



INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S SAFETY SERVICE

The beginnings from 1988 until 1990

During 1988 Dr. Peter Edvi together with some friends started to help refugees from the deceasing communist German Democratic Republic who via Budapest were seeking for personal freedom in the West. For more than one year a merely loose alliance of highly motivated volunteers, this group rapidly became famous for its success. Thus, they also received information about the hair-raising conditions in Rumanian orphanages. For the first time after the collapse of the totalitarian Rumanian regime Dr. Edvi and his friend Dr. László Kövér were given the opportunity during the 1989 Christmas-days to convince themselves of the saddening truth right at the scene, to obtain first-hand evidence and to verify reports by their Transylvanian friends. All efforts to render help on a private basis proved completely insufficient. It was absolutely necessary to turn to the public and to organize help; hence the International Children's Safety Service was founded in Hanover/Germany. The members initiated a comprehensive press-coverage in March 1990; together with moving photos of the misery of the institutionalised Rumanian children the articles went around the world and produced a wave of international help.

In Budapest, too, volunteers became organised. In a historic hour, the constituting session of the first free-elected Hungarian Parliament on May 2, 1990, a group of politicians decided during a session-break to found a charity to help children beyond all political, religious and nationality-related aims. Among the founding-members were well-known politicians as e.g. Dr. Gábor Fodor, ex-Minister of Cultural Affairs, Dr. Viktor Orbán, leader of the Federation of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) and Prime Minister of Hungary, Minister Dr. László Kövér, his deputy, and Dr. Gábor Demszky, Budapest Chief Mayor.

Goals and Organisation

Under ref. No. 6.PK.63395/1. the Budapest civil court registered the "International Children's Safety Service" (ICSS) as a Hungarian association on July 3, 1990. Its non-profit status was recognised under the taxation-No. APEH 7120286376. The statutes and articles postulate the priority of giving financial, social and health-related support and subsistence to children in need, irrespectively of national, political or religious affiliation. ICSS patrons are Dr. Árpád Göncz, president of the Hungarian Republic, Dr. Roman Herzog, president of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Mr. Thomas Klestil, president of the Republic of

- Patrons: Dr. Árpád Göncz
President of Hungarian Republic
- Dr. Roman Herzog
President of Federal Republic of Germany
- Thomas Klestil
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Austria. Mr. Jacques Santer, president of the European Union, has assured ICSS of his support and project-related auspices.

After a modification of the statutes the organisation is directed by a nine-member chair. The two co-presidents Dr. László Kövér and Dr. Peter Edvi have six deputies: Dr. László Csáky, Dr. Sándor Csányi, Dr. Gábor Demszky, Dr. Pál Kovács, Mr. Gábor Kuncze and Dr. Iván Szabó, and as secretary Mr. Viktor Böhm.

As per June 1997, the ICSS has 366 members from all parts of society. Among them we find members of the Hungarian government, e.g. the ex-Prime Minister Mr. Gyula Horn and the ex-Minister of the Interior Mr. Gábor Kuncze, many former ministers, leading members of all political parties elected into the Hungarian Parliament, moreover famous Hungarian artists as well as professors of medicine and therapeutic pedagogy. Most of the members are from Germany and Hungary, others from Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Switzerland, and the US. The membership of companies is possible, too.

In order to co-ordinate the international charitable work, another non-profit organisation, the ICSS Foundation was registered by the Budapest civil court under the ref. No. 9.PK.66561/2. on October 16, 1991, and it was granted the status of a charity under the taxation-No. APEH 7120773904. Since then Dr. Peter Edvi as president and the other four board members Dr. András Böhm, Dr. László Kövér, Dr. Viktor Orbán and Mr. Gábor Princz have managed this foundation.

On January 4, 1991, the independent organisation "International Children's Safety Service in Rumania" was founded. It was admitted and registered by the civil court of Timișoara/Northern Rumania under the ref. No. 35/PJ/1995. Its non-profit status was acknowledged by the district authorities under ref. No. SC096003564. Its president Dr. Ferenc Bárányi is re-elected member of the Rumanian Parliament, acted as chairman of the Health and Family Committee in the last legislative period and is now Secretary of this Parliamentarian Committee. The Rumanian ICSS closely co-operates in relief actions with its Hungarian sister organisation.

For six years the German ICSS in Hanover had worked as a non-registered association with legal capacity according to German laws it was founded anew in September 1996 in order to obtain its registration which was done by the Hanover civil court under ref. No. 7155 on December 23, 1996. It was granted the non-profit status by the Hanover-Nord revenue-office under the taxation-No. 2520640361 on March 6, 1997. The founding of other independent organisations in compliance with the ICSS ideas, functions and missions has been envisaged for Austria, Belgium, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, and the US.

Financing

The ICSS is financed in small parts by member fees, mostly however by honorary activities and donations. Single projects are sponsored by companies.

Fund raising is regularly done at benefit-events: each year pianist Zoltán Kocsis - well known beyond Hungary - recites at the Budapest Congress Center. At Christmas-time the Hungarian State Opera stages a performance for the benefit of ICSS.

The most generous donors to both events are invited to a reception hosted afterwards by the Hungarian President of State Dr. Árpád Göncz.

In March 1995, ICSS for the first time organised the 'Ball of Balls' in the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. Due to its financially and socially great success (HUF six million net gain) this ball shall become an integral part of the annual charity events.

In financial co-operation with the city of Budapest ICSS organises the annual events with several hundred thousand participants on the occasion of the International Children's Day. It also organises annual Christmas celebrations for 4.000 to 5.000 children of low income families and special gift-actions for some 300 other.

Despite its nation-wide activities, among them a branch office at the southern Hungarian town of Pécs, ICSS limits its number of staff to the minimum. Therefore it can guarantee that 95 % of its receipts are employed for the persons in need whereas only 5 % of the receipts are used for organisation and management. The annual audits are open to everyone and they are published.

Projects

Over the years ICSS has been established as one of the most important non-government welfare organisations in Hungary. The scope of its work is extremely versatile:

1. Healthcare Programme

ICSS covers the costs of remedies, medicines and medical aid and meets the needs of Hungarian and foreign children for their examination and medical care as well as for their hospital care or operations.

2. Dental ambulance-bus

Starting in May 1996 the ICSS has operated its own dental ambulance-bus in Hungary and in the neighbouring countries. This mobile dental practice is completely equipped including an X-ray apparatus: it is self-supported and independent-pendent from localities. The bus is employed for dental examinations and treat-treatments of children and juveniles to secure dental basic care.

3. Foster-Parent Programme

ICSS in a self-financed pilot program supports 38 Hungarian children from state-owned orphanages in rural areas who are now raised by foster-parents. In co-operation with the Rumanian ICSS it carries out a similar project for 48 Rumanian infants in the Northern Rumanian settlement of Sinmartin/Transylvania. Based on these experiences the Hungarian ICSS started in January 1998 another pilot project for orphaned and abandoned children as well as runaways and street-children from the city of Budapest (Greater Budapest).

4. Children Feeding Programme

ICSS pays for and ensures the lunch of some 700 children of socially deprived families in schools and kindergartens. For many of them it is the only chance to get at least one hot meal once a day.

5. Codification Programme

ICSS signed a contract with the Prime Minister's office for establishing a common Child-, Youth- and Family-Law Codification and Deregulation Committee which in co-operation with Parliament and Government has to render the UN Declaration of Children's Rights and the EU Convention on Human Rights into the Hungarian legal system.

6. Holiday Programme

ICSS ensures the opportunity of organised holidays for institutionalised or otherwise disadvantaged children.

7. Educational and Post-Graduate Programme

ICSS offers training-courses for foster parents. It also furthers the post-graduate training of foreign doctors, paediatricians, therapeutic pedagogues, laboratory technicians, and staff-members of child-care institutions. ICSS supports the education and intellectual development of children in state-care or of other disadvantaged children.

8. Relief Shipments

ICSS takes relief shipments mostly to Romania and to the territory of ex-Yugoslavia, but has also carried out relief actions in Bangladesh, Russia, and Ukraine. It also gives long-term support to various foreign - mostly Rumanian - institutions.

9. Co-operation with and Support of Other Organisations

Employing the precise Central-Eastern European knowledge of its members, ICSS frequently assisted other relief organisations. Hence e.g. it took part in preparing the UNICEF and UNESCO programmes for Rumania and established the proper contacts and conditions for many Western European relief convoys.

ICSS helped in the planning of reconstructing or reorganising hospitals and children's homes and secured the logistic background. One of the most ambitious projects at present is the reconstruction of an orphanage at Sinmartin/ Rumania: this co-operation with Austrian, German, Rumanian and Swedish organisations runs up to estimated costs of DM2 Million of which half will be paid for ICSS.

10. Events

ICSS organises events for Christmas-tide, Children's Day, Mother's Day, etc. to entertain children who in case of indigence are guests of ICSS. Each year several concerts and other events at the Hungarian State Opera are organised for the children's benefit.

11. Programmes for Information and Advice

ICSS regularly gives information and advice to children, youths and children's institutions about legal, medical and other issues concerning children. A publication-series deals with legal questions, self-organisation and planning of life, drugs, smoking, and sexual education; it was started in 1995 and will be con-continued with publications on other child-related topics.

12. Film, Television and Photo Documentation

The everyday life of socially disadvantaged children as well as the problems which arise in child welfare on the part of hospitals, schools and other institutions for children are documented.

Late in 1996 the ICSS-owned 'Centre for Infant Development' in Budapest was taken over by public authorities and Hungarian health insurance companies. This centre had been designed and founded as well as financed and operated for more than five years by ICSS. Its physicians, psychologists, therapeutic pedagogues and teachers treated physically and/or mentally handicapped children. The big success of this centre did not only justify the conception and its realisation; its integration in the public health-care proves that ICSS' ideas and the transition into pilot-projects can trigger off public initiatives.

If you want to support the work of ICSS, please do it as a visitor to one of our events, or as a member (minimum annual fee for private members HUF 1.200). Please contact the following address:

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