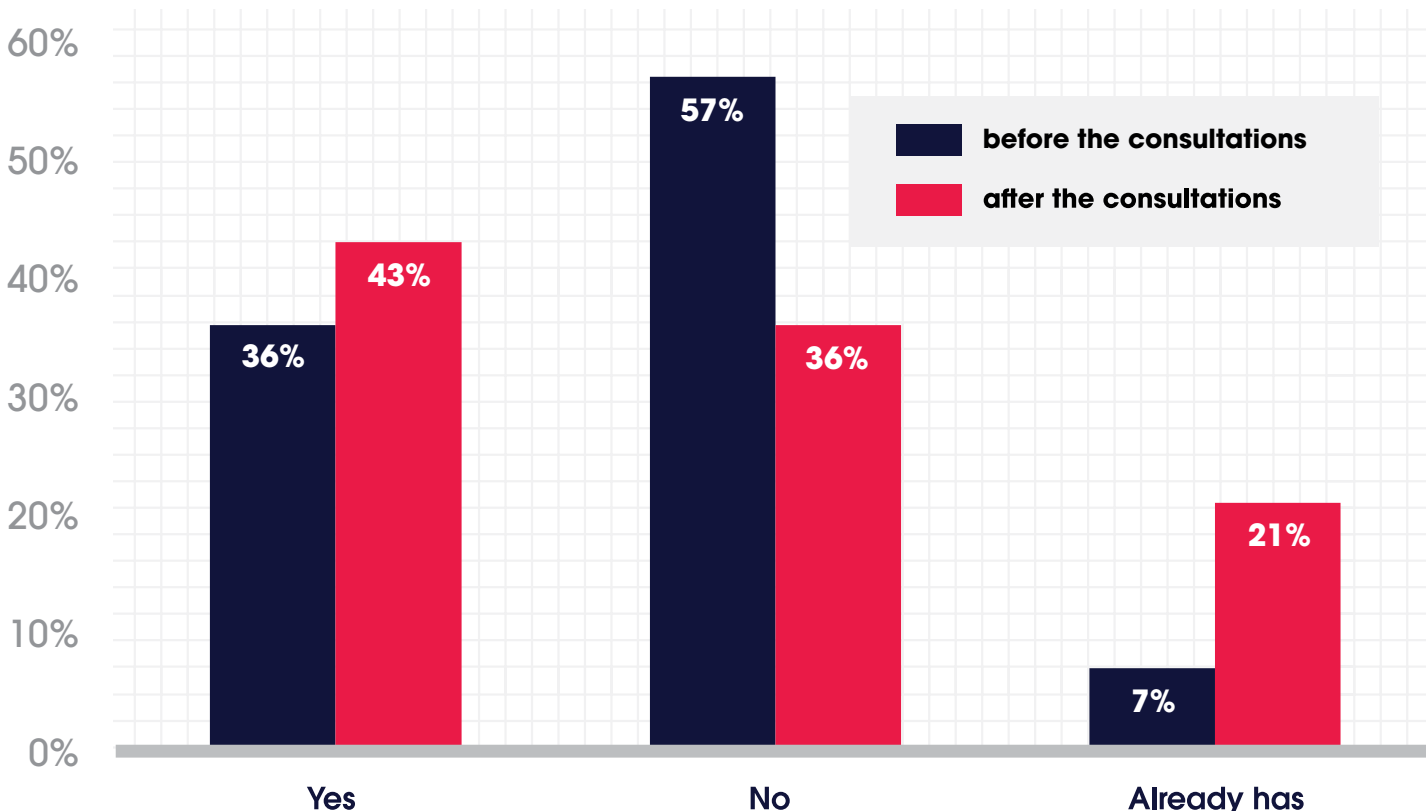


Figure 3: Does the municipality plan to train municipal employees on energy efficiency issues? (Source: consultation series conducted by the Equilibrium Institute between October 2023 and March 2024).

To facilitate municipalities' participation in energy and energy efficiency project grants, let's develop a database or guide that standardizes to the extent possible the sequence of energy efficiency and energy saving measures for different types of municipalities. Municipalities could be categorised based on factors such as available energy sources, size of municipal property holdings, public lighting infrastructure, and the presence of facilities like swimming pools, sports arenas, and cultural centres.

Engaging residents and fostering informed, "smart" consumers can be achieved through various means, including the establishment of green energy agencies, climate agencies, or a one-stop-shop advisory network. While these entities may vary in name, their core purpose is the same: to provide comprehensive guidance on the resource requirements, funding sources, and optimal sequencing for implementing energy efficiency or renewable energy investments. Regarding the latter it



should be explicitly stated that thermal insulation upgrades should precede any mechanical system modernizations in all cases.

It is important to point out that **these agencies or advisory points should not only receive clients, but actively seek out alternative methods of knowledge dissemination** to reach even the less engaged segments of the population.

▶ LOCAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD REWARD ADHERENCE TO ESTABLISHED PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS!

To increase trust in the products used for building renovations, **businesses in the sector should set minimum standards among themselves. Municipalities should prioritise businesses that participate in such collaborative efforts.** This approach can significantly reduce risks associated with potentially poor construction quality. An excellent example of the effectiveness of such self-regulating collaborations is the initiative launched by facade insulation companies under the umbrella of the Hungarian Building and Plaster Association.

▶ EASIER FINANCING, INNOVATIVE ENERGY PRODUCTION – MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD SEEK CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS!

During the energy consultations conducted by the Equilibrium Institute, numerous practical examples demonstrated the benefits of collaborations and alliances across various levels and topics. Below, we showcase two areas where creative cooperation can significantly enhance resilience during crises.

▶ **Municipalities often face difficulties in obtaining loans** due to regulatory requirements necessitating government approval. This limitation makes it difficult to carry out energy investments, which are often very costly, and it also prevents municipalities from responding quickly enough in a crisis. **Municipalities should join forces with market players to facilitate financing!** Many entrepreneurs can relatively easily access favourable loan structures, such as the Széchenyi Loan. To overcome financing difficulties, it is always worthwhile to explore whether

such cooperation can be established in the spirit of common goals. In such cases, the renewable energy contractor will take out a loan for the renewable energy investment (solar plant, ground source heat pump system, possibly wind farm). The contractor will own the asset until the end of the payback period, but will supply electricity or heat to the municipality, and at the end of the payback period the asset will be transferred to the municipality. Another possible implementation involves a local entrepreneur installing a renewable energy system with a capacity exceeding their needs and sharing the excess with the municipality under an agreement. This requires forming an energy community.

▶ **Let's establish energy communities!** The idea is to exploit the potential of the various actors' different energy production and consumption patterns. While some important elements remain to be seen, let's keep an eye on the regulatory developments. The spread of energy communities would be particularly important in the current energy crisis. **In energy communities, consumers can produce a portion of their own heating and electricity, which is then shared within the community.** This offers a good chance for reducing energy costs, strengthening the diversification of energy sources, better utilising financial resources, and partially addressing issues such as feed-in and balancing.

There are essentially two main types of energy communities, and with an appropriate regulatory environment, both can be useful elements of the transition:

▶ the case of Bábolna is an example of a **pilot large-scale energy community implemented by the municipality**

▶ **grassroots energy community initiatives** can also have spectacular energy and community-building benefits

For more information on the first type, please contact [the Association of Hungarian Energy Communities and Resilience Service Providers](#), and for the second type, the [Solidarity Economy Centre](#).

LET'S RENOVATE OUR BUILDINGS!

Buildings account for 40 percent of the country's final energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, upgrading obsolete buildings is key to the resilience of municipalities. All municipalities should start energy efficiency building renovation programmes as soon as possible.

Besides public subsidies, modernisation **can also be financed by own resources, loans or through the so-called ESCO model.** In the case of the latter, the ESCO company finances the energy upgrade of the building and the resulting cost savings are shared between the energy consumer and the investor on the basis of a predetermined scheme. The main advantages of this solution are that it does not require any upfront capital from the owner and that the ESCO company assumes both the risk and the organisation of the renovation work. **The ESCO model, much like in the case of using the municipality's own resources, offers the possibility for a municipality to be able to launch an energy efficiency renovation programme without state assistance.**

In Ajka, for example, a comprehensive housing renovation programme has been running for two decades, and in recent years it has operated with a combination of 50 percent self-financing and 50 percent municipal subsidies. When the renovation programme was launched in 2003, the main objective was to increase the aesthetic value of the properties, but **today the renovations typically include energy efficiency measures.** Over this period, about 67 percent of the city's approximately 9,300 apartments have undergone some form of renovation, and about 60 percent of these renovations have resulted in energy savings. Other municipalities should learn from such experiences. Above all, **municipalities should dare to integrate energy efficiency requirements into residential renovation tenders! This will pay off for municipalities and property owners alike in the foreseeable future by reducing energy costs and increasing the energy independence and crisis resilience of the municipality.**

When renovating buildings, **deep renovation is the ideal solution, with energy savings of up to 60 percent.** However, if the municipality does not have sufficient funds all at once, deep renovations can be implemented in several

stages. To ensure the proper sequence, it is also important for the municipality to have access to adequate energy expertise.

In the case of buildings with limited financial resources, and especially those under heritage preservation, **modern thermal insulation of the windows and doors can also make a significant improvement.** Such technologies can reduce the heat loss of a conventional window by up to 70-80 percent.

LET'S REDUCE THE USE OF NATURAL GAS!

Over the past two years, it has become clear that reducing natural gas consumption is not only a matter of climate protection but also a critical issue of energy security, competitiveness, and even security policy. **The possibilities for substitution largely depend on the specific conditions of each municipality: in Pápa, for example, the use of sewage sludge for biogas is being considered,** but it is also worth exploring the potential of utilising industrial waste heat, geothermal energy, or solar and wind energy. **A qualified energy expert can be of great help in finding the right solution for each municipality.**

LET'S SWITCH TO LED SYSTEMS FOR PUBLIC STREET LIGHTING AND UPGRADE INDOOR LUMINAIRES!

Despite being the most energy-efficient solution for municipal electricity consumption, many Hungarian municipalities have yet to transition to LED lighting. In addition, the light output of today's LED street lighting exceeds that of conventional, gas-discharge street lighting. LED solutions also improve the quality of street lighting (light distribution, horizontal illumination, uniformity). Expert estimates indicate that only 23 percent of Hungary's public lighting fixtures currently use LED technology, with about 5 percent capable of adjusting light output (and thus electricity consumption). This latter capability allows for reduced energy usage during late night and early morning hours.

Based on the consultations, switching public lighting to smart LED systems could potentially reduce electricity consumption by around 50 percent, leading to substantial cost savings.



The planned phase-out of gas-discharge light sources by 2027 poses a significant risk to the provision of public lighting for municipalities. According to experts, approximately 2800 Hungarian settlements have yet to undergo LED conversion for public lighting. Let's avoid a scenario where the demand for LED conversion floods the market at the end of 2026 and the beginning of 2027 across thousands of municipalities simultaneously! Starting the modernization process early will result in lower costs and earlier reductions in operational expenses for public lighting.

Modernisation is also the only way to avoid a shortage of lighting in municipal buildings due to the phase-out of older types of fluorescent and compact fluorescent luminaires last year and the depletion of stocks. This case also shows that planning is important to ensure that the increased demand does not hit the market all at once, driving up the cost of modernization.



LET'S HELP PEOPLE LIVING IN ENERGY POVERTY!

Energy crises, which will become more frequent in the future, will always have the greatest direct impact on those affected by energy poverty. When formulating long-term municipal strategies, particular attention must be paid to this group, and targeted policy measures must be implemented to prevent the emergence of unmanageable crisis situations.

Energy consultations carried out by the Equilibrium Institute show that municipalities in general consider reducing energy poverty to be important, but that measures to address energy poverty are not always included in their plans.

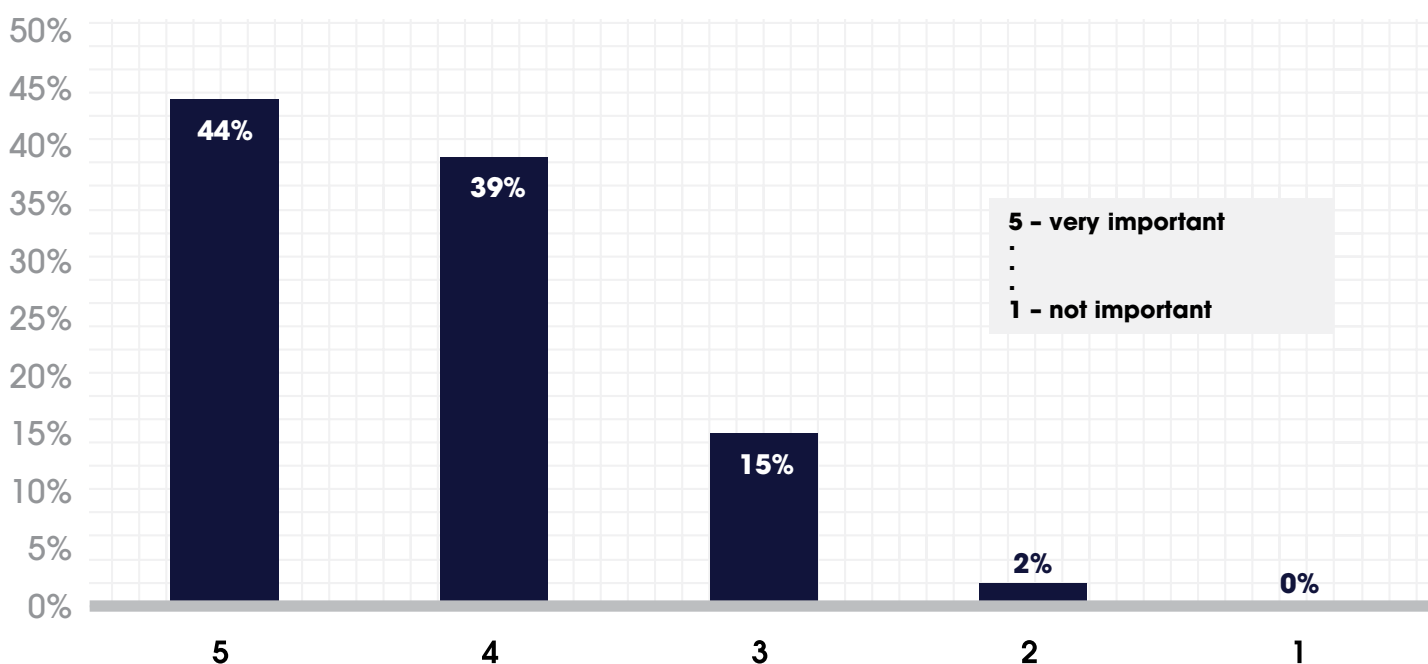






Figure 4: How important does the local government consider the reduction of energy poverty in its municipality? (Source: consultation series conducted by the Equilibrium Institute between October 2023 and March 2024).

According to a survey conducted by the Equilibrium Institute, 33 percent of the municipalities plan to introduce or increase the amount of social fuel subsidies, 50 percent

plan to implement new measures against energy poverty, and 60 percent aim to increase resources for social support and/or expand social services in general.

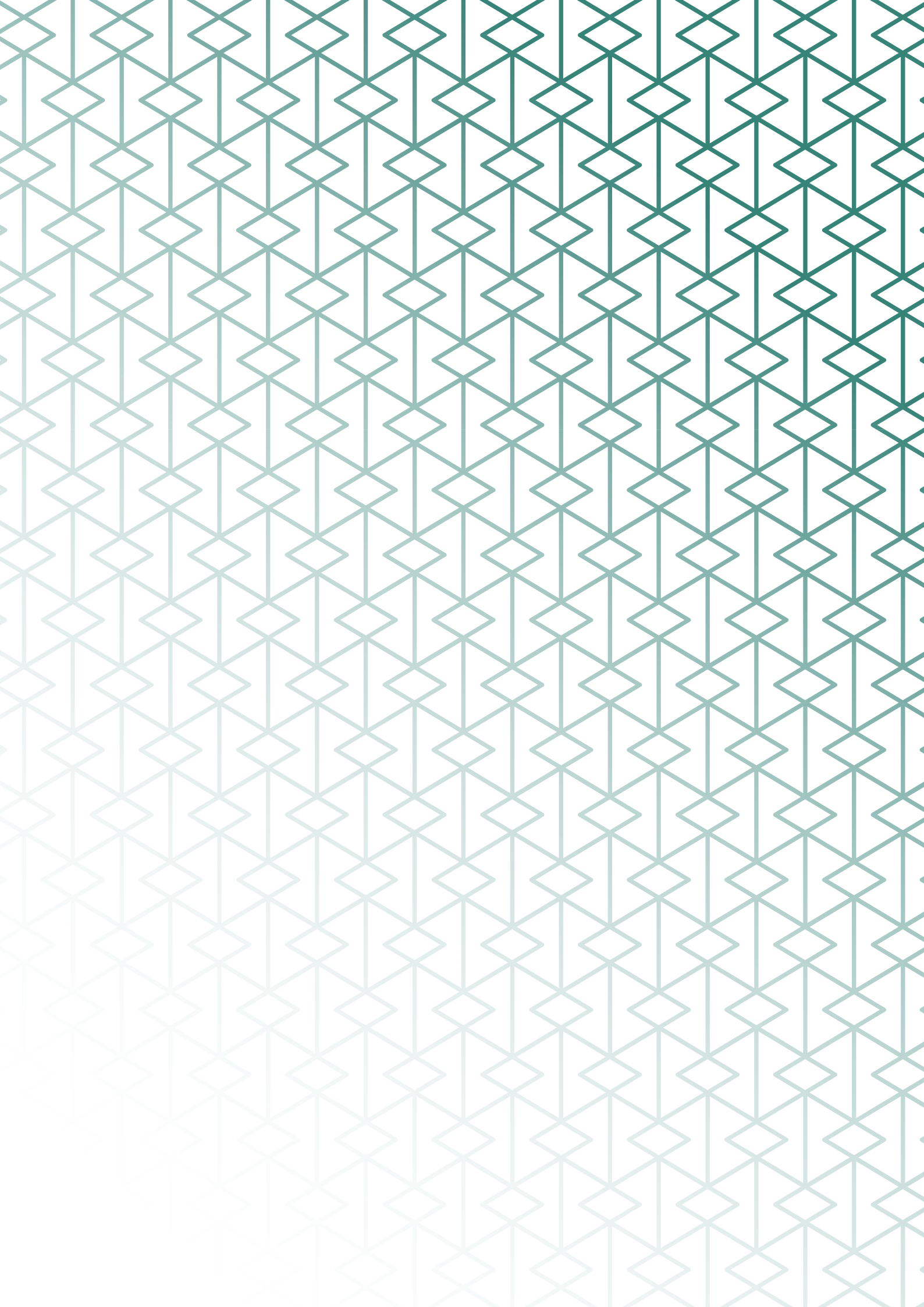
Let's take decisive action against energy poverty!

-  **Let's create a municipal firewood storage program** to ensure that those living in energy poverty have access to adequate quality firewood!
-  When announcing housing renovation grant schemes, **special consideration (such as higher subsidy intensity) should be given to those affected by energy poverty!**
-  **Let's expand the social housing stock**, and let's start its energy renovation as soon as possible!
-  **LET'S UTILISE THE OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OBLIGATION SCHEME (EKR) AND TAX INCENTIVES FOR ENERGY-SAVING MODERNIZATIONS!**

The opportunities offered by the corporate tax credit and the Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme can make it much easier to finance energy-saving retrofits – let's take advantage of this opportunity! Both the tax incentive and the EKR require an external party to certify the energy savings – **this is something to consider before investing.**

The **corporate tax credit** is aimed at businesses, so the municipality itself cannot directly benefit from it. However, entities like the municipality's operating company or outsourced facilities like a public bath may qualify. Since an audit is mandatory both before and after the investment, it is crucial for a company subject to corporate tax to have the assessment conducted by a tax auditor before the investment and to incorporate the auditor's energy-saving recommendations into the procurement specifications.

The **Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme** is a market-based mechanism that obliges designated actors in the energy market to achieve a certain level of energy savings for end-users in proportion to their energy sales. Obligated parties can include electricity traders, natural gas traders, and universal electricity or natural gas service providers. As **municipalities are also end-users, EKR obligated parties can account for their energy savings.** In practice, this means that **it is profitable for them to "purchase" the energy savings achieved by municipal energy efficiency projects, making them interested in partially or even fully financing such investments.** The EKR also requires an external actor to propose concrete energy efficiency measures in advance. The website of the Hungarian Energy and Public Utility Regulatory Authority provides a [list of specific measures](#) that could generate EKR revenue for the municipality – it is worth planning energy efficiency investments based on these guidelines.



THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE'S POLICY PROPOSALS

AREA	PROPOSAL
STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS	Let's take advantage of the opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange and networking!
	Let's integrate green energy considerations into decision-making!
	Municipalities should employ energy experts, independently or in collaboration with other municipalities!
	Let's train more energy experts!
	Smart users for smart systems!
	Local governments should reward adherence to established professional standards!



TO STRENGTHEN THE RESILIENCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

AREA	PROPOSAL
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**STRENGTHENING THE
RESILIENCE OF
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

Easier financing, innovative energy production - municipalities should seek creative partnerships!

Let's renovate our buildings!

Let's reduce the use of natural gas!

Let's switch to LED systems for public street lighting and upgrade indoor luminaires!

Let's help people living in energy poverty!

Let's utilise the opportunities provided by the Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme (EKR) and tax incentives for energy-saving modernizations!

ABOUT US

The Equilibrium Institute is Hungary's largest independent, future-oriented policy think tank.

In line with the vision of Hungary's future presented in our publication entitled Hungary 2030, the Equilibrium Institute works on creating a smart and environmentally cleaner nation rooted in a strong community. To this end, we write widely appealing and practical policy proposals that serve the development of our country, and we discuss these jointly with the best domestic and international experts.

Our goal is to ensure that the current and future political, economic, and cultural decision-makers learn about our recommendations, come to agree with them and implement them.

The staff members of the Equilibrium Institute and the members of its Advisory Board are renowned experts in Hungary who are considered to be among the best researchers and analysts in their respective fields. The work of the Institute is helped by more than 30 experts, including economists, sociologists, political scientists, lawyers, urbanists, and climate researchers.



OUR EXPERTS



TAMÁS BOROS

Executive director and co-founder

Tamás Boros is the executive director and co-founder of the Equilibrium Institute. He was 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.

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.



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.

ÁKOS KOZÁK

Director of Business Relations and co-founder

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.



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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.



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