



NGO Media Monitor

Coverage of events related to civic organisations in the
Hungarian electronic and printed media

April – September 2005



The present report has been made using recycled paper

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Executive Summary

The analysis of media-coverage related to NGOs is one of the key pillars of civic advocacy. **Consequently, the analysis of media coverage of the civic sector is of vital interest for policy decision-makers, civic organisations and lobbyists alike.** Media monitors provide crucial assistance both in ongoing civic advocacy campaigns and the evaluation of final results.

The present summary has been compiled based on monthly monitoring prepared by Partnership Foundation of media-coverage related to civic organisations, reviewing the period between April 1 and September 30, 2005

Based on media coverage of the past six-month period, the following conclusions can be drawn:



Compared to the previous six-month period, the volume of civic media-coverage has slightly declined.

Compared to the October 2004 and March 2005 period, along with the 2 percent decline in the volume of overall media-coverage, that of **relevant lobbying-related civic media-coverage** declined by a significant 8 percent.



Along with civic initiatives relevant from the point of lobbying, there has been a growth in the number of news items without a distinct lobbying message, while these issues have great impact on



the operation of local communities and civic organisations. Reports on the establishment and local operation of specific civic organisations have been printed primarily in local papers.



In the period under review the nomination *Védegylet* for the head of state received large media coverage. In addition, the media paid special attention to Cannabis Society's campaigns for easing sanctions against drug users, and financing problems facing civic organisations, i.e., difficulties related to the National Civic Fund.

Similar to the previous review period, the top three civic issues based on the number of publications are all politically sensitive, which



explains why they moved to the centre of public attention.



The publication of reports related to civic organisations **relevant from the point of lobbying in national political dailies and local newspapers** has evened out and the “top four” dailies have actually made some gains over local publications.



In the field of electronic media, **public television station m1¹ and Kossuth Radio, as well as commercial InfoRádió covered the highest number of civic advocacy issues.** As in the previous periods, the two most popular commercial television stations, TV2 and RTL Klub, continue to cover only major civic campaigns, focusing primarily on initiatives advanced by the Defence League and the Cannabis Society, and issues relate to the financing of civic organisations.



Examining the media-coverage of civic organisations, **11 civic initiatives stand out involving issues that received special attention in previous analyses,** i.e., they have dominated the civic media-coverage in the past 12 to 18 months.



Despite the fact that the volume of overall media-coverage declined only slightly, that of relevant lobbying-related civic media-coverage declined by a significant 8 percent. The change is explained by the gradual increase of news items that are non-essential from the point of civic advocacy.

1. Analysis

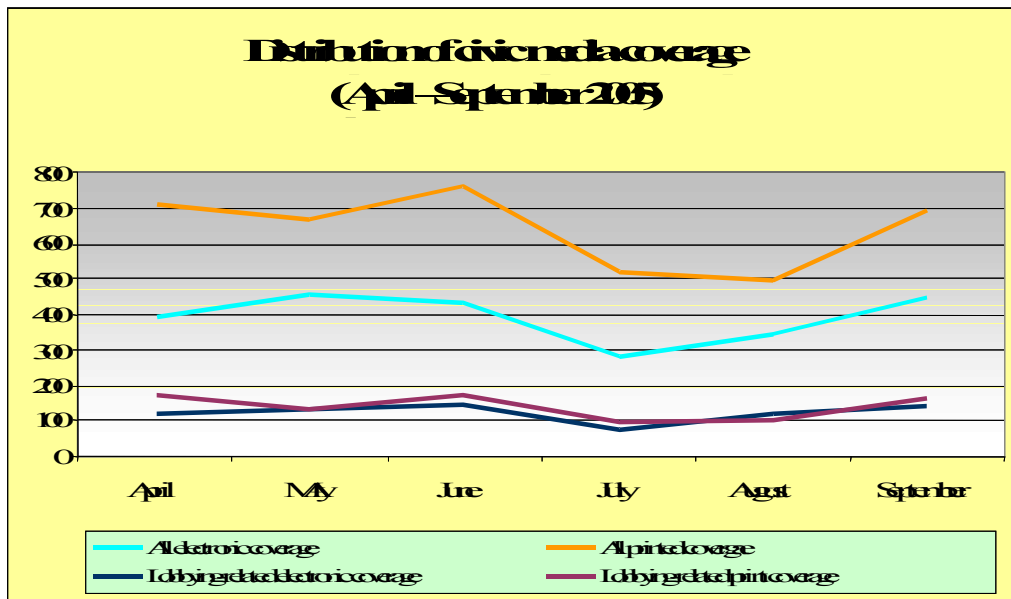
1.1. A GENERAL FEATURES OF THE MEDIA'S COVERAGE OF NGOs

Compared to the previous six-month period, the volume of civic media-coverage declined between April 1 and September 30, 2005.

¹ Before September 8, 2005, MTV1.



Again, we registered such far-reaching initiatives advanced by the civic sector as the farmer demonstration and drug legalisation analysed earlier. **In the period under review, the *Védegylet*'s nomination of the head of state and the Cannabis Society's initiative to ease sanctions against drug users received significant media coverage.**

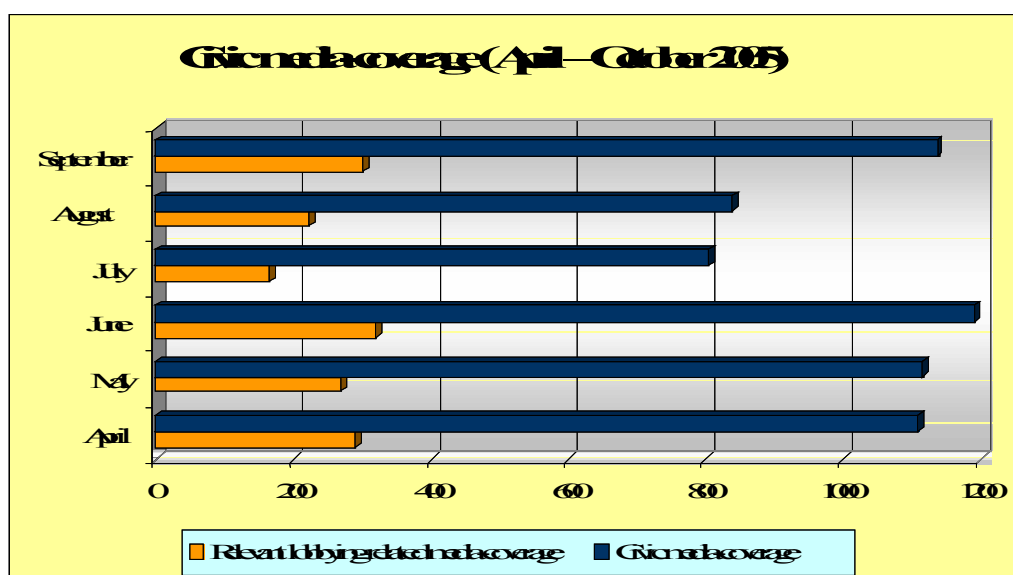


Typically, during the winter months and the summer ‘doldrums’, civic issues are given less coverage in the media. Nevertheless, compared to similar periods in previous years, each year we register a slow but steady increase. In other words, gradually the Hungarian media places more emphasis on publishing news related to civic organisations.

The chart below shows the distribution of civic media-coverage in the past six-month period:

COVERAGE RELATED TO NGOs (April - September 2005)						
	Media coverage		Relevant lobbying-related coverage		Percentage of relevant lobbying-related coverage	
	printed	electronic	printed	electronic	printed	electronic
April	712	397	173	117	24%	29%
May	662	454	133	137	20%	30%
June	760	431	172	148	23%	34%
July	520	284	94	72	18%	25%
August	496	343	104	120	21%	35%
September	694	443	163	139	23%	31%
Total	6196		1572		25%	

Compared to the same period in the previous year, the volume of media-coverage decreased only by two percent. However, compared to the previous six months, the ratio of **relevant lobbying-related issues** declined more significantly from **33 percent to 25 percent**.



1.2. THE DISTRIBUTION OF CIVIC INITIATIVES PUBLISHED IN THE ELECTRONIC AND PRINTED MEDIA

The period between April and September 2005 was characterised by an **extraordinary abundance of topics**. It must be noted that a volume of civic news

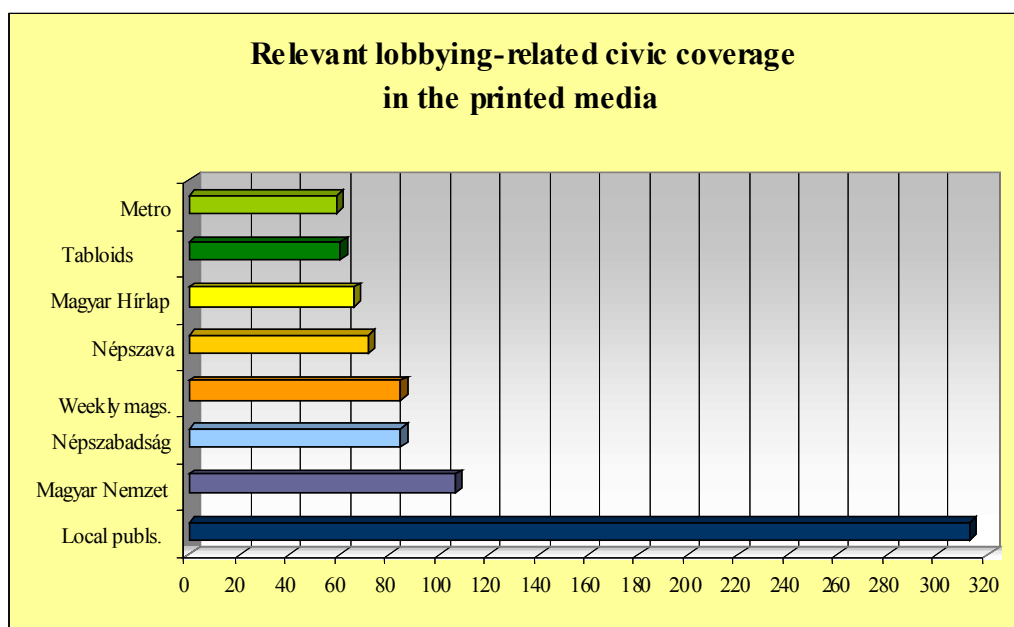


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less relevant from the point of lobbying has also been covered by the media, primarily by local media.

Measurements clearly indicate that in the printed media **the volume of coverage related to the civic sector increases year after year.** However, despite the rising number of civic news items in the printed media, the number of news relevant from the point of lobbying has remained stable or increased but slightly. As a result, the percentage of news relevant from the point of lobbying stagnated or declined in the past six months.

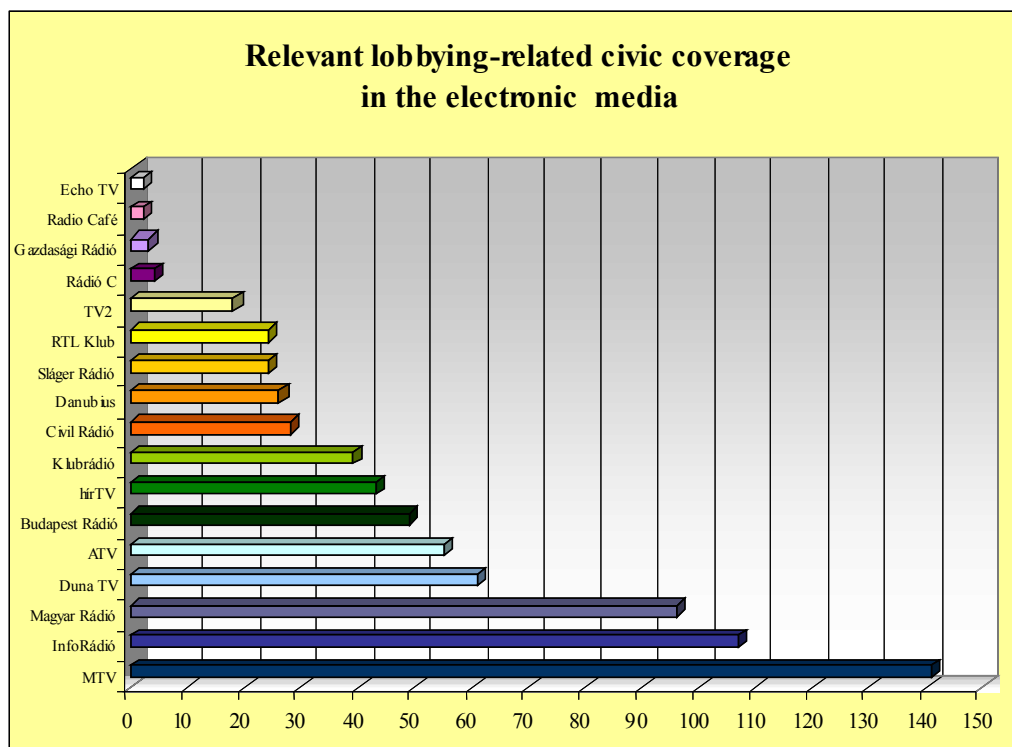
The four top political dailies continued to devote the most space to civic news, publishing a total of 330 items relevant from the point of lobbying. Of all national general-purpose publications the daily Magyar Nemzet stands out; it published news on civic initiatives and issues related to the survival of the civic sector on 107 occasions. Magyar Nemzet is followed by the dailies Népszabadság (85), Népszava (72) and Magyar Hírlap (66). Falling slightly behind the national dailies, local newspapers published a total of 313 items with distinct lobbying messages. It must be noted that **local papers publish a large number of articles affecting the life of the community, which, however, have little relevance from the point of lobbying.**



When it comes to the electronic media, we noticed that television and radio stations tend to prefer civic initiatives that carry distinct lobbying messages. In the **electronic media the ratio of coverage of civic advocacy issues was 5-14 percent higher than in the printed media.**



An analysis of the past few months shows that public television station MTV and Kossuth Radio, and commercial InfoRádió provided the highest coverage of civic actions and campaigns promoting the interests of NGOs.



1.3. THE VARIETY OF TOPICS COVERED BY THE MEDIA

The civic media-coverage of the past six-month period is characterised by the wide variety of civic issues. **Coverage has been clearly dominated by the civic nomination of László Sólyom as the next head of state, i.e., an initiative advanced by the Védegylet**, while other initiatives also received widespread coverage.

Issues preoccupying the general public and NGOs have come to the fore, such as easing sanctions for drug use, perennial “green-issues” or issues related to the financing and survival/consolidation of the civic sector.

In the chart below we summarise civic media-coverage relevant from the point of lobbying, where civic issues reached or exceeded ten publications in the period under review.

NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS ON CIVIC ISSUES²

² In the review period, civic issues covered by the Hungarian media 10 or more times.



(April - September 2005)	
Civic issues	Total
Védegylet (László Sólyom's nomination)	203
Cannabis Society (drug legislation amendment)	100
National Civil Fund	86
Abortion pill (Alfa Association)	46
Civic curators (ORTT, Hungarian Public Radio)	39
Zengő-affair	33
Parking (Society for More Humane Parking)	26
Housing mafia (Demonstration by Victims Organisation)	23
Amendment of the firecracker act	22
National Development Plan (grants for civic organisations)	21
Civic Island	20
1 percent tax contribution	19
Paks (civic organisations versus National Atomic Energy Agency)	18
Anti-racist demonstration	18
Greenpeace (Majak)	18
Air pollution (Clean Air Workshop)	17
Violence within the family	17
„Bridge of Health”	17
Leader+	17
National Road 10 (Clean Air Workshop)	15
Swimming pool expansion on Margaret Island	14
Closure of small post office (Zemplén Association of Villages)	14
European Mobility Week (series of events)	13
Embankment expansion (Defence League)	12
Auchan in Solymár (Clean Air Workshop)	11
VAT reduction	10

Similar to the period between October 2004 and March 2005, in the past six months leading civic news (including the Védegylet's initiative, the Cannabis Society's protest action and news related to the National Civil Fund) stood out among other initiatives covered by the media. In the period between April and September 2005, issues related to the financing of NGOs, i.e., NCA-related issues, were covered each month with varying intensity. Leading news centred on the nomination of László Sólyom, while the Cannabis issue was covered by the media for two months.



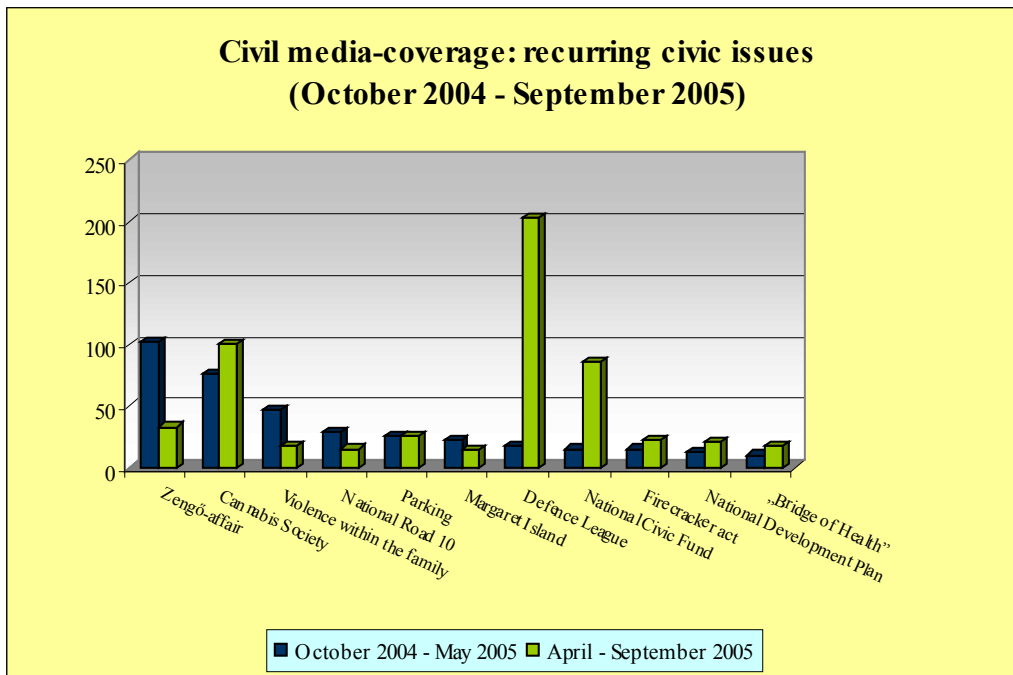
In the past six months, besides the NCA issues mentioned above, the Hungarian media was preoccupied with the Zengő-affair and the difficulties surrounding the election of the president of the Hungarian Public Radio, i.e., the role played by NGOs in the Supervisory Boards of public media.

Among major civic events we found a number of issues that emerged suddenly in connection to specific campaigns, became leading news for a week or a month, only to disappear completely and leave the public in the dark as to their potential resolution. For instance, a number of annual events, like the “Bridge of Health”, the Civic Island, the European Mobility Week, and new topics, like Alfa Association protesting the introduction of abortion pills, all fall into this category.

1.4. RECURRING CIVIC ISSUES RECEIVING REGULAR COVERAGE

There were a large number of civic initiatives that were among the best-covered issues in the October 2004 and March 2005 period; on a quantitative basis, these were among the most prominent civic news. This despite the fact that in a comparison with the previous and the currently reviewed six-month period the weight of these issues shifted, i.e., it was restructured in terms of media coverage.

Based on our measurements, eleven topics can be identified among civic initiatives relevant from a lobbying point that also received coverage in the previous six-month period. It must be noted that the Zengő-affair was one of the leading civic news in the period prior to that as well, between April and September 2004. Along with the Zengő-affair, one must mention the Cannabis Society initiative aimed at the liberalisation of the drug legislation; both issues were among the top three civic actions in the past two-year review period.



2. Methodology

2.1. THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

In our analysis we examined media-coverage related to NGOs in the period between April 1 and September 30, 2005. In the “Civic Media Monitor” we talk about coverage “relevant from the point of lobbying” when the coverage in question refers to specific civic interests and distinct lobby messages, i.e., it contains information relevant from the point of civic advocacy as well.

2.2. THE REVIEWED MEDIA

Our review was based on Observer Médiafigyelő's (Mediawatch) database. While this depository is one of the most comprehensive media databases in Hungary, it may also contain some deficiencies. Consequently, the data may include a 2-3 percent margin of error. Our review extended to the following media:

National television companies	National and news radios
ATV Duna TV Echo TV hírTV m1 RTL Klub tv2	Budapest Rádió Civil Rádió Danubius Rádió Gazdasági Rádió InfoRádió Klubrádió Kossuth Rádió Rádió C Rádió Café Sláger Rádió
National dailies	Local dailies
Blikk Magyar Hírlap Magyar Nemzet Metro Napi Ász Népszabadság Népszava Színes Bulvár Lap	24 Óra, Alföldi Lapok, Békés Megyei Napló, Déli Hírlap, Délmagyarország, Délvilág, Dunántúli Napló, Dunaújvárosi Hírlap, Észak-Magyarország, Fejér Megyei Hírlap, Hajdú-Bihari Napló, Heves Megyei Hírlap, Jászkun Krónika, Kecskeméti Lapok, Kelet-Magyarország, Kisalföld, Komárom-Esztergom Megyei Hírlap, Miskolci Tipp, Napló, Nógrád Megyei Hírlap, Nyíregyházi Tipp, Petőfi Népe, Somogyi Hírlap, Szerencsi Hírek, Tolnai Népújság, Új Heti Hírnök, Új Néplap, Új Pest Megyei Hírlap, Vas Népe, Zalai Hírlap
Internet portals	Weekly magazines
Index [origo] online versions of dailies, television and radio stations	168 Óra, Élet és Irodalom, Figyelő, Hetek, HVG, Heti Válasz, Magyar Demokrata, Magyar Fórum, Magyar Narancs, Üzleti 7, Vasárnap Reggel, Vasárnapi Hírek