



Magyar Madártani és Természetvédelmi Egyesület

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## DEAR MEMBER! DEAR NATURE-LOVER!

The year of the Hoopoe, 2015, has ended a five-year cycle of presidency in MME's life. In 2016, new presidential members will be elected by our main decision-making body, the General Assembly. The General Assembly holds a meeting in spring, regularly once a year. This forum provides an opportunity for the delegates, chosen from among our members, to make decisions regarding most important key issues. Among others, this decision-making body is entitled to elect the Presidency, the controlling panel between Assemblies, which happened last time in 2011. It is easy to calculate that a renewal is necessary in 2016, which will be a perfect opportunity to make a reflection on all the things happened in the past five years with the help of the major milestones. Like any other organization, we could be part of uplifting events, but also needed to face lots of challenges. Despite careful planning and managing, the new Presidency took over control of MME with huge burden in 2011. Great liquidity problems needed to be solved quickly, however, it was clear from the beginning of the cycle that the situation, due to effective measures taken, would not last long. In 2012, several large EU funded projects secured financial stability, therefore, the Presidency could continue its work on more solid basis having the biggest problem being sorted out. During these years, besides starting some new projects, we also wrapped up some others. We closed successfully our Saker Life+, Red-footed Life+ and the Meadow Viper Life+ programmes. The Presidency put an emphasis on the 40th anniversary of MME during its work, which offered an opportunity to look back and sum up the achievements of the past few decades. We opened the Eagle Centre near Jászberény within the framework of the HELICON Life+ programme, established the Mammal Conservation Group and also wrote up a strategy plan to define directions for the period of 2012-2016. Progressive events could fill out pages, however, the other side of the coin needs to be presented as well. Our Agricultural Working Group, established during this period, had and still have to face several questions dealing with fate of the Hungarian land, which would determine the survival of the diversity of our nature in the future. We pointed out the same long-term threats in our "Stand up for the Hungarian nature!" campaign, in which, we expressed our concern, in collaboration with other nature conservation organizations, regarding planned sales of protected lands.

Besides establishing and reserving our financial stability, we had to sadly acknowledge that national funding opportunities practically came to an end, therefore, future of civil organizations not eligible for international funds became unstable further decreasing the strength of the civil sphere. At the same time, despite providing mandatory governmental functions, our Monitoring Centre and Ringing Centre had to become fully self-sufficient, since our contracts with ministries had not been renewed for years. Fortunately, it is all behind us already, and the operation is on solid basis now.

We watched the state nature conservancy shrinking and losing all its influence in the past five years. In addition, the life of the civil sphere became even more difficult with increased administrative burdens and constant uncertainty due to frequently changing legal background.

Facing all these, we still looked at the future confidently. Even though, our membership somewhat declined in the past few years, number of sympathizers and supporters grew to a size never seen before. It is well illustrated by that while in 2011, only 27.000 people visited the programmes organized by Local Groups, their numbers increased to more than 40.000 in 2014. The same progress is visible during our donation campaign, which is indispensable for our stable operation.

We established our five-year strategy plan in the beginning of the Presidency cycle. It had very ambitious goals in the following nine areas: "Preserving endangered animal species, Sustainable land use, In connection with nature, With knowledge for nature conservation, We stand up for nature, Bird protection without borders, More sources to nature conservation, Effective organization for nature". Altogether, we described 266 activities in 30 chapters for ourselves for this period, which would be hard to list, but their implementation was even a tougher challenge. When evaluating the

plan, we concluded that 61% of the activities had been carried out or even surpassed expectations, 26% we reached some results but less than the goal was, and 13% of them was either unsuccessful or could not be started at all. The assessment showed us that we succeeded in many areas, what we could be proud of, however, it was clear that certain sections need much more efforts in order to comply with the expectation we set for ourselves. Thus, lots of things left to do in the following five-year period, and we already see what to strengthen.

This short retrospect may equally fill us with pride or worries, hopes and responsibilities felt over the implementation of newer tasks. All in all, however, it can be said that the Presidency participated in such works as part of a team, which consider to be progressive, not only in the Hungarian nature conservation scheme, but also abroad. It feels good to take part in the coordination of this organization, knowing that the results, despite all the struggle, are very encouraging and inspiring for us to continue. From the Presidency's standpoint, we are proud of the achievements of the past five years during which, we could effectively serve the cause of the national nature conservation. I hope that the next elected Presidency will close a similarly successful period after the following five years, contributing further to the preservation of our natural heritage.



Zoltán Bajor  
President



Gergő Halmos  
Director



## MEMBERSHIP AND NATIONAL NETWORK OF LOCAL GROUPS

It has always been particularly important for MME to promote widespread public awareness. That is why social support is our main value and the basis of our work. Our mission, including protecting nature, raising awareness in the society and performing partnership tasks, is aided now by 31 Local Groups while another one groups together members residing abroad. These local organizations enable us to represent MME and also the cases of nature conservation and environmental education nationwide. Local Groups coordinate the activities of the members living in any given regions. Any new MME member will become a member of the competent Local Group depending on where he/she lives, unless requested otherwise. After joining the organization, Local Group representative will get in touch with the new member, and inform him/her about events, trips and conservation activities, in which, therefore he/she can participate through regular emails and sometimes monthly newsletters.

MME's Central Office aids these groups with technical materials on nature conservation and environmental education, providing financial and administrative background, as well as, direct funding coming from membership fees, donations and grants. In return, Local Groups spend tens of thousands of volunteer hours performing conservation work and environmental education.

Since its founding on January 6, 1974 through December 31, 2015, 36.198 people joined the organization. Our end of the year 2015 register shows that MME has 5036 paying members, of which 408 joined as new members and 4628 people just renewed their membership. The number of members counting in all family members is 8065.



## POLICY

During the year, we regularly delivered our opinion on any governmental plans and changes in the law affecting nature conservation. Among these, planned changes regarding state lands managed by national parks were of great importance. Within the Day of Hungarian Nature campaign, we stood up against unfavourable plans together with our partners. We participated in the policy-making of Birdlife International, the main topic of which was how to strengthen the Birds and Habitats Directive. Actively engaged in the signature collecting campaign, called Nature Alert, aiming to reach out to as many people as possible, and to which eventually 500.000 people gave their signatures showing their support.

## INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

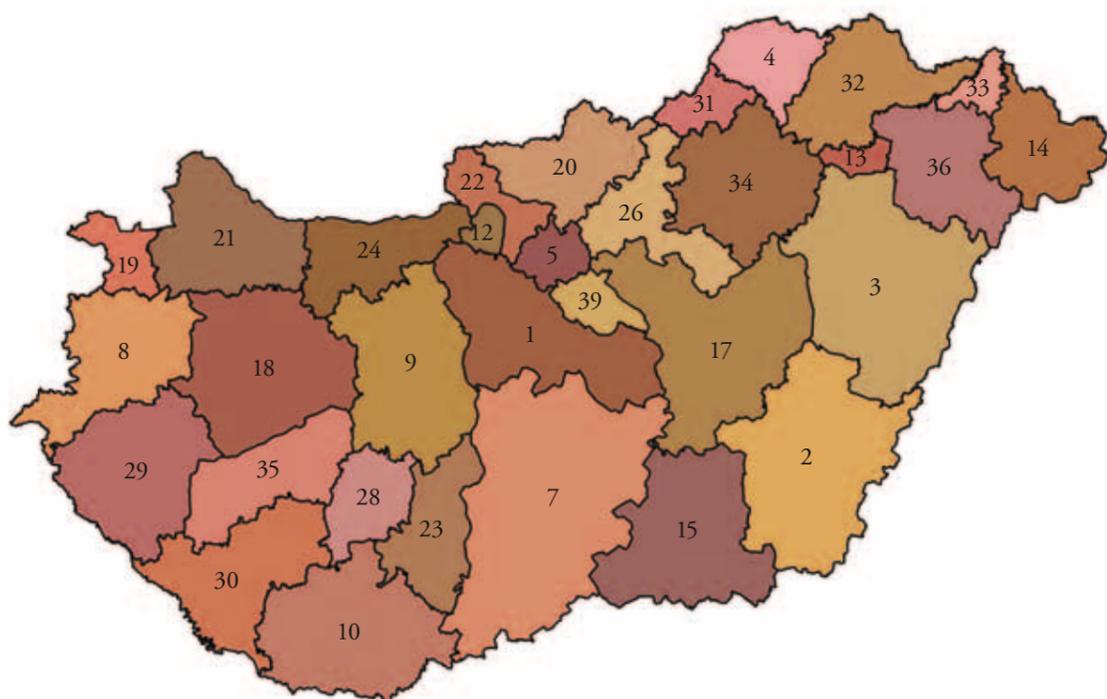
Birdlife International, of which MME is an integral partner organization, is the single largest network of nature conservation organization in more than 110 countries, counting 2.5 million members giving jobs to more than 4000 employees, while serving the cause of bird protection and nature conservancy. European and Central Asian regions have a branch office in Brussels where we work to make the EU "greener" as part of the biggest nature conservation group. MME is member of the IUCN, we operate in their International Committee. In 2015, MME further strengthened its relationships with other bird conservation organizations, in particular Birdlife partners. We joined the 'Caucasus Initiative' and will provide financial and professional support in the following years to develop organizations dealing with bird protection the Caucasus region. Based on our local experience how to fight poisoning, we have created a new regional project, in which we will work with Czech, Slovakian, Austrian and Serbian partners in the future.



Partnership for  
nature and people



PRESENTATION OF THE LOCAL GROUPS



LOCAL GROUP	MEMBERS	WITH FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS	VOLUNTEER	ACTIVITIES
1. Budapesti	1833	2627	160	
2. Békés megyei	112	161	12	
3. Hajdú-Bihar megyei	171	242	30	
4. Gömör-Tornai	24	44	50	
5. Gödöllői	113	212	31	
7. Bács-Kiskun megyei	184	294	30	
8. Vas megyei	104	149	25	
9. Fejér megyei	212	356	50	
10. Baranya megyei	370	656	130	
13. Tiszavasvári	20	27	11	
14. Szatmár-Beregi	24	38	11	
15. Csongrád megyei	190	324	80	
18. Veszprém megyei	166	263	65	

LOCAL GROUP	MEMBERS	WITH FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS	VOLUNTEER	ACTIVITIES
19. Soproni	53	93	13	
20. Nógrád megyei	87	148	25	
21. Kiszalföldi	113	216	30	
22. Börzsönyi	201	370	88	
23. Szekszárdi	85	134	20	
24. Komárom-E megyei	151	252	120	
26. Heves megyei	72	118	9	
28. Dombóvári	94	144	45	
29. Zala megyei	103	144	102	
30. Kaposvári	59	98	30	
31. Észak-Borsodi	20	23	3	
32. Zempléni	46	75	9	
33. Tiszaközi	30	44	2	
34. Bükk	158	283	80	
35. Dél-Balatoni	63	104	15	
36. Nyíregyházi	59	95	50	
39. Tápió-vidéki	107	235	35	
<b>Összesen</b>	<b>5024</b>	<b>8065</b>	<b>1210</b>	

- Environmental education
- Bird ringing camps
- Nest box installation, and monitoring
- Bird ringing, ringing demonstrations
- Protection and rehabilitation of natural habitats

- Recovery of injured birds
- Frog rescue
- Litter picking
- Species protection works

All of the local groups take part in the organisation of national and local events.

The main activities of a group are marked with a dark pictogram.

## WORKING GROUPS

Members can join the work of our autonomously operating working groups doing environmental education, bird ringing and surveys organized by MME's Monitoring Centre.

### MME'S BIRDS OF PREY WORKING GROUP

Main duties of the leadership comprising twelve people elected from different regions and approximately 300 members to carry out raptor conservation programmes and monitoring activities on rare species. When our programmes being organized, we constantly cooperate with the government in nature conservation and all the partner organizations in the Hungarian Raptor Conservation Council. Our Imperial Eagle, Saker Falcon and Red-footed Falcon protection programmes are of great importance internationally, and which are currently being implemented within the framework EU funded projects.

In 2015, we had performed population monitoring of 12 rare raptor and owl species and also the Black Stork in cooperation with national park directorates, but we also surveyed the Goshawk population in sample plots. Thus, we recorded 85 Black Kite, 11 Red Kite, 283 White-tailed Eagle, 28 Montagu's Harrier, 37 Short-toed Eagle, 39 Lesser Spotted Eagle, 184 Imperial Eagle, three Golden Eagle, 938 Red-footed Falcon, 166 Saker Falcon, 58 Peregrine and 84 Eagle Owl pairs.

Electrocution poses the largest threat to birds of prey, due to which, tens of thousands of birds die even nowadays. In cooperation with the Steering Committee of the "Accessible Sky" Agreement, we fight to eliminate this threat. Second biggest mortality factor is the recently increasing direct poisoning. Working together with stakeholders, we try to reduce this factor within the framework of the EU funded HELICON Life +Project.

Achieved results are regularly presented through multiple channels, and we also created an emailing list ([raptor@mme.hu](mailto:raptor@mme.hu)) to have a platform for sharing experience among interested people. One of our main events the "Falco Luring", held in winter, further serves this aim, and which was organized and executed by the Körös-Maros National Park Directorate in the Körösvölgyi Visitor Centre, between February 28-March 1, 2015 celebrating the 10th anniversary of the event. Altogether, 134 participants of 4 different countries and 17 nature conservation organizations took part in the conference holding 33 technical presentations during the two days. The Saker Award was also handed to one or two experts picked by the managing board of the Working Group for their exceptional work in raptor conservation. In 2015, our Slovak colleagues, Istvan Danko and Jozef Mihok received the award in recognition of four decades of cooperation. Materials of the conference and other related papers are published in our yearbook titled "Heliaca". Another important event is the "Eagle Alarming", which is an informal get-together of the active members. It was held in the Eagle Centre near Jászberény, and organized by the Hortobágyi National Park Directorate, our Working Group and the Helicon Life+ project. This was the very first occasion when family members were also invited, thus 80 people participated in the event.

### MAMMAL WORKING GROUP

In 2015, the Mammal of the Year programme continued, which was announced in the Vadonleső (Wildlife Watcher) programme with the support of MME's Mammal Working Group. This year, the Souslik was the species chosen, and within the programme several events (souslik-poem celebration,

video clip-making and essay writing competition, Souslik Festival lasting several days) were organized further popularizing the species. In parallel, organizing and promoting the "Mammal of the Year 2016", which aimed the protection and promotion bats, had already started around the end of the year.

MME participated in several surveys of bats and protection activities in 2015 already, during which, volunteers removed bat droppings from communal roosting places, and also made these safe for bat species. We had successfully continued the relocation project of the strictly protected Mediterranean Horseshoe Bats, when 48 individuals were transferred to the population in the Gerecse Hills, which still exists but got close to extinction. We had carried out population surveys in several Natura 2000 sites, we gained up-to-date knowledge of the distribution of forest-dwelling species, in particular. In close cooperation with the Nature Conservation Foundation of Tolna County, we tagged several Western Barbastelles in Gemenc. Results had already showed that this strictly protected species requires large tracts of old forests, distribution of which keeps decreasing even in this particular, national park managed area.

Members of our working group revised fliers, posters and brochures made within the framework of Souslik LIFE (<http://sakerlife3.mme.hu/>).

Together with associates of HNPI and Milvus Group we had prepared and started a necessary rescue and translocation of the endangered population of *Nannospalax transsylvanicus* near Debrecen. In order to preserve another taxon, *Nannospalax montanosyrmienensis*, our members helped governmental consultations with background materials, specialist reports, field surveys and consultations. We also took part in MME's Family Day to promote these steppe-living creatures.

### AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE WORKING GROUP

We aim to protect populations of amphibians and reptiles, increasing those if possible, in order to achieve this we established conservation programmes and found appropriate conservation measures for these. One of our main projects is the Caspian Whipsnake Conservation Programme. We entered into a contract with Duna-Ipoly National Park and Duna-Dráva National Park directorates to study the populations of this species along the Danube River and near Budapest. In 2015, 18 volunteers joined the programme while 12 people helped in the habitat restoration work on the Vöröskővár Hill. The Rákosmenti Ranger Service and the Municipality of Budapest organized and started, hand in hand, the removal of exotic turtle species from Lake Naplás. During the year, 68 individuals of five different species were caught and taken to the Budapest Zoo.

Our National Amphibian and Reptile Mapping programme in 2015 was a success again: our volunteers uploaded 7532 new data reaching 28.776 observations (17.301 amphibians and 11.475 reptiles) of the herpetofauna in the past five years since its start. Last year, 88 new people registered, of which 68 actually uploaded observations, as well. So far, altogether 562 users shared data of all 780 registered people.

Amphibian of the Year 2015 title went to the Northern Crested Newt in 2015. To promote the species among the wider public, we held 15 presentations, made fliers, a roll-up and also announced a drawing competition. This last event, named "Tufts and Crests", was organized together with the Hoopoe, titleholder of the Bird of the Year. Of more than 300 drawings illustrating the Northern Crested Newt, 14 participants received a gift package containing different souvenirs of the working group. We organized a Herpetological Camp in the Ócsa Ringing Station, where participants could get to know the herpetofauna of the area through observations and studies during daily field trips.



## SPECIES CONSERVATION PI



### IMPERIAL EAGLE CONSERVATION AND ANTI-POISONING

923 fledged young over the last 5 years

#### PROGRAMME

The Imperial Eagle is a Globally Threatened species, and since two-thirds of the European Union population breeds in Hungary, it plays an important role as a 'flagship' species in regional nature conservation. From 2012 through 2016, national Imperial Eagle conservation work has been funded by the European Union Life programme. Its breeding population estimated to 190-200 pairs in 2015, which is a result of a slow increase after being on the verge of extinction in the '80s. We have recorded pairs in 186 territories of which the active nest was found in 184 cases. Out of 175 pairs started to breed, 129 pairs (74%) were successful fledging chicks. Altogether, 234 chicks fledged, of which 161 (69%) received a unique ring. Fledging success (1.3 chicks/breeding pair) was somewhat above the multi-annual average, so hopefully this year's chicks would further increase the population through newly established pairs.

In 2015, a total of 15 full-grown, injured individuals were discovered in Hungary. Only one of those was alive, but later it perished as well. In six cases, condition of the carcasses did not allow to determine the reason of death unambiguously. Most frequent reason of death in 2015, was direct poisoning leaving five eagles dead, among them "Remény" ("Hope") the satellite-tagged individual. In one case train, in another case a car collided and killed eagle while another bird died due to electrocution, and one to lead poisoning. Besides local recoveries, a ringed eagle was found electrocuted in the Czech Republic, and two other birds carrying transmitters died abroad also due to poisoning ("Vásárhelyi" in Poland and "Csörgey" in Austria).

Two juveniles were tagged with satellite transmitter within the framework of HELICON life project. 87 volunteers guarded five Imperial Eagle nests. During wintertime one artificial feeding site was maintained and 33 artificial nests were placed out. We also made sure about regular monitoring of 160 territories on the 20 SPA sites included in the project. We continued the operation of the detection dog unit, the only one of its kind in Central Europe, which carried out 168 searches and helped the investigations of authorities discovering crime related evidence. More than 20 workshops and educational lectures were held to stakeholders (hunters, police and conservationists) and the general public about the project, Imperial Eagles and threats to raptors. We started the operation of the Eagle Centre in Jászberény and organized guided tours to more than 1000 people already. Furthermore, due to the 25 blog posts and 18 related press releases, more than 87 different kinds of media, reported 312 times about the project in online news portals (192), print media (99), television (21), radio (21). Together with our project partners, we made six more short films. Two online camera systems helped us broadcasting from both an Imperial Eagle nest during the summer and a feeding station during autumn and winter, which had already been followed for nearly 500,000 times.

Further information: [www.imperialeagle.hu](http://www.imperialeagle.hu)



RED-FOOTED FALCON CONSERVATION PROGRAMME



6054 ringed birds over the last 5 years, a new nesting colony in the Transdanubian region

During nationwide population monitoring carried out by MME's Red-footed Falcon working group, we found that number of breeding pairs was below the total of last year. The reason behind this was probably the adverse weather conditions around the equator during the time of migration. Part of our birds drifted all the way to the Canary Islands to the west on the way home, where they had even blocked the traffic of a local international airport for a few days. That is why birds showed a delayed pattern on their arrival to the breeding grounds where vole population had just crashed following a peak year in 2014. Conditions were also worsened by long-lasting cold fronts. Our estimation totaled around 950-1050 pairs. On the sample plots of the project we marked 245 birds, among them adult nesting or migrating birds, with individual color-rings. Of all the 129 trapped adults, 39 were recoveries, and we had to replace lost or damaged rings in several cases. We paid extra attention to those few breeding pairs in the Sárvíz-valley, where after so many years a new Red-footed Falcon colony established once again in Transdanubia, and which being an outpost forms the basis of the expansion of the species to the west. In collaboration with local colleagues, we marked 8 juveniles and three adults here.

Surprisingly high percent of the 164 nesting pairs in the Vásárhelyi steppe arrived late, moreover, several known birds were alone or not started to breed at all. We found several failed attempts or small clutches, and collected unusual amount of medium aged chicks still unable to fly on the ground under the nest-boxes. Out of those 122 pairs eventually started to breed, only 47 were successful. Last chicks were ringed around the end of August by the associates of REDFOOT LIFE+ project.

In addition to the birds we tagged with PTT transmitters in 2014, another seven birds in Hungary, and two in Romania got satellite tags in 2015, respectively. Their movements can be followed on the [www.satellitetracking.eu](http://www.satellitetracking.eu) site.

Prior to migration we counted the most, 7000 birds, on September 16 gathering together in 43 different roosting sites.

Land management actions on areas of two partnering national parks went as planned, in the Bükki National Park Directorate the project's usual grazing season opening celebration was held on Saint George's Day, April 24. Körös-Maros National park also continued the promotion of small parcel land management.

Events of the project were completed with presentations held on September 19, in the 16th Day of the Lake Fehér, and the Tata Wild Goose Festival late November. In addition to events, due to our 17 blog posts and five related press releases more than 27 different kinds of media reported 62 times about the project in online news portals (44), print media (12), television and radio (6).

Further information about the project and conservation of the species: [www.falcoproject.eu](http://www.falcoproject.eu)



### ROLLER CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

Volunteers of MME and the national parks joined forces in the conservation of the species and checked more than 2300 artificial nest boxes in 2015. National population estimated to be 1400-1500 pairs. It is encouraging that four pairs of Roller started to breed in Fejér County, which is probably the first step in its western expansion. Unfortunately, only one of those could fledge chicks, however, based on our experience, more and more pairs will attempt to breed there in the future.

The weather during the breeding season in 2015 was not too bad, however, predation by Pine Martens was significant in certain areas. The reason behind this might be the vole gradation in the previous year, and since this rich prey base had diminished martens needed to look for other food source. Chicks of rollers in artificial nest boxes were an easy meal for them.

Volunteers ringed 1711 chicks altogether in 2015, of which 125 were adults and 1586 chicks, respectively.

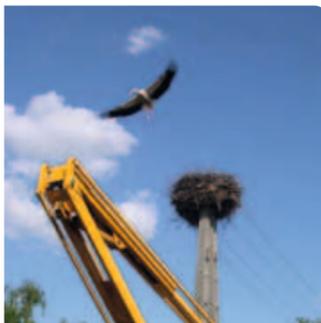
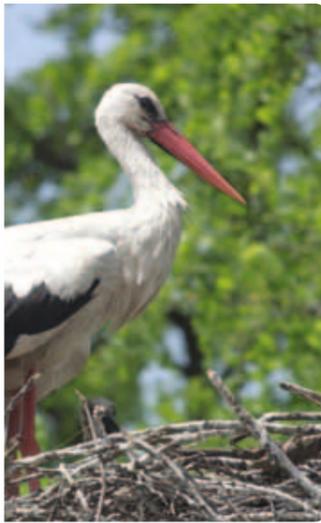
1079 birds got colour rings reaching a total of 5511 marked birds since the start of the colour ringing project in 2010. The color-ringing project revealed several interesting recoveries, 22 birds were identified by their rings in 2015. The following recoveries enriched scientific results regarding the species: one individual was reported from each of Greece, Bulgaria and Libya. Migration research is an important action of the "Conservation of the Roller in the Carpathian Basin" Life+ project, in which, we tagged adult birds with PTTs, therefore, it would be the first time to receive information on their migration and wintering areas.

Recently, only two birds, namely Cselén and Pétör, have working transmitters, and they seem to spend the winter in the northern parts of Namibia and Botswana. Early September, during an unusually early cold spell, they left the Carpathian Basin the same day and three days and 3000 kilometers later passed the Sahara and started the first longer resting period staying in one place in the Sahel Zone. Habitat selection study another integral part of the project is carried out using Pica type UHF loggers. In 2015, eight birds got this kind of device. Our initiation "Farmers for Rollers" try to involve landowners and agricultural workers, who works on Natura 2000 sites and willing to reforest, place out nest boxes and T-perches. We held presentations in order to promote the programme in two forums last year. Our first project video showcasing our work among them tagging and its objectives was finished and uploaded to MME's Youtube channel.

Altogether, 18 information tables were placed in all the involved SPAs. 29 blogposts and three press releases helped us to reach three million people. Nearly 100 Facebook posts were shared 140.000 times and the number of our active users reach 250.000.

More information: [www.rollerproject.eu](http://www.rollerproject.eu).





### WHITE STORK CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

We ringed more than 900 chicks in 94 towns and villages during the event called Stork Road Show, which was visited by 3500 people in 2015. In the past few years we tagged several birds within the “Bird Protection and Research without Borders” project in collaboration with SOS, the Slovakian Ornithological Society. In 2015, 14 birds got GAM-GPS satellite tags; their movements could be followed on the <http://satellitetracking.eu> site. Spring migration of a female called Veca, was uploaded to the <http://eszakigolyahir.hu> site and was broadcasted by TV and radio channels. The “Északi gólyahír” (Northern Stork News) project enabled us, in collaboration with the Foundation for Cserhát Natural and Cultural values, to tag two more individuals. The juvenile storks, “Picur” and “Keszi” reached South Africa by January 2015. “Picur” is one of the adopted chicks from a nest in Nagyhalász followed by a nest cam, therefore, its migration and return, when he spent the summer in Transsylvania, drew particularly big attention. Unfortunately, part of our tagged storks, similarly to their untagged fellows, ended up dead due to electrocution, collision or natural predators.

Deployed nest cameras in Dejtár, Nagyhalász, Rimóc and Zalaistvánd were visited 2.3 million times.

We continued our White Stork conservation and monitoring programme in 2015. Our volunteers found 2593 active nests in 2015. Breeding success was average, reaching a nationwide average of 2.17 chicks per nest.

During the year, we received calls and reports of more than 50 injured, electrocuted or troubled stork for any other reason. We tried to solve the problem in each case with the help of our volunteers. Dangerous medium-voltage pylons still pose a serious threat around the nests. Transformer type pole configurations are particularly hard to insulate, and being the major mortality factor among freshly fledged youngsters. Nowadays, there are still hundreds of endangered nests, where chicks die year after year. We have been cooperating with national park directorates and electric companies in order to solve the problem.

More information: <http://eszakigolyahir.hu>

### HUNGARIAN MEADOW VIPER CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

The European Committee awarded “Best of Best” to our five-year LIFE+ programme, thus our conservation efforts to protect the Hungarian Meadow Viper entered the five best nature conservation projects once again. In 2015, 209 animals were born in the Hungarian meadow viper Conservation and Exhibition Centre, totaling 2115 vipers already since the start of the project. Nowadays, almost 600 vipers live in the terrariums of the Centre among conditions close to natural. Their breeding has been going as planned, under constant supervision of a vet making sure that their health and condition is satisfying. To feed the vipers with insects and to have constantly available food source, Budapest ZOO established a prey animal breeding facility. We continued releasing back the artificially raised vipers back to the wild: we let go 80 vipers at 5 different sites. Five of them were tagged with transmitters, so that we can follow them for up to a year. Monitoring of the wild population in the Fertő-Hanság and Kiskunság National Park was also carried out again. Our Centre had awaited visitors in addition to the regular Open Days in May, June and September, altogether more than 1000 people paid a visit to the facility in 2015. We held the 7th Viper’s Day on September 5 at six different places (Budapest Zoo, Nyíregyházi Sóstó Zoo, Szegedi Vadapark, Xantus János Zoo in Győr, Miskolc Zoo and Jászberény Zoo). The official website ([www.rakosivipera.hu](http://www.rakosivipera.hu)) and Facebook page of the project

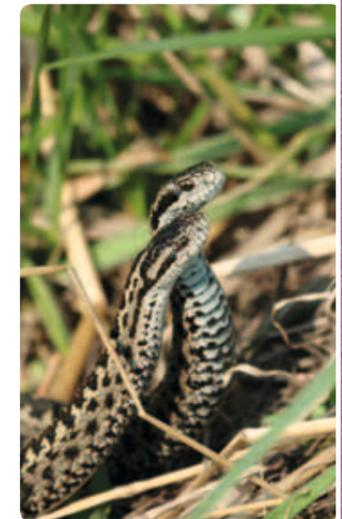
is refreshed on a regular basis.

Results of the project were presented in a conference held in Wrocław,

Over 2000 meadow vipers were bred in captivity within the last 5 years

Poland.

More information: <http://www.rakosivipera.hu>





## IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS (IBA) AND NATURA 2000, SWISS-HUNGARIAN COOPERATION PROGRAMME

The network of IBAs includes the most important areas for birds worldwide. The system of IBAs provides the basis for selecting and evaluating Special Protection Areas, as part of Natura 2000, in most member states of EU. The Natura 2000 is the ecological network of EU, which consists of the most valuable natural areas of the 28 member states forming a contiguous system protected by law.

In 2015, main part of our job was carrying out management and professional tasks in the project "Sustainable conservation on Hungarian Natura 2000 sites" funded by the Swiss-Hungarian Cooperation Programme. The project had been going as planned, promising results were produced which we presented in a professional conference along with other projects financed from the same source. Meanwhile, we sent mid-term reports, and we also made the first sustainability plans based on collected data, which were discussed with stakeholders (farmers, town municipalities, authorities and civil organizations) at the scene.

Our organization is still an indispensable player in making plans on how to manage Natura 2000 sites. In 2015, we led such planning of a dozen bird and habitat protection areas alongside with national park directorates, universities.

From the beginning of 2015, we had put main emphasis on policy making in relation to agricultural biotopes, as well as, maintaining close contacts and cooperation with land users. From 2016 on, special, nature conservation aimed agricultural payments became available in three more High Value Natural Areas. Two of these (Tiszavölgyi-sík and Jászság) were established due to MME's work. We also participated in the planning and promoting of the new agro-environmental management programme started in 2016. Through cooperation with the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture, we had distributed informational material related to agricultural payments to about 2000 interested parties.

More information: [www.natura.2000.hu](http://www.natura.2000.hu)



Over **17 million** records were provided by approximately **2000** people within our online database over the last 5 years

## MONITORING OF BIRD POPULATIONS

MME's Monitoring Centre, which focuses its work primarily on birds and collects data from all over Hungary, is unique of its kind in Hungary. The Centre has two main population surveying, monitoring and mapping programmes: Common Bird Census (CBC) and the European Breeding Bird Atlas (EBBA) started in 2014.

CBC programme provides valuable information about biodiversity and changes of populations of common birds for MME. So far, some 1200 volunteers have joined the project since its start in 1999. In 2015, 150 volunteers sent 500 field notes to process. MME's database contains almost 15 million records currently. It will be an important task for us in the following years that we keep up and if possible even broaden the coverage of this nationwide survey!

In coordination of the Monitoring Centre, a new, remarkable work had started in certain areas of the country in 2014, which would run through 2017, the European Breeding Bird Atlas. During this programme, surveyors aim to map the breeding populations of the local species. In 2015, 250 surveyors participated in EBBA surveys, and due to quick uploading opportunity since spring, more than 3 million data are available regarding more than six thousand 2.5\*2.5 km UTM grids (map.mme.hu). It is particularly important that the majority of the Hungarian birdwatchers take part in this ornithological work that is more significant, than ever before.



Overview map of the database about the EBBA survey in 2015

## BIRD RINGING

1 039 577 specimens of 252 species  
had been ringed over the last 5 years

MME'S Ringing Centre has been the managing body of nationwide ringing activities since 1976. It registers national ringers and operates the database, which contains 5.9 million data today. The Centre keeps contact with partner organizations from abroad and with the international umbrella organization, the European Union for Bird Ringing – EURING). It provides numbered ornithological rings to individual ringers, as well.

MME's Ringing Centre records 406 ringers recently, out of which 252 have active status. Most of them are MME members also. In 2015, altogether 226,536 birds of 221 species were ringed in Hungary. Most numerous were the Barn Swallow (30.140), Coal Tit (24.481), Sedge Warbler (16.813), Eurasian Reed Warbler (15.549), Blackcap (15.018), and Blue Tit (14.436). Some of these birds got ringed as chicks while in the nest, altogether 18.127 individuals of 107 species. Half of the ringing took place at one of the ringing stations, which recorded 25.000 recoveries besides ringing.

Besides ornithological (aluminium) rings, ringers widely use colour rings with specific codes that can be read by telescopes or even by naked eye. This year, 6383 birds of 45 species were marked with colour rings.

Furthermore, MME's Ringing Centre processed 2826 letters containing some 6.000 recoveries. With the help of a newly developed online application called Tringa (T-ring application) by T-Systems Hungary, ringers and observers can upload and maintain their data themselves. In 2015, 20% of the ringing data and third of the recoveries were entered into the system by way of Tringa.



## COMMUNICATION

One of the main activities of MME is representing the cause of nature conservation in a more effective and extended way, bringing birds and people together and harmonize their coexistence and also managing existing conflicts between stakeholders for the benefit of nature conservation. Civilians, MME's members and volunteers are the main target group, and, at the same time, our biggest support in these efforts. Common plans can only be achieved by cooperation between different age groups and stakeholders communities. This work, being more important than ever, is coordinated by MME's Department for Social Relations and includes outside and inside communications (Facebook, YouTube, blogging and media news), member registration, preparing publications, publishing the Madártávlát magazine, organizing events, educating about nature conservation, Bird of the Year Programme, Bird-friendly Garden Programme, 1% tax donations. Associates (eight full-time and four contract workers) also perform office tasks in the Budapest Regional Office, besides making plans and organizing.

## PUBLIC EVENTS

Local, regional and nationwide birding events are the most important tools in our public relations building activity.

PUBLIC BIRDING EVENT IN 2015	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS (PERSON)	OTHER EVENTS IN 2015	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
I. Eagle Day	160	AgroMashExpo	42 000
Night of the Nightingale (nationwide programme)	2 000	Fishing, Hunting and Arms International Exhibition	55 000
Stork road show (nationwide programme)	3 700	Week of Water, Day of Water (Tropicarium, Hungarian Natural History Museum)	1 461
Tokaj Sand Martin boating	150	Ilcsi Beauty Herbs conference	1 000
Stork road show (Tímár-Nagyhalász)	110	Szeged Bridge Market	5 000
Lake Balaton Swan road show	1 600	Animal Festival (Budapest Zoo)	20000
European Bird Watching Day	3 000	Saint Martin's Goose Fest (Outdoor Ethnographical Museum)	8 100
Wild Geese Festival, Tata	13 000	<b>Total</b>	<b>132 561</b>
Birds and Trees Day in the Jókai Garden	490		
Family Day in the Jókai Garden	413		
Local events by local groups	49 000		
<b>Total</b>	<b>73 623</b>		



## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Since its establishment, MME has considered it important to provide opportunity all age groups to get to know local wildlife. For this reason, MME's Birding Kindergarten and Birding School Programme was initiated long time ago, and held by enthusiastic volunteers and associates in several places nationwide. We gave lectures to kindergartens and elementary schools all over Budapest participating in the education of over 3500 children.

Environmental and Nature Protection, the National Association of Training Centres is the partner of MME within the Swiss-Hungarian Cooperation Programme SH/4/10 "Classrooms reaching the skies". With the help of educational aids and printed materials, MME's associates passed on information about practical nature conservation and Natura 2000 topics in self-organized events, we also participated in a workshop for leading agronomists set up by The Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture.

We were also present at the "Sustainable conservation on Hungarian Natura 2000 sites" funded by the Swiss-Hungarian Cooperation Programme, the side event of the International Nature Film Festival. We used questionnaires to survey the development of knowledge in and attitude toward nature related topics among pupils and teachers involved in the forest school/kindergarten scheme.

We mailed printed educational materials to partner organizations, forest school/kindergarten services, national parks, zoos and the then Nature Conservation Department of the Agricultural Ministry. Software development finished on May 31, 2015. The website designed for children [www.csipogo.hu](http://www.csipogo.hu) was finished and in September its subpage, the Birds of Hungary as well. We developed a policy package for the sustainability of forest school/kindergarten system.

In relation to our community involvement and

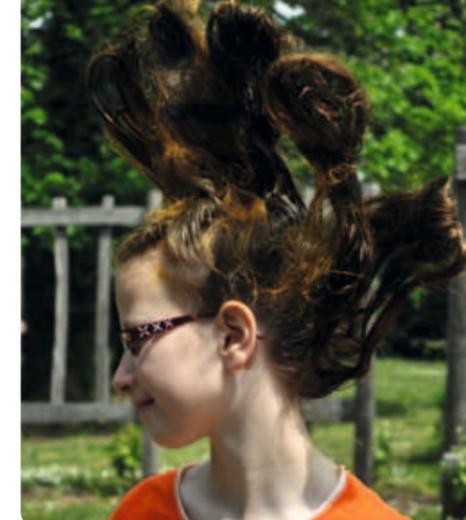
birding competition we built a Bird-friendly sample garden, organized family events, birding excursions, on which 15 groups among them three school classes participated, totalling 333 kids.

During several "green" days, family days, local trips and camps we carried out awareness-raising activities. Our camps and ringing stations offered tremendously exciting experience for both kids and adults.

Personal relationship with an  
annual **70 000** visitors

## YEAR OF THE HOOPOE

MME has chosen its bird of the year since 1974. Usually we focus, in close cooperation with the people and the media, on a species or a species group for a year that needs special attention because conservation problems arose in relation to it temporarily or permanently. The Hoopoe was picked as the Bird of the Year in 2015, as the result of an internet poll, by the Hungarian people. We had several media appearances regarding the species, as well as, an account dedicated to the species on the subpage of the kids' website [www.csipogo.hu](http://www.csipogo.hu). Around the Merzse-marsh, The Budapest Voice band alongside with associates of MME placed out artificial nest boxes. Regarding the bird and amphibian species of the year, we announced a drawing contest, which turned out to be very popular receiving more than 1500 entries. This time we offered opportunity to both high-school students and adults to participate in it. There was another competition for the general public called "Tufts and Crests", in which people should show up having a haircut resembling either the bird or the amphibian of the year.



## BIRD-FRIENDLY GARDEN PROGRAMME

This programme, started in 2002, is the MME's most important, practical bird conservation initiation, targeting the general public nationwide. Everyone is welcome to join, and following a registration process, one could receive a sign acknowledging his/her achievements in the suggested bird conservation activities. Now, there are five sub-programmes in the Bird-friendly Garden (see the table below). In 2015, within the framework of Bird-friendly Uplands, the municipality of the 12th precinct financed the Bird-friendly Uplands package containing feeders, nest-boxes, brochures and bird seed, what we distributed among educational and teaching institutions, thus students of 19 institutions could get first-hand experience with practical bird conservation.

Results of the Bird-friendly Programme in the light of figures

Sub-programme (Year of publication)	Number of registered in 2015	Total number of participants as of 2015
Bird-friendly Garden (2002)	235	1133
Bird-friendly Kindergarten (2002)	71	285
Bird friendly School (2002)	21	100
Bird-friendly Block of flats (2008)	5	22
Bird-friendly Workplace (2008)	9	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>1578</b>

Over **25 000** Facebook fans,  
over **1 million** YouTube downloads

## MME ON THE WEB

The most important partner of our organization is the civilian population. The easiest way to inform people is using the internet. Therefore, we pay special attention to digital communication.

We post longer informational materials, event invitations and reports on constantly updated news portals on a regular basis.

In 2015, several new, gap filling developments were carried out at national level on our renewed, both in shape and functions, website:

A thematic website named Chirping was launched <http://www.csipogo.hu>, where the youngest generation can get to know the world of birds through illustrations, photos and simple games.

Birds of Hungary webpage was developed and published, where the interested may find precise information and continuously updated data about more than 400 bird species of Hungary

<http://www.mme.hu/magyarorszagmadarai>

Archives of MME's magazine, Madártávlát, are fully available since its start in 1994

[http://www.mme.hu/madartavlat\\_magazin](http://www.mme.hu/madartavlat_magazin)

The yearbook HELIACA, result of a joint effort between the Raptor Working Group of MME and the Hungarian Raptor Conservation Council was digitized and now available since the year 2009 for the interested <http://www.mme.hu/heliaca-evkonyv>

We use Facebook pages of MME and other EU funded projects as a perfect platform for quick news and information exchange, and also to personal communication with the interested.

By the end of the year, 6356 new fans, more than last year, joined our Facebook site now counting 24.304 fans. Our 354 Facebook shares, were checked by some 8 million people 13 million times.

MME's YouTube channel is also a top priority communication tool where we uploaded 103 new short videos reaching 403 videos by the end of the year. Those were downloaded 258.401 times and the total of watching time is about 270 day altogether. MME's YouTube channel showed the viewing figure of more than a million (1.079.479) downloads from 179 different countries.

Our electronic mails were sent out to more than ten thousand addresses on a monthly basis.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/MME/292148076390>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/MMEBirdLifeHungary/>

Observer data showed that we had 2037 appearances in 247 different online media, 889 in 100 printed media. We also appeared 350 times in 17 different in TVs and Radios. Among media types, one could find us in the online media, 2037 times (62%), in printed media 889 times (27%), and in electronic media 350 times (11%). In the online media the minap.hu (101) while in the printed media the Dunántúli Napló (46) published our news the most. Among TVs and radios, most news could be heard in the InfoRadio, altogether 162. Our online hits reached 81 248 133 persons. Prints read by 56 513 873 people.

## SUPPORT OF THE SOCIETY

The support of the society is one of the fundamental pillars of MME. Members are the main basis of daily bird conservation activities and also provide financial background together with partner organizations and companies. It is therefore of utmost importance that individual and family members, volunteers, donors participate actively in the work of MME.

When lobbying in nature conservation issues and submitting professional proposals, decision makers consider the support of the society (number of members is the main indicator of it) important, because it shows that we represent the opinion of a broad civilian base.

Financial figures of the social support in 2015, as follows: Offering 1% of the personal income tax means the main independent source of our income. The number of people giving us their 1% had increased compared to the previous years.

YEAR	SUM OF OFFERED 1%	NUMBER OF PEOPLE OFFERING 1%
2010	30,1 million Ft	4802 persons
2011	31,0 million Ft	5749 persons
2012	26,1 million Ft	5937 persons
2013	25,2 million Ft	6020 persons
2014	23,4 million Ft	5793 persons
2015	25,8 million Ft	6103 persons

Changes of 1% of the income tax offered to MME between 2010-2015

In 2015, we continued searching for individual donations as it has increased importance lately, and launched six campaigns in which we sent out a colour printed annual report and an appeal about the importance of the 1%.

Our supporters could choose from three options of support in 2015. The usual pin donation campaign, membership discount for partnership, donating through different products ('caring products'), and also leaving inheritance. 'Caring products' are nature conservation related products, which may draw attention to certain conservation problems and their sales would also financially benefit the organization, which in return advertises those through its official website.

Our individual and company donors fall into one of the three categories, defined by the amount offered. Furthermore, we got donations from MME members and non-members, which could not be assigned to any of those, and to whom our sincere thanks also go to.

SUPPORT CATEGORY	NUMBER OF SUPPORTERS
Golden Level Support (100.000 Ft)	16
Silver Level Support (50.000 Ft)	37
Bronze Level Support (20.000 Ft)	409
Supporting MME members	292
Other main donors (above 5000 Ft)	3096
<b>Total</b>	<b>3850</b>

We thank all the people, who helped the MME's work any way!

### MME NATURE-LOVERS STORE

MME's Nature Lovers Store enriched its palette with new publications e.g. Natura 2000 species and habitats in Hungary, Birds in Hungary. New games and teaching materials are available for institutions. The form and content of our web-shop had been renewed too. Naturally, books, brochures and tools related to birding and nature observation can be bought, as well. Purchasing personally, one can also use credit cards now. In the shop in the Jókai Garden, people can shop on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday while the web-shop is constantly available.

### FINANCIAL YEAR 2015

MME closed another successful year due to the EU funded projects. Donations, offerings of 1% income tax and other kinds of support exceeded the amount of 156 million forints this year again. This exceptional source of income guaranteed stable and smooth operation of our organization and the achievement of our goals. Thanks to all our supporters!

Tender budgets mainly came from EU funded projects connected to LIFE Nature financial instrument, but also from awarded national grants. Magnitude of these reached 372 million forints in 2015, and adding it to the income from last year the total sum was 664 million. Our total revenue was about 1.292 million forints, however, due to accountancy purposes of the projects, part of this can only be credited in 2016. Therefore, more than 188 million forints will only be available in 2014; nevertheless, we closed the year with a positive balance.

98% of our income went directly to our conservation programmes, 9% was used to finance spreading information, arranging and collecting donations, educational and communication tasks. Our local groups received 6%, while MME's Central Office 6% of the total income, respectively.

Our main goal is to maintain the rate of increase of the financial support and stabilize sources of tenders in order to avoid liquidity problems may arise in the case of co-financing and pre-financing projects. Stable financial background provides a solid basis to be more effective in reaching our goals in nature conservation.





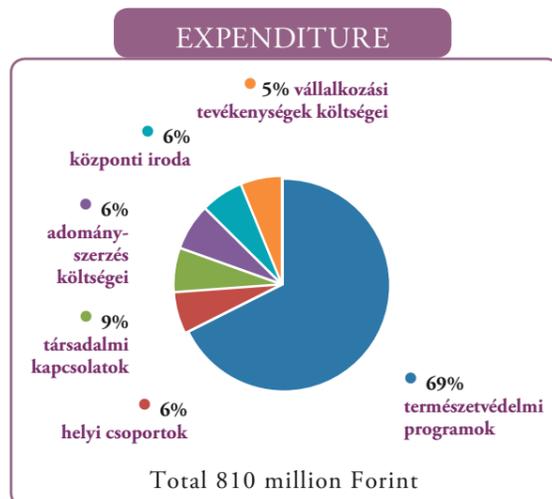
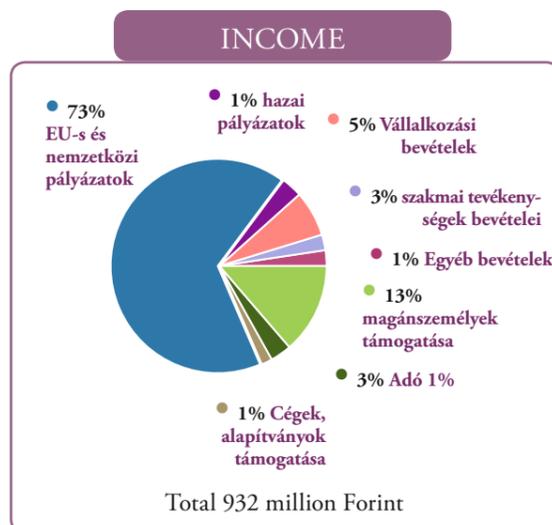
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## OUR SUPPORTERS

Due to our limited space, we are only able to list those of our supporters who donated above 20 000 Ft. We are however grateful to all of our supporters.

### GOLDEN LEVEL PRIVATE SUPPORTERS

Deák András (Zalaegerszeg), Rákosi Árpád (Ajka), Herczeg Zoltán (Szeged), Szomor Dezső (Dömsöd), Lehmann László (Budapest)

### GOLDEN LEVEL CORPORATE SUPPORT

MOL Magyar Olaj- és Gázipari NYrt. (Budapest), Szent Erzsébet Otthon (Pilisvörösvár), Vámor Kft. (Budapest), Zárdai Ügyvédi Iroda (Budapest), Ilcsi Szépitő Füvek Biokozmetikai Kft. (Budapest), HungaroControl Magyar Légiforgalmi Szolgálat Zrt. (Budapest), Jázmin Konzult Tanácsadó Kft. (Zalaszentiván), Tardis Bt. (Budapest), Infinity Database Solutions Kft. (Káva), Ferenczi Épületgépészeti Kft., Webshop Logisztika Kft. (Budapest)

### SILVER LEVEL PRIVATE SUPPORTERS

Gráf Antalné (Ócsa), Zelenyánszki Anna (Budapest), Vámosi Péter (Gödöllő), Sipos Ferdinánd (Kiskunmajsza), Óvári Judit (Szeged), Papp Zoltán (Helvécia), Pozsonyi Erzsébet (Veresegyház), Fehérné Mokos Katalin (Szilasliget), Nagy Csabáné (Nagyberény), Kiss Endréné (Mogyoród), Komoróczy László (Budapest), Turtsányi Johanna (Piliscsaba), Fésűs Antalné (Budakeszi), Molnár Sándor (Budapest), Juhász Gergő (Budapest), Gál László (Budapest), Szatmáry László (Budapest), Nagy Enikő (Gödöllő), Bland Mária (Bakonygyepes), Varró Béla (Budapest), Bessenyei György Jánosné (Verőce), Milon László (Kunpeszér), Szurovszki György (Kunpeszér), Herold István (Komárom), Szerémy Zsoltné (Tata), Béki Ernőné (Szeged), Antal Sándorné (Törökszentmiklós), Bíró Zoltán (Fót), Kovács Zoltán (Szeged), Hajdu Ferencné (Budapest), Kujbusné Molnár Erzsébet (Nyíregyháza), Schendel Margit (Bad Vöslau)

### SILVER LEVEL CORPORATE SUPPORT

NIOK Alapítvány (Budapest), Disznókő Szőlőbirtok és Pincészet Zrt. (Mezőzombor), Balatonlelle Város Önkormányzata (Balatonlelle), Trinity Communications Kft. (Budapest)

### BRONZE LEVEL PRIVATE SUPPORTERS

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