



Open Letter – Stand up with Hungary for a #WelcomingEurope!

Yesterday, Hungary's Parliament passed a series of laws that criminalise individuals and NGOs that offer help to migrants in need. With this open letter, civil society organisations call European citizens to sign and mobilise behind the #WelcomingEurope European Citizens' Initiative. Hungarian civil society needs your support now and the EU must end the criminalisation of solidarity across Europe.

Yesterday, on *World Refugee Day*, Hungary's government, led by Viktor Orban, officially criminalised solidarity with migrants and refugees.

While millions across Europe have donated their time and money as part of the #RefugeesWelcome movement, volunteers and NGOs in Hungary will now face jail-time for doing the same humanitarian acts. Even providing a leaflet or legal advice can now land you in jail. Asylum seekers and undocumented migrants will no longer have access to information and critical aid. This new law is a direct attack on the rule of law, freedom of expression and association and our EU fundamental values.

The crackdown has already begun. Last week, stickers were placed on the doors of organisations supporting migrants. Tragically, one of those NGO buildings used to be a yellow-star house in 1944. And now Orban is actively lobbying governments across Europe to follow his lead, ahead of this weekend's EU migration summit.

Hungarian civil society has asked for your help. Despite the enormous dangers, they have joined the #WelcomingEurope European Citizens' Initiative because they need the support of citizens across Europe to fight back.

Hundreds of organisations across Europe have joined *We Are a Welcoming Europe* – the first ECI on migration. The ECI is not just any petition: it is the EU's official tool for its citizens to demand action for; the EU. Now we need to mobilise our supporters and reach 1 million signatures to reclaim our right to help.

Tell our leaders that help is no crime.¹ This is not the Europe we want, but it is the Europe we will get if we don't act!

The Citizens' Committee - #WelcomingEurope ECI campaign

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¹ *We Are a Welcoming Europe ECI asks the European Commission to: Ban the criminalisation of solidarity in EU member states; Support European citizens who want to offer safety to people fleeing persecution; Guarantee effective access to justice to all victims of exploitation and abuse.*