



PRESS BRIEFING TODAY

WHEN: Wednesday 10 May 2017, 1pm CET

WHERE: Press Club Brussels Europe asbl, Rue Froissart 95 - 1040 Brussels

LIVESTREAM: www.facebook.com/mentaldisabilityadvocacy

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EMBARGOED: Ends Wednesday 10 May 2017, 12noon

MDAC DEMANDS EU STEP IN FOR THE VICTIMS OF TOPHÁZ EU must stop financing mass segregation of people with disabilities

BRUSSELS - The Mental Disability Advocacy Centre (MDAC) is calling on the European Union to provide urgent assistance to people with disabilities detained at the Topház Special Home in the city of Göd.

The call comes following the release of a major report on Wednesday 3 May 2017 in Budapest, where MDAC [uncovered evidence](#) of torture and ill-treatment in the state-run institution.

Human rights monitors from MDAC visited the institution between February and April this year and uncovered evidence of children with disabilities kept in cage beds, signs of malnutrition, open wounds and one child in a makeshift straitjacket. [Photos](#) were also released which have shocked the Hungarian public.

The institution has received financing from EU Structural and Investment Funds which are administered by the Hungarian Government.

Now MDAC is demanding the European Commission investigate where the money has gone, how the funds have been used and to ensure they comply with EU law, including meeting core human rights standards.

A report from this project, which documents 30 visits to institutions in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary and England, will be released by MDAC at a conference at the European Parliament today (Wednesday 10 May, 9am CET).

Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans has been invited to meet with the MDAC team to discuss the steps that must now be taken.



URGENT ASSISTANCE FOR THE VICTIMS

Since the release of the report, the Hungarian Ministry of Human Capacities has suspended the temporary director of the institution and ordered a special inquiry. Yet, it is still not clear if urgent assistance or independent legal advice has been made available to the victims.

MDAC is appealing for parents and guardians of the victims to come forward.

The report was released after the Hungarian Government denied access to MDAC monitors from June to December 2016, as part of a major initiative to monitor institutional settings for children with disabilities in four European countries, also co-financed by the European Union.

MDAC Campaigns Director Steven Allen said: “The appalling situation of people with multiple and profound disabilities at Topház is a public scandal. The evidence that EU money has been used at this institution is profoundly concerning, especially as the EU has ordered Member States not to use such funds on institutionalisation of persons with disabilities. MDAC demands that the EU step in to assist the victims of Topház. Furthermore, the European Commission must now assess how widespread this problem is across Europe.”

MDAC Litigation Director Ann Campbell said: “The EU committed to protecting the rights of people with disabilities when it accepted the binding force of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010. We call on them to respect that Convention and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The European Commission, Parliament and Council must ensure accountability for such egregious human rights violations against one of the most marginalised minorities in Europe today.”

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