

Report on the Equilibrium Institute's Activities in 2024

On the Path to a Smarter, Cleaner,
and More Successful Hungary



Equilibrium
Institute

Future for Hungary ▶▶

Equilibrium Institute



DEAR FRIENDS,

How can we entice the 770,000 Hungarians who moved abroad to return home? How can we reform our cultural funding system so that Hungarian works become internationally recognized and in demand? How can Hungary truly become a water-rich country and prevent the desertification of certain regions?

These are just a few of the questions the Equilibrium Institute tackled in 2024. We are honoured that **our proposals garnered significant interest from policymakers in both the governing and opposition parties, mayors, leaders of major companies, professional organisations, research institutes, and—through our more than 800 media appearances—the wider public as well.**

In addition to our policy proposals, **we developed Hungary’s first Settlement Index**, ranking the country’s 3,155 municipalities and 23 districts of Budapest based on statistical data. This tool provides local decision-makers with **guidance on areas where their towns and cities could benefit from further development.** To support this initiative, we organised a high-profile conference at the Royal Palace of Gödöllő in collaboration with our partners.

Last year, **we also published our quarterly economic forecasts, the VOSZ Barometer** showcasing the entrepreneurial climate, and our **Poverty Research** tracking the evolution of poverty in Hungary. One of our most celebrated projects was a **virtual reality-based urban vision concept**, where we presented a visually striking depiction of how a Budapest district would look if the Equilibrium Institute’s policy recommendations were fully implemented.

In 2024, we organised several prestigious professional events. **We launched Hungary’s new international security conference, the Budapest Energy and Security Talks**, which brought together over 300 experts and decision-makers from 11 countries. **We co-hosted the Smart Budapest Forum**, focusing on enhancing Budapest’s appeal and its development. Additionally, we initiated a **wide-ranging professional collaboration and consultation aimed at renewing Hungary’s housing stock.**

We are especially proud that the **Equilibrium Institute was selected as the official Hungarian partner for the NATO Summit in Washington**, further solidifying our professional authority and international recognition as a think tank.

One of the core values of the Equilibrium Institute is our belief in the innovative power of collaboration. That is why not only is our advisory and research team—composed of some of the country’s best experts—continuously expanding, but we also maintain an ongoing dialogue with Hungary’s political and economic decision-makers. **In 2024, we consulted with hundreds of government, opposition, and independent decision-makers, not only in Budapest but also in over 40 different rural municipalities.** Our think tank now **collaborates with 35 international partners** to work towards a **more successful Hungary by 2030.**

We are proud to have maintained our full professional and financial independence for the fourth consecutive year. Thank you for your continued support, attention, and ideas that have helped our work so far. We invite you to continue following and supporting us in 2025!

2 January, 2025 Budapest

Tamás Boros
Executive Director of the Equilibrium Institute



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1. THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE’S POLICY PROPOSALS FOR 2024

In 2024, the Equilibrium Institute developed and presented policy proposal packages across four comprehensive topics to decision-makers. Each policy publication is preceded by months of consultations with policymakers and stakeholders. During this process, we ensure the inclusion of statistical data, relevant literature, expert opinions from key figures in the field, and the practical experiences of those affected.

Our policy packages are distributed to the government, all opposition and governing party Members of Parliament, mayors, other political and professional decision-makers, as well as the media.

HOW CAN WE BRING BACK HUNGARIANS WHO HAVE MOVED ABROAD?

In 1990, nearly 400,000 Hungarians lived abroad on a permanent basis. Over the next 30 years, this figure rose significantly, reaching approximately 770,000 Hungarians living in various countries around the world by 2023. The scale of emigration is not only important from a demographic perspective; it also impacts economic growth, the sustainability of social welfare systems, the availability of skilled workforce, and the realisation of the potential within human resources. Additionally, the annual amount of money sent back to Hungary by Hungarians working abroad is comparable to the annual EU funds allocated to Hungary, demonstrating that while emigration presents challenges, it also offers undeniable economic benefits.



Moreover, if the Equilibrium Institute’s various return scenarios and return-supporting policies were implemented, Hungary’s nominal GDP could increase by 300–1500 billion HUF.

In the proposal package, we sought and provided answers to the following questions:



- ▶ How significant is emigration in Hungary?
- ▶ How many Hungarians work abroad, and where exactly?
- ▶ How does their absence affect the domestic economy?
- ▶ What are the main motivations behind Hungarian workers emigrating?
- ▶ How many of these workers could be encouraged to return? And most importantly: how?

The Equilibrium Institute’s key proposals for encouraging Hungarians working abroad to return home:



FINANCIAL INCENTIVES:

-  Use targeted return grants to encourage workers in shortage occupations to return to Hungary.
-  Offer tax relief for Hungarian SMEs to incentivise the employment of returnees.

DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES AND ADMINISTRATIVE SIMPLIFICATIONS

-  Achieve a paperless, digital state by 2030!
-  Automate bureaucracy wherever possible.

REINTEGRATION

-  Include returning Hungarians in domestic employment and retraining programs.
-  Support the family reintegration of returnees.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

-  Rely on organisations within Hungarian communities abroad to help bring Hungarians back home.
-  Shift from general country image campaigns to data-driven communication.
-  Encourage cities to actively participate in calling back Hungarians working abroad.
-  Cities facing persistent labour shortages should launch their own targeted return programs.

The complete proposal package is accessible by clicking on the QR code.



I HOW CAN WE ENHANCE THE ENERGY SECURITY OF HUNGARIAN MUNICIPALITIES?

By the end of 2022, Hungarian municipalities faced an unprecedented energy crisis. **The sustained increase in energy prices, international market uncertainties stemming from Russian aggression, and prolonged inflation imposed seemingly unmanageable additional costs** on local governments from one month to the next. These challenges not only jeopardized their budgets but also threatened their ability to deliver the most essential public services under their responsibility.

Between the autumn of 2023 and the spring of 2024, the Equilibrium Institute **visited 15 locations across the country to discuss the most pressing energy**

challenges with local decision-makers and leaders from surrounding municipalities. As part of this effort, the think tank had already developed a proposal package titled **“How Can We Increase the Crisis Resilience of Hungarian Municipalities?”** which was discussed with local government leaders at these locations. Additionally, external experts with extensive practical experience were invited to consult and propose solutions for municipalities to reduce energy consumption and transition away from fossil fuels. **The proposal package includes solutions raised during the six months of consultations,** all of which reflect real-life, practical problems faced by many municipalities. **At the 15 rural locations, representatives**



from over 70 municipalities were present, and the Institute had the opportunity to consult with more than 150 local government decision-makers.

The Equilibrium Institute’s Key Proposals for Enhancing the Energy Security of Hungarian Municipalities:

- ▶ Leverage the potential of collaboration, knowledge exchange, and networking.
- ▶ Integrate green energy considerations into decision-making processes.
- ▶ Train more energy specialists.
- ▶ Promote smart systems.
- ▶ Renovate municipal buildings.
- ▶ Upgrade to LED lighting for public spaces and modernize indoor lighting fixtures.

- ▶ Reduce natural gas consumption.
- ▶ Encourage municipalities to reward the enforcement of established professional standards.
- ▶ Simplify financing and embrace innovative energy production—municipalities should seek opportunities for creative collaboration.
- ▶ Take advantage of the EKR system and corporate tax benefits for energy-saving upgrades.

The complete proposal package is available by scanning the QR code.



HOW CAN HUNGARIAN CULTURE BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE?

Culture is a communal resource that fosters cohesion, identifies breakthrough opportunities, and contributes to collective success. Additionally, culture is a significant segment of the economy, influencing material prosperity: the sector accounts for approximately 4.7% of the Hungarian economy’s added value.

Through soft power, a country can significantly enhance its ability to attract capital, boost exports, increase tourism appeal, and strengthen its international influence. However, Hungary ranks in the lower third of the EU in major soft power indices: 18th in overall country image and 19th in cultural appeal. This is particularly surprising given that Hungary spends the most on cultural services within the European Union, allocating 1% of

GDP—twice the EU average. Despite this high spending, chronic underfunding persists across all sectors, limiting the competitiveness of cultural exports. This suggests that the main issue for the international competitiveness of Hungarian culture is not insufficient state funding but the inefficient and wasteful use of resources and the underutilization of soft power potential.





To capitalize on Hungary’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, along with its geopolitical, cultural-economic, and international influence opportunities, the system of state cultural funding must be made more efficient. Furthermore, cultural diplomacy should allocate more resources to soft power advocacy, emphasizing country image and cultural-tourism competitiveness.

**The Equilibrium Institute’s Key Proposals
for Increasing the Export Competitiveness of
Hungarian Culture:**




 **MORE EFFICIENT STATE CULTURAL
FINANCING**

-  Create a state and municipal cultural task registry.
-  Establish a Performing Arts Monitoring Office.
-  Introduce dual leadership for state-funded cultural institutions, separating artistic and economic-organizational management.
-  Form oversight boards for cultural budgetary institutions, modeled after Anglo-Saxon boards.
-  Set up creative hubs, collaboration networks, and cultural consortia within specific artistic fields.
-  Develop a single-channel cultural financing system by genre and thematic funding areas.

 **TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKET
COMPETITIVENESS**

-  Award extra points in higher education admissions for regular artistic activities or volunteer work in public collections.
-  Launch targeted mentorship programs to connect artists with management skills to aid their success.
-  Make a business knowledge course mandatory in the curriculum of higher education art programs.
-  Introduce differentiated career models tailored to specific artistic sectors to increase the attractiveness of artistic careers.

 **EXPANDING CULTURAL FUNDING
SOURCES**

-  Encourage arts funding through well-monitored tax incentives.
-  The state should host an annual “cultural marketplace” to connect potential patrons with cultural players.
-  Establish an annual state fund for contemporary art acquisitions and collection expansion.

 **SOFT POWER ADVOCACY**

-  Develop a unified, well-thought-out, long-term Hungarian cultural export strategy.
-  Shift cultural export focus to potential foreign consumers instead of Hungarian communities abroad.
-  Over the next decade, expand the Liszt Network coverage by 50%.
-  Establish a Cultural Export Agency.
-  Encourage state-owned companies to support Hungarian cultural exports with financial and in-kind contributions.
-  Create a Central and Eastern European cultural information space to exploit the export opportunities rooted in the cultural heritage of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.
-  Build the Hungarian national brand on the rich traditions of civic culture and Hungary’s international cultural influence.
-  Direct targeted funding through state patronage to promote the international success of Hungarian films.



▶ Require prominent cultural institutions to prioritize increased foreign appearances and performances.

▶ Include Hungarian bands performing in foreign languages in the radio quotas for Hungarian music.

The complete proposal package is available by scanning the QR code.



I HOW CAN HUNGARY BECOME A WATER-RICH COUNTRY?

In the coming decades, the availability of sufficient quantities and quality of water will become increasingly significant worldwide. **Water security, access to clean drinking water, and the predictable availability of water as a critical resource for agriculture, industry, trade, and tourism will become less of a given.**

Contrary to popular belief, Hungary is not a water superpower but a water-scarce country. 94% of Hungary’s surface water originates from rivers flowing in from abroad. Based on the per capita water reserves generated within its territory, Hungary ranks only 164th globally and second-to-last among the 27 EU member states. This presents serious risks: the quantity and quality of water flowing through Hungary are subject to external influences beyond the country’s control.

Climate change exacerbates Hungary’s vulnerability, compounded by the **thoughtless and highly wasteful use of water.** Despite this, the critical importance of achieving long-term sustainable water security is not given sufficient weight in domestic public discourse. Instead of resigning ourselves to this vulnerability and focusing solely on mitigating avoidable damages, **Hungary should strive to establish a competitive edge by building long-term water security.** However, this requires immediate intervention.

The Equilibrium Institute’s Key Proposals for Ensuring Hungary’s Long-Term Water Security:












▶ WATER RETENTION IN LANDSCAPES

- ▶ Restore the meandering flow of rivers.
- ▶ Utilize subsurface storage spaces.
- ▶ Enable local water retention by restoring wetlands.
- ▶ Implement regional pilot projects for retaining water in landscapes.


▶ SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

- ▶ Prioritize water-saving agriculture over irrigation development.
- ▶ Promote precision agriculture tailored to local conditions and water retention.
- ▶ Create dual-use channels to raise groundwater levels.
- ▶ Establish water conservation cooperatives.
- ▶ Implement regional-scale afforestation and protective shelterbelts.
- ▶ Identify areas suitable for water management and afforestation.

URBAN WATER RETENTION

-  Encourage blue and green roofs, rainwater tanks, rain gardens, infiltration ditches, and storage ponds to enhance water infiltration into soil.
-  Reduce pressure on drainage systems by increasing evaporation.
-  Develop sponge city concepts.
-  Continue building separate stormwater drainage systems.
-  Construct additional stormwater reservoirs for rainwater retention.
-  Mandate water retention considerations in urban development plans.
-  Require rainwater retention measures for new buildings connecting to combined systems.
-  Prevent the increase of paved surface ratios in cities.
-  Link new irrigation discounts to the presence of water retention solutions on properties.
-  Introduce pricing for stormwater drainage, and municipalities should reward rainwater retention efforts.
-  Increase per capita green space in the capital to 9 m²/person.

 Protect roadside tree rows with the same buffer zones as other infrastructure.


 Support operational costs for green infrastructure elements with dedicated municipal financial funds.

DATA-DRIVEN WATER MANAGEMENT

 Mandate the registration of both existing and new wells.

 Enforce the measurement of water use.

 Ensure remote monitoring for as many observation wells as possible.

 Strictly regulate and enforce the responsible management of vulnerable water bodies with monitoring and penalties.

 Establish a water management think tank uniting all relevant scientific disciplines.

 Use drone technology, satellite observation, and laser scanning to build advanced monitoring systems.

The full proposal package is accessible via the QR code.





2. THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE’S EVENTS IN 2024

In 2024, the Equilibrium Institute organized nearly dozens of events and participated as speakers at numerous conferences. For the first time, we hosted Hungary’s leading international security and energy policy event, the **Budapest Energy and Security Talks** conference. This two-day international event brought together **leading experts and decision-makers from 11 countries** to discuss pressing issues such as the NATO Summit, challenges in the Western Balkans, cybersecurity, and energy security. With this event, **the Equilibrium Institute established a new annual professional forum for Hungary**, focusing on transatlantic security policy challenges.

Additionally, our think tank’s **urban development, economic, and municipal development conferences**

further strengthened the Equilibrium Institute’s position as a leading domestic expert organization. The goal of these events is to generate valuable dialogue and offer future-oriented solutions to Hungary’s developmental challenges.

In total, we engaged with thousands of individuals in person, discussing topics such as opportunities for Hungary’s economic growth, strengthening the competitiveness of the Hungarian SME sector, the future of education, pressing energy and climate change issues, the role of the state, digitalization, suburbanization, and many other subjects.

WE ESTABLISHED HUNGARY’S NEW INTERNATIONAL SECURITY POLICY CONFERENCE: BUDAPEST ENERGY AND SECURITY TALKS 2024



The challenges of the changing world order and the transatlantic alliance system have a direct impact on Hungary. Since 2023, **the Equilibrium Institute**


has prioritized foreign and security policy strategy development, focusing on responses to Hungary’s geopolitical challenges. In 2024, in collaboration with NATO, we organized Hungary’s new flagship security policy event, the **Budapest Energy and Security Talks conference**. The two-day event brought together renowned **international experts and political and economic decision-makers from 11 countries**, including the United States and across Europe. Speaking before an audience of more than **250 participants**, they shared their insights on the conference’s main topics:









-  The outcomes of the Washington NATO Summit
-  Geopolitical challenges in the Western Balkans
-  The escalating threats of cybersecurity
-  Current and future trends in energy security and energy markets



This two-day international event marks a milestone for the Equilibrium Institute, as our annual conference has initiated a new expert dialogue in Hungary on the most critical issues in domestic and transatlantic security policy. The conference provided an excellent platform for experts and decision-makers to discuss these pressing challenges.

The Budapest Energy and Security Talks conference hosted some of the most prominent figures in global security, energy policy, and diplomacy, including:

-  **Boris Ruge**, NATO Deputy Secretary General
-  **Mitch McConnell**, U.S. Senator
-  **Michal Kurtyka**, former Polish Climate Minister and Atlantic Council expert
-  **Miroslav Lajcak**, EU Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkans regional issues
-  **Beata Daszyńska-Muzyczka**, Polish Presidential Envoy and Special Representative for the Three Seas Initiative

-  **Robert Benjamin**, Regional Director, National Democratic Institute (NDI)
-  **Jörn Fleck**, Director, Atlantic Council’s Europe Center
-  **Tomi Huhtanen**, Director, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies
-  **Tamás Vargha**, Deputy Minister of Defense, Hungary
-  **Lech Wałęsa**, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and former President of Poland
-  **Pekka Haavisto**, former Finnish Foreign Minister
-  **Philip T. Reeker**, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs
-  **Zsolt Németh**, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Hungarian Parliament
-  **Ian Brzezinski**, Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council
-  **James J. Carafano**, Vice President of The Heritage Foundation
-  **Attila Steiner**, Hungarian State Secretary for Energy and Climate Policy





Acknowledgment of Our Partners

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for Eastern Studies – OSW, PHI Institute for Augmented Intelligence, RUSI – Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, Strategy and Leadership for a New Central Europe.

Selected presentations and panel discussions from the Budapest Energy and Security Talks are available for rewatching via the QR code.



LAUNCHING A PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION TO RENEW HUNGARY’S HOUSING STOCK

An exceptional professional consultation took place at the Equilibrium Institute, attended by **Gergely Fábíán**, former State Secretary for Industrial Policy and Technology, and **Roland Papp**, Head of Department at the Ministry of National Economy. During the meeting, we presented and discussed in detail the **comprehensive professional policy package** coordinated by the Equilibrium Institute.

The initiative to accelerate the renovation of Hungary’s building stock was launched by the Equilibrium Institute in the autumn of 2023. The effort has since been joined by dozens of market and professional organizations, representing hundreds of stakeholders.

To overcome challenges impeding the implementation of a large-scale renovation program, Equilibrium Institute engaged in extensive, months-long consultations with the following organizations and industry players, including: **Daikin Hungary Kft.**, **Erste Bank Hungary Zrt.**, **Habitat for Humanity Hungary**, **Lehel Radiátorgyár Group**, **Hungarian Banking Association**, **Hungarian Energy Efficiency Institute**, **Hungarian Construction Chemicals and Plaster Association**, **Hungarian Heat Pump Association**, **Hungarian Green Building Council**, **Hungarian Solar and Solar Collector Association**, **MANAP Industry Association**, **Masterplast Hungary Kft.**, **National Council for Sustainable Development**, **OTP Bank Nyrt.**



This marks a major milestone and success for both us and our partners, as the first comprehensive home renovation program has now been initiated. The Equilibrium Institute first drew the attention of Hungarian economic and political decision-makers to

this issue two years ago, emphasizing that the renovation efforts should start with the so-called “Kádár cube.” One of the institute’s key policy priorities is **the energy renovation of at least 100,000 Hungarian homes annually.** This would not only boost the country’s economic competitiveness and improve energy efficiency but also represent a significant step toward achieving climate neutrality.

The policy package prepared through this professional collaboration is available by scanning the QR code.



SHOWCASING THE FUTURE SETTLEMENTS OF HUNGARY



At the **Future Settlements Conference**, organized in collaboration with our partners, the **Association of Hungarian Municipalities** and the **Urban Development Association**, nearly 150 mayors, decision-makers, and municipal representatives gathered to discuss the development prospects of Hungarian settlements and potential responses to the energy crisis. During the event, we presented the **Settlement Index Awards** to the mayors of the municipalities that achieved the highest rankings in the **Equilibrium Institute’s Settlement Index**. The goal of the conference was to **facilitate data-driven and objective discussions among mayors and accompanying experts on topics such as the development opportunities for Hungarian settlements, local autonomy,**

and energy independence. It also served to recognize the top-performing cities, Budapest districts, and villages in Hungary. **Gábor Mayer, State Secretary for Regional Development, welcomed the attendees and delivered a keynote speech on the renewal of Hungary’s territorial policy.**



We firmly believe that Hungary can only become more successful in the coming decades if it relies on **vibrant, free, and capable local communities.** This is why the annual **Settlement Index** is designed to assist decision-makers in identifying the areas that, with targeted development, **can help strengthen and enhance the success of local communities across the country.**

WE BECAME CO-ORGANIZERS OF THE SMART BUDAPEST FORUM



The 2024 Smart Budapest Forum was organized by the **Budapest Enterprise Enterprise Promotion** in partnership with the Equilibrium Institute. **The event was driven by the shared belief that a livable metropolis serves as a driver of economic growth, a hub of innovation, and a foundation for sustainable welfare societies.**

Budapest’s development is a priority since an economically attractive and regionally inspirational global city is critical to avoid economic, cultural, and political mediocrity. We firmly believe that Budapest, as one of Central Eastern Europe’s leading cities, can and must reclaim its prominent position on the regional map. Therefore, the 2024 Smart Budapest Forum focused on the central question: How can Budapest become the leading city of Central Eastern Europe?



The Forum aimed to provide solutions **to enhance Budapest’s appeal to the hundreds of domestic and international political and economic decision-makers and thought leaders in attendance.** The one-day international conference, featuring both foreign and Hungarian experts, explored the social, political, and economic aspects of developing an attractive metropolis.

INTRODUCING THE EQUILIBRIUM CITY CONCEPT VIDEO

In 2023, we unveiled our policy recommendations titled “How to Make Our Cities More Attractive?”, which address urban sprawl. **At the 2024 Smart Budapest Forum, the Equilibrium Institute presented its city concept video, offering a virtual walk through a model 15-minute city neighborhood that integrates all of our policy proposals.**

The city concept video is available via the attached QR code.



The presentations from the 2024 Smart Budapest Forum can be rewatched by scanning the QR code.



NATIONAL DIALOGUE: CONSULTATIONS WITH HUNDREDS OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DECISION-MAKERS ACROSS MORE THAN 40 CITIES

National Dialogue: Consultations with Hundreds of Economic and Political Decision-Makers Across More Than 40 Cities

The Equilibrium Institute is committed to contributing to Hungary’s sustainable economic growth and social well-being through its policy activities and proposals. We firmly believe that without **on-the-ground work and engaging stakeholders, policymaking is incomplete**. In 2024, the Equilibrium Institute placed great emphasis on **organizing professional consultations and presentations for economic policymakers and business leaders**.

In the spring of 2024, at the invitation of the National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers (VOSZ), we presented our policy package aimed at labor market development during a large-scale conference. The recommendations focused on **increasing the labor market participation of the 55+ age group and gradually encouraging Hungarian workers abroad to return home**. These policies sparked significant interest among economic policymakers.



Since its inception, one of our think tank’s primary goals has been to **deliver our economic analyses and proposals to a broad spectrum of decision-makers**. To achieve this,

in 2024, we visited 27 cities to engage with local business communities and present our macroeconomic forecasts. These events included **consultations with nearly 500 additional decision-makers and 17 presentations for senior executives of large corporations**. In partnership with PwC Hungary and at the request of VOSZ, we also began developing a program package aimed at **strengthening the supplier positions of Hungary’s small and medium-sized enterprises**. We held three **in-person consultations with members of the Economic Roundtable**, which comprises leaders of the country’s largest industries, to incorporate their insights into the Equilibrium Institute’s policy proposals.

Our energy consultation series, launched in 2023, continued in 2024 in cooperation with the Alliance of Hungarian Municipalities (MÖSZ). We held discussions in more than 15 municipalities with local decision-makers and leaders of neighboring towns to identify the most pressing energy challenges. During these consultations, we revisited and discussed our earlier policy package, [How to Increase the Resilience of Hungarian Municipalities](#), with local government officials. Additionally, we invited external experts with extensive practical experience to **propose concrete solutions** for reducing energy consumption and transitioning away from fossil fuels.

As a result of our nationwide outreach, we provided interviews to nearly 50 regional media outlets. This ensured that our **policy proposals reached not only national and metropolitan decision-makers but also those shaping the future of Hungary’s rural areas**.

A report from our energy consultation in Pápa is available by scanning the QR code.



WE ORGANIZED PANEL DISCUSSIONS FOR JOURNALISTS

The Equilibrium Institute ensures that every economic forecast and policy initiative is accompanied by a professional panel discussion. This tradition continued in 2024 with four such discussions, each of which received outstanding media attention.

▶ HOW CAN HUNGARY BECOME A WATER-RICH COUNTRY?

In December 2024, the Equilibrium Institute presented its policy proposals aimed at securing Hungary’s water resources. Invited experts discussed the most pressing challenges and potential solutions in this field. The panel included **Sándor Bardóczy**, Chief Landscape Architect of Budapest, **János Zlinszky**, Associate Professor at the National University of Public Service’s Department of Water and Environmental Policy, and **Dóra Csernus**, Climate, Energy, and Environmental Policy Director at the Equilibrium Institute. The discussion was moderated by **Gábor Filippov**, Research Director at the Equilibrium Institute.



A summary of the discussion is available on Telex.



▶ HOW CAN WE ENTICE HUNGARIANS ABROAD TO RETURN HOME?



“A domestic position offering approximately two-thirds of the income earned abroad would be the most important factor for Hungarian expatriates to consider returning home. Returning Hungarians could play a key role in addressing Hungary’s labor market challenges,” highlighted the Equilibrium Institute during a press discussion co-organized with VOSZ (National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers). The panel included **Orsolya Nyeste**, Chief Macro Analyst at Erste, **Attila Gazsi**, Vice President of VOSZ, **Ákos Kozák**, Economic Research Director at the Equilibrium Institute, and **Gábor Filippov**, Research Director at the Equilibrium Institute.

A summary of the discussion can be read on HVG.



▶ THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE’S SUMMER ECONOMIC FORECAST FOR HUNGARY

The Equilibrium Institute presented its summer economic analysis to journalists, led by **Barna Szabó**, Chief Economist at the Equilibrium Institute, and **Ákos Kozák**, Economic Research Director at the Institute. Their discussion partner was **Balázs Szabó**, CEO of HOLD Fund Management. The event projected that the Hungarian forint would devalue further in the coming months, with the euro trading above 400 HUF in 2025, potentially in the 410–419 HUF range.

A summary of the discussion can be read on Telex.



Hungary’s economic outlook for 2025 alongside **Sándor Baja**, Managing Director of Randstad Hungary, and **László Perlusz**, Secretary General of VOSZ. The event emphasized that household consumption could drive growth in the coming years. Hungarian families largely rebuilt their savings lost during the inflation shock of 2024, and real wage increases may stimulate consumption. The Institute predicted that inflation in 2024 would average 3.9%, decrease to 3.2% in 2025, but rise to 4.9% in 2026.



▶ THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE’S WINTER ECONOMIC FORECAST FOR HUNGARY

During the 2024 winter economic forecast, **Ákos Kozák** and **Barna Szabó** from the Equilibrium Institute discussed

A summary of the discussion can be read on Telex.



I WE ORGANIZED A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA

In collaboration with the London-based **Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI)**, the Equilibrium Institute hosted a much-needed professional discussion on the implementation and challenges of sanctions against Russia in Hungary. This meeting was part of the European Sanctions and Illicit Finance Monitoring and Analysis Network (SIFMANet) initiative, which the Equilibrium Institute has joined. The goal of SIFMANet is to strengthen the EU member states’ responses to illicit financial activities that

threaten democracies and to develop effective policy recommendations.



DISCUSSING HUNGARY’S FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY CHALLENGES WITH FUTURE EXPERTS



The Equilibrium Institute places a high value on collaboration with university students, young experts, and talent development. **In 2024, we began organizing closed discussions for young professionals focused on foreign and security policy.** The first session centered on the U.S. presidential election and its security policy implications for Hungary. The Institute is committed to hosting similar events in 2025 to foster professional dialogue among young specialists and provide opportunities for networking.

CO-ORGANIZERS OF THE CEONET FORUM

The Equilibrium Institute co-organized the CEONet Forum, which addressed topics in security policy, economics, energy, and energy security. Our experts led and inspired dialogue in the forum’s key roundtable discussions. The economic panel focused on Hungary’s growth challenges and new breakthrough opportunities. The security policy session explored global political shifts and the outlook for 2025. Meanwhile, the energy panel provided guidance on future energy sources and the importance of energy efficiency.

For the Equilibrium Institute, events like these are vital for presenting our policy proposals to relevant decision-makers and contributing forward-looking,

actionable recommendations to the discussions. These recommendations aim to provide tangible value to policymakers and business leaders.



WE DISCUSSED THE THREE SEAS INITIATIVE WITH IAN BRZEZINSKI

The Equilibrium Institute hosted an online discussion with **Ian Brzezinski, former U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense** and currently a member of the Atlantic Council’s strategic advisory group. Ian Brzezinski, who also serves as the Institute’s foreign and security policy senior advisor, was interviewed by Réka Szemerényi, former Hungarian ambassador to Washington, about the Three Seas Initiative (3SI). During the discussion, Brzezinski highlighted that while Central and Eastern Europe has seen several cooperation frameworks of varying success over the past decades, the 3SI stands out. Its potential lies in being a regional initiative that

enables long-term development in economic, energy security, infrastructure, and even military mobility, by fully leveraging the region’s geo-economic opportunities. **The discussion was supported by the Embassy of the United States in Budapest.**

A summary of the discussion can be read on [Index.hu](https://index.hu).



WE TRAVELED ACROSS HUNGARY WITH OUR LECTURES

The Equilibrium Institute’s experts were invited to present at numerous prestigious conferences in 2024.

At the request of the Terézváros Municipality, **Tamás Boros, Director of the Equilibrium Institute, delivered the opening lecture at a conference on the future of Airbnb.** In his presentation, Boros provided data illustrating the housing situation in Budapest, offering a foundation for policymakers to develop effective strategies. He also drew attention to one of the city’s biggest challenges: **population decline**, particularly in inner districts.

At the Hóvége.hu Conference, **Marek Bertram, the Equilibrium Institute’s lead analyst, discussed poverty with András Gábos from TÁRKI and György Molnár, a senior researcher at HUN-REN KRTK.** According to the Equilibrium Institute’s poverty research, 75% of Hungarians earn less than the net 400,000 HUF monthly income needed for an average livelihood, while nearly 45% live on less than 250,000 HUF per month. The Equilibrium Institute’s proposals emphasize a comprehensive overhaul of the social benefits system, aiming for greater simplicity, efficiency, and transparency. The Institute suggests introducing a fixed basic benefit of 50,000 HUF for low-income earners, which would be automatically disbursed.

A summary of the lecture was published on [Merce.hu](https://merce.hu) and can be accessed via the QR code.



A summary of the conference is available on [Telex](https://telex.hu).





Public buildings account for 10% of total energy consumption, and the EU aims to renovate at least 3% of public institution buildings annually, achieving significant energy savings. Upgrading public buildings and installing smart meters not only supports sustainability but sets an example for retrofitting commercial and residential properties. The Equilibrium Institute’s policy focus includes deep retrofits for at least 100,000 properties annually. **At the Renovate Europe Day 2024 Conference, Dóra Csernus, the Institute’s Director of Climate, Energy, and Environmental Policy, moderated a panel on public buildings.**

The European Council consistently prioritizes training, reskilling, and enhancing energy efficiency alongside expanding carbon-neutral energy sources. Speaking at the **European Year of Skills Conference, Dóra Csernus** emphasized the intersection of these goals and the importance of developing green skills. The event was part of the **Hungarian Presidency’s program in the EU Council.**



Water security will become one of the greatest societal, economic, and security challenges of the 21st century. **At the Portfolio Sustainable World 2024 Conference, Dóra Csernus** delivered a presentation on protecting and ensuring the future of Hungary’s water resources.



At the Sustainable Tech 2024 Conference, Dóra Csernus moderated a roundtable discussion on Hungary’s geothermal energy potential. Panelists included Attila Holoda, an external advisor to the Equilibrium Institute, Dr. János Szanyi from the University of Szeged, and Gábor Szita, president of the Hungarian Geothermal Association.



Increasing labor market participation among older workers offers significant economic potential. **At the National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers’ (VOSZ) conference, “Rethinking Domestic Labor Market Reserves,” Barna Szabó, the Equilibrium Institute’s Chief Economist, discussed the labor market situation and opportunities for workers over 55.**



3. ANALYSIS BY THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE IN 2024

The Equilibrium Institute firmly believes in the power of data—that evaluating a country’s or city’s successes and failures should rely on objective trend analysis and international comparisons. For this reason, our think tank

regularly publishes reports on Hungary’s performance in key areas such as poverty reduction, economic growth, and major megatrends shaping the nation’s future.

ANNUAL POVERTY RESEARCH

To enable policymakers, state institutions, charitable organisations, and civil society to respond adequately and promptly to the ongoing stagflationary period, it is essential to measure the process of impoverishment, the proportion of poor individuals in Hungary, and the population’s economic outlook with greater precision and timeliness.

The Equilibrium Institute contributes to this task through public opinion research conducted since November 2022 in partnership with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. These surveys represent the Hungarian population as a whole, estimating the current extent of poverty and forecasting trends. Following this approach, the 2024 Annual Poverty Research was also published.

In 2024, 25–33% of the Hungarian population (approximately 2.5–3 million people) live in poverty. 45–50% of respondents manage to live within their means and maintain a balanced lifestyle. The remaining 15–20% experience financial stability, with the ability to save and cover significant unexpected expenses without difficulty. To sustain even a modest standard of living, Hungarians reported that they would need a net income of 250,000 HUF per person per month.

The results of our 2024 Poverty Research are accessible by scanning the QR code.



QUARTERLY ECONOMIC FORECASTS PUBLISHED

Throughout 2024, our think tank released economic forecasts quarterly. According to the winter forecast by the Equilibrium Institute, Hungary’s GDP is projected to grow by 0.6% in 2024. However, growth is expected to pick up in subsequent years, with GDP growth reaching 2.2% in 2025 and 2.6% in 2026. Over the coming years, the primary driver of growth is expected to be consumption: households rebuilt savings lost during the inflation shock of 2024, and anticipated real wage growth in the next few years is expected to boost consumer spending. The Equilibrium

Institute forecasts average inflation at 3.9% in 2024, decreasing to 3.2% in 2025, before increasing slightly to 4.9% in 2026. As the economy recovers, employment is expected to grow by 0.1–0.2% annually, although slight increases in unemployment are anticipated in 2025.

The full 2024 Winter Economic Forecast is accessible by scanning the QR code.





INTRODUCING THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE’S SETTLEMENT INDEX

At the core of the Equilibrium Institute’s political, economic, and social vision is the power of communities: Hungary can only become more successful in the coming decades if it relies on vibrant, free, and empowered small communities. **To support this, the Equilibrium Institute developed its own Settlement Index in 2024. This index enables data-driven assessments of community assets and progress across municipal terms, allowing for comparative tracking of the status of settlements and districts within Budapest.**

For the creation of the Settlement Index, we selected or generated 53 indicators from more than 2,000 variables. These indicators were chosen to capture the key aspects of a community’s development and livability. Another critical criterion was that relevant data for these indicators should be available for every year of at least two municipal terms.

The full analysis and interactive map are available by scanning the QR-code.



THE 2024 MEGATREND INDEX

The Equilibrium Institute’s mission is to help Hungary become a more successful and livable country by 2030. Both our vision for the future and our policy recommendations emphasise that **Hungary risks falling behind not only Western European countries but also its regional competitors if it fails to address the most critical trends and changes shaping the near future.**

Based on the 2024 Megatrend Index, Hungary ranked 21st, placing it at the lower end of the EU’s middle tier, near the top of the bottom third. While Hungary’s overall position has not improved between 2021 and 2024, progress was observed in every dimension except the “smart country” sub-index.

To assess economic, technological, environmental, and social changes in Hungary and other European Union countries, the **Equilibrium Institute developed the Megatrend Index. This index evaluates areas such as education, digitalisation, environmental protection, healthcare, and social cohesion** using objective and long-term comparable data.

The 2024 Megatrend Index is accessible by scanning the QR code.



QUARTERLY VOSZ BAROMETER REPORTS

In collaboration with the National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers (VOSZ), the Equilibrium Institute published **quarterly VOSZ Barometer reports throughout 2024. These reports were designed to**

track the business sentiment among Hungarian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Each quarter, 400 business leaders were surveyed on topics such as economic outlook, operational challenges, planned

investments, inflation, and salary increases. In addition to standard topics, the Barometer also explored special themes, including **digitalization, energy prices, wages, and sustainable business practices.**

The VOSZ Barometer is a calculated index, representing the percentage of the maximum possible 100 points that surveyed businesses achieved across the measured variables. **In the third quarter of 2024, the VOSZ**

Barometer’s main index dropped to 52 percent, reflecting a 10 percent decline compared to the initial measurement in 2023.

More detailed insights about the VOSZ Barometer, created in partnership with VOSZ, are available by scanning the QR code.



I OUR ANALYSIS OF THE THREE SEAS INITIATIVE HAS BEEN PUBLISHED

The Equilibrium Institute has released a policy analysis on the **Three Seas Initiative (3SI)**. The 3SI connects thirteen eastern member states of the European Union along a north-south axis. Its primary objective is to **foster the integration of the region by developing transportation, energy, and digitalization projects**, thereby creating a functional regional market that significantly **boosts Central Europe’s competitiveness through its efficiency and scale.**

The **transport infrastructure investments** under the 3SI are set to enhance the region’s economic and military mobility. By diversifying energy supplies, energy projects will **support the green transition, improve competitiveness, and reduce the energy dependency** of the region’s countries, thereby increasing their energy security. **Given Hungary’s geographical position, the country stands to benefit substantially from many of**

these regional projects. Successful implementation of the 3SI projects could transform **Hungary into the infrastructural, commercial, and transportation hub of the region.** By capitalizing on this opportunity and facilitating the realization of as many planned projects as possible, **Hungary can strengthen its influence and negotiation power within the EU without incurring significant political costs.** The Equilibrium Institute asserts that Hungary must recognize that, **beyond the Three Seas Initiative, there is no viable framework today for genuinely effective and integrated economic development in the Central Eastern European region.**

The full policy analysis is accessible by scanning the QR code.





4. THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE’S KEY MEDIA APPEARANCES IN 2024

In 2024, researchers at the Equilibrium Institute contributed op-eds, analyses, and interviews on various topics to leading news platforms. **Tamás Boros shared his insights on suburbanization trends and the challenges of future settlements. Ákos Kozák gave an extended interview on the challenges of the SME sector,**

while Gábor Filippov discussed ways to strengthen the international exportability of Hungarian culture and analyzed the opportunities offered by soft power. Marek Bertram shed light on Hungary’s preparedness for future challenges, while Szabó Barna co-published an analysis on Hungarians’ saving habits.

I TAMÁS BOROS: THE “DIRTY CITIES, CLEAN COUNTRYSIDE” THEORY IS FALSE

A country’s competitiveness is fundamentally determined by the population density of its major cities: innovation, as well as cultural and scientific achievements, requires living and physically interacting with similar people. Hungarians are one of Europe’s most individualistic societies, and suburban migration only exacerbates this. Those who move to the suburbs rarely form new communities; they treat these areas as dormitory towns. We believe Hungary can only become more successful in the coming decades if it relies on vibrant, free, and proactive local communities. That’s why we developed the Settlement Index, which

helps decision-makers identify areas that, with targeted development, can make local communities more successful and resilient.

Tamás Boros, Director of the Equilibrium Institute, shared his thoughts on the Settlement Index and the role of cities in an interview with HVG.



I GÁBOR FILIPPOV & BERTRAM MAREK: WHAT DETERMINES SUCCESS OR LAG IN THE GLOBAL RACE OF THE NEXT DECADES?

In 2021, the Equilibrium Institute developed its own measurement method called the Megatrend Index to objectively assess and compare Hungary’s progress alongside the EU in key economic, technological,

environmental, and social trends. Published annually, the index evaluates education, digitalisation, environmental protection, healthcare, and social cohesion based on publicly available data.

What drives nations’ success or failure in the coming decades’ global competition? What do the long-term processes shaping our region’s future reveal, beyond the noise of daily politics? Most importantly, based on data and measures where does Hungary stand now?

The 2024 Megatrend Index, analysed by Bertram Marek and Gábor Filippov, delves into these questions. Their analysis was published on Index.



I GÁBOR FILIPPOV: *FROM CULTURE WARS TO CULTURAL EXPORTS – HOW SOFT POWER BRINGS PROSPERITY*

While no political actor questions the intrinsic value of culture, in practice, the state often views it as a resource-intensive yet unprofitable sector, treating it almost like a luxury. This misconception undermines the significant potential of culture to boost a nation’s economic well-being.

How can culture increase a country’s material prosperity? What can the state do to promote national culture abroad?

In 2024, the Equilibrium Institute developed a policy proposal to enhance Hungary’s cultural export potential and strengthen its global cultural appeal.

Gábor Filippov’s op-ed on this topic was published on 24.hu.



I DÓRA CSERNUS: *HOW CAN HUNGARY’S MUNICIPALITIES ACHIEVE ENERGY SECURITY?*

Persistently rising energy prices, market uncertainties following Russian aggression, and prolonged inflation have placed enormous additional costs on Hungarian municipalities. These costs threatened not only their budgets but also the provision of essential public services.

From fall 2023 to spring 2024, the Equilibrium Institute visited 15 locations across Hungary to discuss the most pressing energy challenges with local decision-makers and leaders of surrounding municipalities. Why is energy modernisation crucial for municipalities adapting to

climate change? What state and municipal tasks lie ahead? And where should efforts begin?

Dóra Csernus, Director of Climate, Energy, and Environmental Policy at the Equilibrium Institute, addressed these critical questions in a Portfolio Checklist podcast episode.





I **GÁBOR FILIPPOV: *HOW SHOULD WE SUPPORT CULTURE?***

The deep historical reasons behind Hungary’s state-heavy cultural funding system stem from the destructive efforts of two 20th-century dictatorships. These regimes obliterated, exiled, or dismantled Hungary’s traditional patronage class, including the landed aristocracy, bourgeoisie, and historic churches. Although a new class of potential patrons emerged after the regime change, Hungary still lacks the institutional and mental traditions of private patronage found in countries with more favorable historical trajectories. Coupled with the small domestic market and weak purchasing power of Hungarians, this results in remarkably low cultural spending by households, especially during crises when this is one of the first areas to suffer cutbacks.

In 2024, the Equilibrium Institute developed a policy proposal to improve the efficiency of Hungary’s cultural funding system. Does the Hungarian state spend too little on culture, or could it ever spend enough? Should the market take on this responsibility, or is state involvement indispensable?

Gábor Filippov, research director at the Equilibrium Institute, explores these questions in his article published on Index.



I **MAREK BERTRAM - BARNA SZABÓ: *HUNGARIANS HAVE A HIGH SAVINGS RATE, YET 2.5 MILLION WOULD STRUGGLE TO PAY FOR AN UNEXPECTED EXPENSE***

In the fall of 2024, seemingly contradictory economic reports hit the headlines: significant wage increases were accompanied by sluggish consumption, high savings rates coexisted with widespread poverty, and, according to the Equilibrium Institute, one-third of the population lives in poverty. This raises a pressing question: what’s the truth behind these conflicting trends in poverty, consumption, wages, and savings? Where is the money?

Marek Bertram, senior analyst, and Barna Szabó, senior economist at the Equilibrium Institute, delve into these issues in their article on Telex.



I **ÁKOS KOZÁK: *CLIMATE CHANGE WILL BECOME ONE OF BUSINESSES’ BIGGEST CHALLENGES***

Over the next five years, climate change is set to become one of the top challenges for businesses, according to this year’s report by the National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers (VOSZ) and the Equilibrium Institute. The study indicates that weather and sustainability issues will soon rank among the top three concerns for companies. Currently, however, the greatest challenges for SMEs include declining purchasing power, reduced demand, and an unstable business environment. Business confidence has plummeted to historic lows, further exacerbated by unpredictable regulatory changes and limited access to EU funds.

In the Della podcast by 24.hu, Ákos Kozák, economic research director at the Equilibrium Institute, discussed the root causes of declining business confidence and how government support programs could be made more effective and targeted to provide real relief to the SME sector.



5. THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

The Equilibrium Institute’s team represented Hungary in the United States, Poland, Slovakia, and several other countries, forging new professional collaborations. With

35 international partners, our think tank is part of a broad network working toward making Hungary a more successful nation by 2030.

I THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE AS THE OFFICIAL HUNGARIAN PARTNER OF THE 2024 NATO SUMMIT

The Equilibrium Institute was honored to serve as the official Hungarian institutional partner of the 75th historic NATO Summit. Our think tank was represented in Washington by Director **Tamás Boros** and Chief Foreign and Security Policy Advisor **Réka Szemerkényi**.

During the summit, critical issues for NATO were discussed, including strengthening collective security and addressing climate change effectively. The agenda also featured discussions on the societal impacts of emerging technologies and the necessity of unified international regulations for these advancements.



I WOMEN IN V4 FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WITH THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE

As an official Hungarian partner, the Equilibrium Institute joined a new V4 project aimed at strengthening the roles of **Czech, Slovak, Polish, and Hungarian women in foreign policy, security, and diplomacy**. During the

project’s inaugural three-day workshop in Bratislava, the Hungarian delegation gained valuable insights and further bolstered regional cooperation.

The project’s primary goal is to establish an international network that facilitates knowledge exchange and the sharing of best practices. The next meeting will be hosted in Budapest, organized by the Equilibrium Institute. We extend our gratitude to the Czech Association for International Affairs (AMO), the Polish Casimir Pulaski Foundation, and the Slovak Foreign Policy Association for their collaboration.



I PRESENTING AT THE WARSAW SECURITY FORUM

We are proud to share that Dóra Csernus, Director of Climate, Energy, and Environmental Policy, and Réka Szemerényi, Chief Foreign and Security Policy Advisor, were invited as speakers at the 2024 Warsaw Security Forum, one of Central Europe’s leading security policy conferences.

The shifting global order and the challenges facing the transatlantic alliance system directly impact Hungary. Since 2023, the Equilibrium Institute has devoted special attention to developing foreign and security policy strategies and addressing geopolitical challenges. We actively strengthen our international relations, with a particular focus on enhancing transatlantic and Central and Eastern European professional cooperation.



I PARTICIPATING IN THE GLOBSEC FORUM IN PRAGUE

Tamás Boros, our Director, and Réka Szemerényi, our Foreign and Security Policy Advisor, represented the Equilibrium Institute at the 2024 GLOBSEC Forum, held this year in Prague instead of Bratislava.

As many Central and Eastern European countries celebrated the 20th and 25th anniversaries of their EU

and NATO memberships in 2024, the region’s shared journey toward peace, prosperity, and cooperation marked a critical milestone. In this pivotal year, the GLOBSEC Forum, under the patronage of Czech President Petr Pavel, brought together leaders from governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society to address the region’s current and future challenges collaboratively.



6. THE VOICES AND FACES OF THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE

In 2024, the Equilibrium Institute achieved a total of 847 unique media appearances across platforms such as Portfolio, Telex, 24.hu, Index, HVG, ATV, HírTV, Inforádió, Partizán, regional newspapers, and Forbes. Our conferences and policy proposals garnered significant media attention, leading to **direct engagements with more than 50 journalists**.

Our regional consultation series was consistently covered by both regional and national media outlets. Collectively, the related articles, interviews, and television and radio appearances **reached an audience of over two million people**.

Additionally, the Equilibrium Institute’s digital presence continued to grow. We surpassed 11,000 followers on Facebook, while our LinkedIn page gained a following of more than 1,800 professionals.

Access all media coverage of the Equilibrium Institute by scanning the QR code provided.



THE EQUILIBRIUM INSTITUTE’S TEAM CONTINUES TO GROW IN 2024!

We are proud to announce that **Attila Holoda has joined the Equilibrium Institute as an external expert, providing his invaluable expertise in energy policy!** Throughout 2024, the Equilibrium Institute held numerous consultations and developed policy recommendations focused on

improving energy efficiency, achieving climate neutrality, and supporting the energy-efficient renovation of buildings. **It is a great honor to have Attila Holoda, one of Hungary’s most respected energy experts, supporting us in these efforts.**



7. NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN HUNGARY AND GLOBALLY

In 2024, we successfully established numerous new partnerships, expanding our network to include 31 international and dozens of domestic organizations. We are proud to introduce the Equilibrium Institute’s new partners:



AMO.CZ

**ASSOCIATION
FOR INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS**

Prague



**CASIMIR PULASKI
FOUNDATION**

Warsaw



**CASLA
INSTITUTE**

Prague



**GREEN EUROPEAN
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**HUDSON
INSTITUTE**

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**INTERNATIONAL
REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE**

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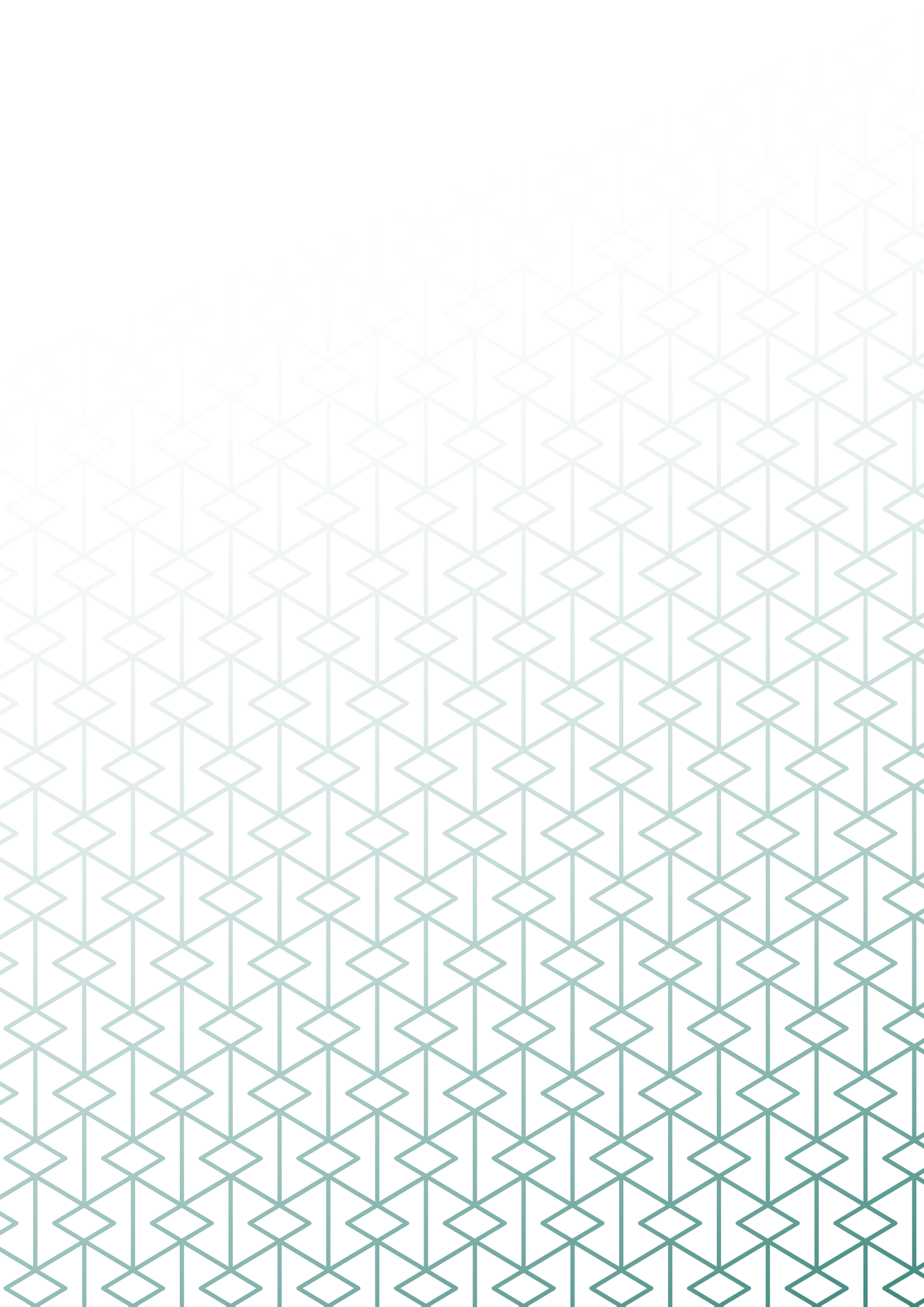
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TAMÁS BOROS

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.



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.

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 of Climate, Energy and Environment

Dóra Csernus is the director of climate, energy and environment 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

Director of International Affairs



Réka Szemerkenyi 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 OGRResearch, 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

Chief 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.

FLÓRA NÁDASDI

Research Assistant

Flóra Nádasdi is the research assistant for the business projects of the Equilibrium Institute. Previously, she graduated from the Budapest Corvinus University with a Master’s degree in Marketing, where she focused on consumer behaviour and marketing research. Then she experienced the Hungarian IT business as a sales assistant. Currently, she assists the Equilibrium Institute in preparing business projects, with a particular focus on creating various data visualizations.



MELINDA WESSELÉNYI

Head of Secretariat

Melinda Wesselényi 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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