

JUDIT CSOBA

## *Managing the unemployment in Hungary*<sup>1</sup>

### **Changing character of the Hungarian labour law**

With the transition to market economy and after the economy was rebuilt on new foundations, the unfavourable accompanying symptoms – especially unemployment – also had to be addressed. The restructuring and continuous expansion of the system of institutions and instruments devoted to controlling unemployment followed the Western European model in many ways by this time, which had already amassed decades of experience; however, at the same time it was unable to break with its own traditions. The established system of labour market institutions operates in a very centralized way both with respect to its structure and its procedures, and non-state players either do not appear in the system at all or play only a very small role.

The first unemployment benefit was granted on 1st January 1989.<sup>2</sup> Although the government's intention was to grant the benefit for those in need only as a last resort, the number of people receiving it continuously increased. This tendency was reinforced by Act IV of 1991 on job assistance and unemployment benefits, which was adopted after the fall of socialism. This law still guaranteed passive benefits for the unemployed for two years. The table below presents the number of recipients and the amount of the benefit during the past two decades.

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<sup>1</sup> The current study is a shortened version of a longer study. The original study published in J. Csoba, Labour Market flexibility and precarity in Hungary, [in:] P.Herrmann, V. Bobkov, J. Csoba, Labour Market and Precarity of Employment Theoretical Reflections and Empirical Data from Hungary and Russia Wiener Verlag für Sozialforschung, Bremen 2014, pp. 67-150.

<sup>2</sup> Decree 114/1988. (31st December) of the Council of Ministers on the unemployment benefit. According to this law, a person is entitled to the benefit if they had been employed for at least 18 months during the three years preceding the termination of their last job, and if no more than one year had passed since their last employment was terminated. The benefit was granted for a total of at most 365 calendar days within three years, but the regulation allowed for the unemployed to receive a transitional unemployment benefit for another 365 days after the end of the first 365 days at a significantly lower level of provision.

*Table 1: Unemployment support and the average wage*

Year	Unemployment benefit and other provisions independent of income			Income compensation benefit and regular social allowance			Monthly net average wage (HUF) <sup>a</sup>
	Average monthly sum, HUF	% of net average wage	Average number of people	Average monthly sum, HUF	% of net average wage	Average number of people	
1990	3,845	37.1	30,302	3,209	30.9	46,823	10,371
1995	11,891	44.6	182,788	6,590	24.7	234,411	26,637
2000	22,818	41.0	131,665	14,656	26.3	162,245	55,650
2005	39,593	38.2	111,732	16,991	16.5	158,565	103,727
2010	50,073	37.8	125,651	..	..	..	132,628
2011	52,107	36.9	110,803	..	..	..	141,127
The net average wage refers to the whole national economy; private sector before 1998: employers with over 19 employees; after 1998: employers with more than 4 employees.							

Source: Munkaerőpiaci tükör 2012, based on data on p. 391.

Due to the growth of the number of the unemployed and the costs, the period of provision was gradually decreased in the past 20 years. The duration of the originally 24 month long unemployment benefit is currently only 3 months (90 days) since September 2011, which is unique among the European countries.

After having received the unemployment benefit – which was based on social insurance – for the maximum duration, job-seekers participated in an income test and if they could prove to be in need, they became entitled within the social welfare system to income compensation benefit after 1993, and to regular social allowance after 1998. Due to the fact that control was emphasised more and more instead of services and welfare provisions, by July 2012, 53.7 % of the registered unemployed were not entitled to any kind of passive welfare provision anymore – neither to unemployment nor to social benefits. Among those entitled to benefits, only 53,500 people got provision on an insurance basis and 190,600 people on a needs basis.<sup>3</sup> (A munkaerőpiaci... NFSZ 2012:16)

<sup>3</sup> [http://nfsz.munka.hu/engine.aspx?page=full\\_afsz\\_stat\\_merop\\_2012](http://nfsz.munka.hu/engine.aspx?page=full_afsz_stat_merop_2012)

**Table 2: Number of registered job-seekers and their division by provision forms 2008–2012**

Year	Entitled to job-seeker provision	Number of people receiving social provision	Job-seekers not receiving provision	Number of registered job-seekers total
Number of registered job-seekers, thousands				
2008	134	148	161	442
2009	202	156	204	562
2010	188	168	227	583
2011	160	182	241	583
June 2012	51	193	280	524
Participation rate in %				
2008	30	33	36	100
2009	36	28	37	100
2010	32	29	39	100
2011	27	31	41	100
June 2012	10	37	53	100

Source: Ferge 2012: 16

Those unemployed people who are no longer eligible for passive provision have access to active labour market measures. Although a wide range of measures was developed, these mainly focused on placement, training and public employment programmes organised and operated by state and municipal government players. The instruments of employment policy involve participants from the private sector only to a small degree and fall far short of both expectations and opportunities with respect to their effects today.

Several reforms have been introduced in the past years with the aim of increasing the rate of employment. The system of unemployment benefits was transformed from autumn 2005 on. The period of unemployment benefit was first reduced to 6 months (2010), then to 3 months (2012). Passive provision, which had been used formerly, was replaced by job search support measures that encouraged the earliest possible entry into employment. The system of social benefits was also transformed in a way to promote work. People who are ready and able to work participate in public employment programmes organized mostly by the local governments instead of applying for social benefit. Whereas in 2008 less than 7 % of the economically active-age long-term unemployed took part in any public employment programme, their rate rose to 33 % in 2009. However, most of these public employment programmes took only 3 to 6 months, in other words they only provided short-term income for the participants, and moreover, their effect in the reintegration process is highly questionable. (Csoba 2010; Scharle 2011)

The OECD member states spend about 0.05 % of the GDP on similar programmes on average. This raises the standard of living of the employees by 0.6 %. The most noteworthy programmes operate in France, Ireland, Spain and Slovakia, where they affect 1.1 % to 2.7 % of the labour force. In 2000, Slovakia introduced a public employment programme which involved almost 12 % of the unemployed in a half-year programme with an income close to the minimum wage. The Czech Republic introduced a system in March 2008, where personalised activation plans were developed for those who had received social provision for at least 6 months, and they were also required to do 20 hours of volunteer work in exchange for the aid. (Magyarország 2011:26)

The sources for managing unemployment can be considered quite scarce in Hungary from an international perspective; in particular, there is very little available for the financing of active labour market measures.

**Table 3: Spending on the management of unemployment (2011)**

	Total sum in % of GDP	Active measures in % of GDP	Sum spent on education in % of GDP	Sum spent on passive measures in % of GDP
Sweden	2.32	0.96	0.58	1.36
Finland	2.58	0.82	0.37	1.69
Denmark	4.51	1.85	0.54	2.66
Ireland	1.48	0.61	0.28	0.86
Italy	1.32	0.53	0.22	0.79
The Netherlands	2.68	1.22	0.13	1.46
Hungary	0.64	0.28	0.06	0.36
Germany	2.97	0.88	0.33	2.09
Greece	0.47	0.07	0.04	0.40
Japan	0.59	0.19	0.04	0.40

Source: <http://stats.oecd.org/wbos/Index.aspx?DatasetCode=LMPEXP>

At present, the private sector plays a rather small role in increasing the level of employment. The low number of available jobs can be explained by the crisis that still has an effect on the representatives of the private sector today and also – according to many experts – by the fact that the labour market measures which are being utilised do not focus enough on supporting the employment-promoting potential of the private sector, and that the range of employment policy tools is unjustifiably restricted to the support of the state sector. (Adler 2011)

After the fall of socialism an effective employment policy failed to materialise despite the efforts of successive governments. In most cases – apart from its political course – the government tried to improve the employment situation through well-meant but short-sighted experiments that were not integrated into a cohesive system and

remained ineffective as a whole. During the past decades, a peculiar and colourful system of employment-related and non-employment-related forms of labour exclusively characteristic of Hungary evolved in the context of this short-term regulatory framework, as the result of a spontaneous development that could be traced back to various economic and political reasons. Some of these forms of labour that are more or less different from non-fixed-term employment or self-employment have already existed as a socialist legacy for many decades (e.g. family member helping out with the family farm or business), others for 10 or 15 years (e.g. seasonal worker, independent sales agent), and yet others only entered the Hungarian legal system during the past few years (teleworker, hired-out worker, self-employing subcontractor). In other words, the regulation of forms of labour that belong to the grey zone (e.g. day labour) has progressed in an unplanned, spontaneous fashion for several decades in Hungary. (Laky 1998, Gyulavári 2006, Gyulavári 2009)

The Labour Code (LC), which has been amended more than 50 times since the fall of socialism, has remained a law with great political significance. Its content has been fundamentally shaped by short-term political interests in addition to professional and dogmatic requirements. (Kiss et al. 2010)

Among the countless amendments of the LC there were only four that brought considerable change. The first of these was Act LV of 1995. With this amendment the legislator aimed to strengthen the position of the trade unions and the collective protection of employees. Thereby it also determined the fate of collective bargaining on the long term. However, this also entailed the drawback that it became practically impossible to negotiate collective bargaining agreements above the level of individual organisations of work. This ambition of the law also caused a problem because the level of organisation of trade unions had become very low by this time, and it tried to ensure the representation of collective rights in a situation where, in the wake of privatisation and the appearance of foreign-owned companies, many employers did not have a representation of the social partners at all, or this representation possessed very little power. (Tóth 2000; Prigberger 2013)

The next amendment of the LC – Act LVI of 1999 – was passed in a period of change of government, and this made itself felt in the content of the legal act. One of the first provisions effected by the legislator was a change of section 25 (5), which had strengthened the position of the trade union earlier: The amendment of section 31 now granted the right of collective bargaining to the works committee as well. This amendment by the legislator caused huge indignation among the employees. However, this change was called for in the prevailing practical context, and the legislators recognised that it would be futile to change the regulations of labour law toward flexibility (for example, with respect to working hours) when there was nobody to sign the collective agreements with, since there was no trade union representation at the workplace that would be entitled to negotiate such agreements. For it has become clear by this time that a trade union did not exist at most places of employment, especially small and medium enterprises. (Bordás-Vona 2010, Prugberger 2003, Neumann 2005)

On 17th April 2001 the Parliament passed Act XVI of 2001, the third significant amendment of the LC.<sup>4</sup> This amendment was essentially made necessary by the preparation to the accession to the EU, which took place on 1st May 2004. The provisions banning negative discrimination were complemented by a prohibition of indirect discrimination and by ruling that the burden of proof lies with the employer; the rules on collective redundancy were clarified; the employee's obligation to inform the employer was set out; and fixed-term labour relationships were regulated in accordance with EU law. All of these provisions served the goal of legislative harmonisation. However, the paragraphs introduced because of EU harmonisation triggered many debates among the stakeholders. One of the controversial provisions was Chapter XI of Part 3 of the LC, which regulated a completely new legal construct in the Hungarian context, the “hiring-out of workers” (i.e. temporary agency work).

Part-time and fixed-term work had existed for a long time in Hungarian labour law legislation within socialist labour law, as a restricted type of the labour contract, although employers and employees did not really make use of it. These atypical forms of employment were covered essentially by the very same general rules as non-fixed-term, full-time (8 hours a day) work. By contrast, the regulations on new forms of work that were included into the Labour Code between 2001 and 2004 – teleworking and hired labour – were very different from the earlier familiar rules on labour relations. (Laky 1998, Laky 2005, Dudás 2004) Hired labour, through which a placement agency – that has an employment relationship with an employee with the purpose of hiring out this employee – hires out an employee for a fee to a “user enterprise” was seen by many as exposing the employees to significant risks, making customary rights, which would develop in a normal workplace and serve the interests of employees, impossible, and creating obstacles for the development of stable co-worker relationships which are recognised to be a prerequisite for social solidarity.

The essence of another part of this amendment was to reorganise the chapter on working hours and rest periods, which was also motivated by the approximation to EU legislation. The amendment of the LC from 1995 already represented a careful step toward the demands that the employers had already been voicing for some time. This amendment encouraged the transformation of the way social aspects had been regarded, and strengthened the focus on market interests at the expense of the employees. Due to pressure exerted by employers' interest groups, the law allowed for a flexible regulation of working hours, which basically meant that the amount of total working time was extended and restrictions on overtime work were relaxed. After the LC had come into effect, several employers introduced a regime of working hours that was more favourable and profitable for themselves, at the detriment of the employees' interests.

In other words, this amendment permitted a regulation of work based on a private negotiation between the employer and the employee under private law, instead of the earlier official rules governed by public law. This significantly weakened collective

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<sup>4</sup> Act XVI of 2001 represented an amendment of Act XXII of 1992 on the Labour Code (LC) and related legal acts with the aim of legislative harmonisation.

protection and made the conditions of employment and the representation of employees' interests dependent on their bargaining power.

The fourth important amendment of the LC, Act I of 2012 marked a return to the liberal values. As a result the employees suffered a further significant loss of status compared to their earlier situation. The severance pay for employees near retirement age and the amount of the normal leave of absence was reduced. The rules of termination of employment were modified to the detriment of the workers. Now people are not entitled to protection from a layoff anymore during a sick leave. According to the earlier rules a fixed-term employment contract automatically became a non-fixed-term one if the employee kept working with the employer's knowledge for at least one more day. This has changed now according to the new rules: without a new work contract the employment relationship automatically terminates on the last day of the fixed period. After the amendment of the LC the employer can also terminate – under certain circumstances – a fixed-term employment relationship with a normal notice.

In summary one may say with regard to the amendments of the LC that whereas there have been several more or less substantial shifts compared to the original situation in 1991, a conceptual change is evident in one respect in the legal regulation of employment: the legal rights that are guaranteed by the welfare state in order to protect employees are being gradually eroded to the benefit of the employers. This is evident in the fact that termination of employment has been facilitated, and minimal wage as well as obligatory benefits have been drastically reduced through continuous changes to the Labour Code. (Kiss et al. 2010)

### **Weaker security and stronger control in legal regulation**

It is not only the Labour Code – which serves the protection of employees increasingly less – that has undergone substantial changes in the period under discussion, but also the Social Act, which regulates the situation of marginalised groups on the edge of the labour market or those who have lost their jobs. When Act III of 1993 (the Social Act) was amended in 1996, the intention to introduce more stringent checks for the beneficiaries of social provision, to restrict the existing social protection, and to strengthen the supervisory function of the state became more prominent. The amendment stipulated that payment of needs-based social benefits for the unemployed by the municipalities must be made dependent on the required cooperation of the beneficiary with the municipal family support centre. This meant that social services which had earlier been provided for voluntary clients now had to be delivered by the social workers to clients required to participate, and in case this requirement was violated they had to apply sanctions which would have an effect on the livelihood of these clients. (Gilbert 1998, Csoba 2010a)

The supervisory role and the fact that unemployment benefits depended on certain conditions had already been present in the Hungarian welfare system before 1996, but verifying whether the clients fulfilled these requirements had not been the duty of

social workers or welfare services, but of members of the staff of labour market institutions, typically those working in administrative positions. Before the Social Act came into force, Governmental Decree 43/1992 (11th March) had regulated the social support of those unemployed persons who were no longer covered by unemployment benefit within the system of social governance. This support was a fixed sum, and the conditions of eligibility were based on the principle of neediness, as opposed to unemployment benefit, which was a type of insurance. To be eligible, the per capita income in the family of the applicant had to be lower than the minimum rate of old-age pension. As a further condition the decree stipulated that the applicant was required to cooperate with the local job centre. If this cooperation did not take place, the client was excluded from the benefit. After the Social Act was passed in 1993, the applicant still had to agree to cooperate with the competent labour agency in order to be entitled to the benefit. At this point the separation between the service and the supervision by the authorities was still guaranteed by the law.

However, with the amendment of the Social Act in 1994<sup>5</sup>, the requirement already appeared that the beneficiary had to cooperate not only with the job centre but also with the municipal government. As part of this cooperation, those having received an income compensation benefit for at least 6 months could be employed for a maximum of 40 hours per month in public employment projects organised by the municipal government. The unemployed were required to accept the work they were offered. A further change was that an unemployed person refusing cooperation was not allowed to receive an income compensation benefit for 6 months after the rejection of the place of work or community service offered. At this time it was already the case that a significant part of the long-term unemployed appeared within the system of social governance, and their administration (determining the rate of the aid, keeping contact, supervision, participation in public employment) was the duty of administrative staff working for the municipalities. Thus the supervisory role was transferred from the labour market institutions to the municipalities, and more specifically to their employees (civil servants) working in social governance.

When the Social Act was amended in 1996,<sup>6</sup> a new form of support was introduced, the regular social allowance<sup>7</sup> (RSZS). People who had not received unemployment benefit earlier but had cooperated with the municipality or with the job centre for a certain time were also entitled to this form of provision. A broad group of people who had not received any provision now applied for regular social allowance. However, because of the size of this target group the officials working in social governance were only able to deal with their administration (verification of eligibility for benefits, and payment of these benefits), but not with counselling for the recipients of the benefits,

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<sup>5</sup> Act VI of 1994 (in force since 1st February 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Act CXXVIII of 1996 (in force since 1st January 1997)

<sup>7</sup> Since the income compensation benefit introduced by the 1993 Social Act could only be paid for a maximum of 24 months, those in need only became eligible for regular social allowance after this period had elapsed. The rate of regular social allowance was different from the earlier income compensation benefit: it amounted to 70 % of the current minimum rate of old-age pension, but the period of payment was unlimited in this case.

nor supporting them in leaving unemployment. Therefore a number of support services for recipients of benefits were introduced gradually and operated by social workers in the municipalities' family support services, which could be utilised by the clients on a voluntary basis.

The next change of legislation affecting the recipients of social aid entered into force on 1st May 2000,<sup>8</sup> when the cooperation of those receiving regular social allowance was specified as an obligation in the Social Act, as opposed to its voluntary status in the earlier years. This amendment marked the birth of the legal framework of conditional welfare provision, because since then proof of neediness was not sufficient anymore; what was also required from now on was a proof of 'worthiness'. The primary goal of the required checks by the family support services was to limit the constantly growing number of clients, and to urge clients who were able to work to enter the primary labour market. However, the objectives that professionals working in the social field were expected to achieve – promoting the return of inactives to the labour market, addressing difficulties that arise from their disadvantaged situation, and reducing budget spending – proved to be infeasible because of the low levels of qualification, regional disadvantages, a lack of available opportunities for work, and the large number of unemployed persons. A large proportion of the clients was unable to enter employment immediately.

In September 2005, the policy makers accordingly modified the regulation of the duties connected to clients receiving regular social allowance, and launched a new programme, the so-called "Inclusion programme". Its ultimate goal was still to facilitate the return of individuals to the primary labour market, but it provided for a two-year period during which programme elements – planned together with the client – supporting the achievement of this goal and the improvement of employability could be implemented.

The detailed provisions on the "Inclusion programme" were set out in Governmental Decree 63/2006 (27th March). This new type of cooperation emphasised the joint responsibility of the recipient of aid and the organisation he or she was required to cooperate with.

The situation of the recipients of social aid and the opportunities of the social workers have changed only slightly since the launch of the "Inclusion programme". Although the long-term unemployed are again required to stay in contact with job centres since 2009, and only those have remained clients of family support services – and receive regular social allowance – who are unsuited for everyday work because of their state of health, their age (above 55) or their special circumstances (family is caring for a child under the age of 14), the everyday activity of social workers in family support centres is still characterised by a lack of resources and uncertainty regarding their own status. Diminishing support, reduced services and extensive application of supervision measures toward aid recipients have become ubiquitous since 2009. The programme

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<sup>8</sup> Act CXXII of 1999 on the amendment of certain laws on labour and social issues (in force since 1st January 2000)

titled “Pathway to work”,<sup>9</sup> which was launched in that year, as well as the “National Public Employment” programme which started in 2011, fundamentally transformed the preconditions for benefits. People of economically active age and able to work were strictly required to participate in public employment as a precondition of aid. Public employment as a form of employment was removed from the scope of the Labour Code.<sup>10</sup> Thereby the wage for public employment sank below the guaranteed minimum income. The income that could be earned by 8 hours of work a day was a gross amount of 71,800 Hungarian Forints, that is, 77 % of the normal gross minimal wage in 2012.<sup>11</sup> Those recipients who are of economically active age and cannot enter public employment receive the employment substitute support,<sup>12</sup> which amounts to 22,800 Hungarian Forints a month (about €76) and depends on the condition that the applicant can provide proof of an employment relationship of at least 30 working days during the previous year. These conditions clearly strengthened the supervisory character even further instead of the service character of these provisions, resulted in precariousness becoming permanent because of the low level of the provisions, and contributed only minimally to the social and labour market reintegration of marginalised groups.

### **The social consequences of changes of legal regulation**

During the past ten years the number and proportion of people living in poverty have grown significantly in Hungary. The 2008 crisis contributed greatly to the phenomenon that precarious situations have become omnipresent and permanent. Its economic and social consequences, including rising unemployment and lower real incomes, have made themselves felt here as well. The fact that people were forced out of the labour market, had difficulties repaying mortgages (which affected broad social groups), and rising costs of living (rising taxes, prices, inflation) resulted in a reduction of the consumption of households and the broadening of gaps in society. With the exception of 2005 and 2006, the income inequality index (defined as the quotient of the incomes of the top and bottom 20 % of the population with respect to income)

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<sup>9</sup> Act CVII of 2008 on the amendment of certain laws on social and labour issues comprised amendments of several legal acts. This act transformed regular social allowance, introduced the so-called ‘readiness allowance’ as another component of the ‘support for economically active age persons’ in addition to regular social allowance, for periods when the municipality is unable to offer community service work to the beneficiary. It defines the objectives of the programme, the tasks and duties of the municipal governments with regard to employment, and contains provisions on financing. Implementation with regard to forms of both financial provision and provision in kind is regulated by Governmental Decree 341/2008 (31st December).

<sup>10</sup> Governmental Decree 170/2011 (24th August) on the specification of the wage for community service work and the guaranteed wage for community service work.

<sup>11</sup> The net value is 47,025 Forints = about 157 €/month.

<sup>12</sup> Act III of 1993 (Social Act), §35. The monthly amount of the employment substitute support is 80 % of the current minimum rate of old-age pension.

was constantly below 4 in Hungary, whereas between 2010 and 2011 this metric again approach the value of 4 (3.9). (A fenntartható...2013:108)

During the past 10 years the structure of poverty has also changed due to the transformation of the redistribution of income among the social groups. The standard of living of families raising children has deteriorated significantly, especially in single-parent families. It was observable that income shifted away from young citizens – and especially children – to older people, and from the economically active members of society toward pensioners. (Vastag 2012: 293) In 2010 the proportion of poor children was distributed along a broad scale, from 11 % in Denmark to 31 % in Romania. The rate in Hungary (20 %) lay around the middle of this scale. In households with children, poverty is 2.5 times as frequent as in those without children. During the past two years the situation of families raising children has become even worse. For example, poverty among 0- to 17-year-olds has increased from the value measured in 2010, 20.3 %, to 23.0 % in 2011. More than 16 % of children live in households that do not have any economically active members. The proportion in Hungary is twice as high as in the Czech Republic or in Poland, but it is also significantly higher than the similar indicators in Slovakia and Romania, or the average rate in the EU (10.6 %). (Magyarország 2011: 30, A fenntartható...2013:107) Thus in Hungarian society it is children and families raising them who live in the most precarious situations! In single-parent families, poverty rate in 2011 was near 30 %.<sup>13</sup>

According to data published by the KSH, the minimum subsistence level in 2011 was 84,000 Hungarian Forints / month for singles (1.01 million Forints / year). For families, this figure is – for 2 adults and 3 children – 277,000 Forints / month (3.32 million Forints / year). For comparison, the average gross income in Hungary is 2.52 million Forints / year. For families with children to earn an income that exceeds the minimum subsistence level, there should be at least two wage earners in the family earning at least the average income. However, in the current employment situation, where the proportion of active wage earners is only slightly higher than 50 per cent, this is rather unlikely. Atypical forms of employment, which are in fact widely recommended in such contexts, do not represent a real solution to emerge from poverty either. In 2011, due to the spread of atypical forms of employment (especially part-time employment), the income situation of people employed in this form has deteriorated to a higher than average degree, and their poverty risk rose from 0.43 to 0.45. It seems that in the context of the standard of living in Hungary, part-time employment does not offer adequate protection against poverty. Their rate of poverty is higher than the national average (16.7 %) and close to the corresponding average rate for people who are not employed (16.4 %). (Társadalmi... 2013:2)

In Hungary, 68.3 per cent of all social allowances consisted in financial provisions, which is higher than the average rate of the EU-27 (65.1 %). As opposed to the prevailing trend in the EU countries according to which the proportion of forms of support or services in kind is growing within the range of social provisions, financial support even gained ground between 2000 and 2009 despite the low level of

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/eurostat\\_tablak/tabl/tsdsc250.html](http://www.ksh.hu/docs/hun/eurostat_tablak/tabl/tsdsc250.html)

provision. Even though Hungary is spending much less on the correction of inequalities than the EU average,<sup>14</sup> social transfer payments that are intended to reduce poverty still consume significant sums.<sup>15</sup> (Társadalmi... 2013:9)

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<sup>14</sup> As opposed to the EU average of 29.5 %, spending on social protection in Hungary only constituted 23.4 % of the GDP. The value of the payments per capita at purchasing power parity was half of the EU-27 average. The only area where the amount of expenses is higher than the EU average is the provision for families and children (Hungary: 13.2 %, EU: 8 %).

<sup>15</sup> Aid that is available on a needs basis reaches those with a low income and the poor through the municipal governments. Municipal aid comprised 2.5 per cent of all social allowances in 2012, or 0.5 per cent of the GDP. (KSH 2013: 3)

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