1. The Council of the broadest national consensus

On 24 August 2004 the Hungarian Economic and Social Council was set up in order to promote the discussion of the national strategies of economic and social policy as well as the long-term governmental aims, to facilitate social dialogue and to help the emergence of a national consensus necessary to making decisions affecting a broad sphere of the society.

Members of the autonomous social body, set up for the discussion of national strategies overarching governmental cycles, and for the promotion of the elaboration and implementation of a harmonious and balanced economic development and a social model adjusted to it, represent the aspects of the economic and social life, of civil society, of the interest representations of employers and employees, as well as of learning.

The ESC was set up upon the initiative of the government based on an accord of the National Interest Conciliation Council of 26 July 2002.

An Economic and Social Council, or a body of similar name, offering a framework for macro-level consultations, has been in existence in almost all the Member States of the European Union.

On the level of the European Union the European Economic and Social Committee is an associated institution of the Economic and Social Council.

2. Relationships in the interest of interest conciliation and of the organised civil society

The Hungarian Economic and Social Council has 43 members, of who 18 represent the economy, 6 the employees, 11 the civil organisations an 8 learning. The government is not member of the Council, but has permanent representation by the chancellery minister and members of the government may participate in the plenary sessions as permanent invitees. The acknowledgement of the strategic role of the Council and its authorisation for consultation and making proposals is indicated by the fact that the prime minister participated in all of its plenary sessions in the first year after its establishment, and appointed Dr Lajos Héthy as governmental co-ordinator.
In Hungary interest tripartite conciliation (employer-employee-government) has been in operation since 1988. Its national institution is the National Council for Interest Conciliation. The development of the system of tripartite interest conciliation by branches has also begun. The tasks and aims of the Economic and Social Council are different: it is a forum of giving opinion and recommendations to the adjustment of national strategic aims and programmes, following European patterns, involving a significantly broader sphere of civil society.

In strategic issues related to the European Union it helps the development of professionally well-founded stands in harmony with the Union objectives by the fact that four members of the Council are also members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), and that the organisations represented by the members of the Hungarian ESC are also represented in the EESC.

The post of president is filled by annual rotation; in the first year the president was delegated by the economic sphere, to be followed by a representative of the employees. Each side delegates a deputy president and three further members to the Permanent Committee, which is the body for discussions and decision-making between plenary sessions.
3. Founding Members of the Economic and Social Council

DEMJÁN Sándor, the current President
Acting Chairman of the National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers
Diploma in commerce
Chairman of the Board of TriGránit Inc.
Chairman of Polus Investments
“The Businessman of the Year Prize 2005” - Ernst and Young Prize

DR. SZABÓ Endre, Co-President, employees’ side
President of the Cooperation Forum of Trade Unions
Secondary school teacher
Participation in the setting up of the National Council for Interest Conciliation, and of the Council for Interest Conciliation of Budgetary Institutions, member of the Executive Committee of the Federation of European Trade Unions

DR. TÓTH János, Co-President, civil side
Deputy-President of the Association of Industrial Parks
Lawyer specialising in foreign trade
Head of the Lawyer’s Office Dr.v.TÓTH
Member of the Board of the European Economic and Social Committee
Deputy Chairman of the Hungarian Section of the European Federation for Economic Co-operation

PROF. DR. VIZI E. Szilveszter, Co-President, science side
President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Medical doctor, awarded the Széchenyi Prize
Director of the Institute of Medical Biochemistry of the Semmelweis University,
Deputy Rector of the University
  Professor of the Department of Pharmacology and
  Pharmacotherapy of the Semmelweis University

DR. HERCZOG Mária, Chairperson of the Permanent Committee
Professional Director of the Prominently Public Benefit Association for Family, Children and Youth
Sociologist and economist
Senior researcher of the National Institute of Criminology
Senior researcher of the National Institute for Family and Social Policy
Member of the European Economic and Social Committee

ECONOMIC SPHERE

DR. ANTALFFY Gábor
Acting Chairman of the National Federation of Traders and Caterers
Lawyer with diploma specialisation in economics
Member of the National Council for the ILO

BARTUS Pál
Chairman of the National Federation of General Consumer Cooperatives and Business Associations
Business administrator
President and Director-General of Coop-Hungary Inc.
President of the Supervisory Board of COOP EURO Inc.
Middle Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary (civil division) – 2005
DR. CŠIKAI Miklós
Chairman of the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture
Specialist engineer
President and Director-General of Árpád-Agrár Inc.
Honorary Citizen of the Corvinus University
Member of the Council for Research and Technical Innovation

ERDEI Tamás
President of the Hungarian Federation of Banks
Business administrator, Chartered auditor
President and Director-General of the Hungarian Foreign Trade Bank Inc.

FARKAS Tamás
Chairman of the National Council of Co-operatives
Engineer and economist
Chairman of the National Association of Housing Co-operatives and Condominiums
Gold Cross of Merit of the Republic of Hungary (1994)

HÖRÖMPÖLY László
Chairman of the Hungarian Industrial Association

DR. KŐRÖSI Imre
Union of Agrarian Employers

MOSONYI György
Chairman of the Joint Venture Association
Chemical engineer
Chairman of the Board of TVK Inc.
Member of the Board of AB-AEGON

NAGY Tamás
Chairman of the National Federation of Agricultural Cooperators and Producers
Mechanical engineer
President and Director-General of the Dél-Pest Holding Inc.
Member of the Board of the Hungarian Development Bank
Member of the European Economic and Social Committee

DR. PARRAGH László
Chairman of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Lawyer
Founder of the Parragh Commercial and Holding Inc.
Chairman of the Supervisory Board of KAVOSZ Inc.
Member of the Boards of MEHIB, EXIMBANK and GYSEV

DR. RUDNAY János
Chairman of the Association of International Companies in Hungary
Lawyer
Head of the Dr. Rudnay János Consultancy Inc.
Former Director-General of the REEMTSMA Tobacco Works Ltd. of Debrecen

SUGÁR András
Co-Chairman of the Investors’ Council
Electrical engineer
Former Director-General of the T-Mobile Magyarország Inc.
Co-Chairman of the Council of Competitiveness

SZALAY-BERZEVICZY Attila
President of the Budapest Stock Exchange Inc.
Specialist economist
Acting Director of HVB Bank Hungary Inc.
Member of the Presidium of the Federation of European Stock Exchanges

DR. SZAPÁRY György
Representative of the Monetary Council of the National Bank of Hungary
Economist
Deputy President of the National Bank of Hungary
Member of the European Economic and Financial Committee
Member of the “Euro 50 Group”

**SZÉLES Gábor**
Chairman of the Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists

**SZÜCS György**
Chairman of the National Association of the Industrial Corporations
Turner
Self-employed service providing and product manufacturing entrepreneur

**TÓTH István**
Chairman of the National Association of Strategic and Public Utility Companies
Engineer of transport economics
Director-General of Alba Volán Inc.
Deputy Chairman of the Board of the VOLÁN MERGER
Deputy Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Fejér County

**EMPLOYEES’ SIDE**

**DR. BORSIK János**
Chairman of the Federation of Autonomous Trade Unions

**GASKÓ István**
Chairman of the Liga Trade Unions
Economist
Chairman of the Democratic League of Autonomous Trade Unions
Chairman of the Free Trade Union of Railway Workers
Deputy Chairman (employees’ side) of the Supervisory Committee of MÁV ZRt.

**PALKOVICS Imre**
Chairman of the National Federation of Workers’ Councils
DR. VÍGH László  
Chairman of the Grouping of Intellectuals’ Trade Unions  
Agricultural engineer  
Retired associate and former Acting Director of the Research Institute for Husbandry and Feed  
Chairman of the Trade Union of Workers in Agricultural Training and Research  

WITTICH Tamás  
Chairman of the National Confederation of Hungarian Trade Unions  
Economist  
Former Secretary-General of the Trade Union for Garment Industry Workers  

CIVIL SIDE  

BARABÁS Miklós  
Director of Europe House  
M.A. History and English  
Head of the European Regional Office of the World Federation of Civil Organisations in Budapest  
Member of the European Economic and Social Committee  
Member of the Board of the Association of European Citizens  

GARAI István  
Chairman of the National Association for Consumer Protection in Hungary  
Engineer and economist  
Member of the European Economic and Social Committee  
Member of the Executive Committee of the European Organisation for Consumer Protection  
Knight’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary (civil section)  

DR HEGEDŰS Lajos  
Co-Chairman of the National Council for the Disabled  
Lawyer  
Self-employed lawyer
President of the National Federation of the Associations of the Mobility Impaired
Deputy Chairman of the European Regional Organisation of the International
Association of the Disabled

JANKOVICS György
Member of the Council for the Elderly

MS KORMOS, Zsuzsanna DEBRECENI
Member of the Council of Women’s Representation
Foreign trader
Social Policy agent for the National Association of Big Families (NOE)
Member of the National Council of Social Policy

DR. KOVÁCS Árpád
Federation of Economic and Scientific Associations

MÁRKUS Eszter
National Meeting of the Organisations for the Protection of the Environment and
Nature
Economist
Associate of the EMLA Association

PONGRÁCZ Gábor
Conference for Children and Youth

DR. TARDY Pál
Deputy Chairman of the Federation of Technical and Scientific Societies
Metallurgical engineer
Technical Deputy Director of the Hungarian Union of Iron and Steel Industries
(MVAE)
Member of the advisory board of the Coal and Steel Research Fund of the EU
Honorary Professor of the University of Miskolc
SCIENCE SIDE

**DR. BEREND T. Iván**
Former President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Economist
Professor of the University of California, Los Angeles
Former Director of the Centre for European and Eurasian Studies of the University of California
Member of the British Academy, of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and of the European Academy

**DR. BESENYEI Lajos**
Chairman of the Hungarian Rectors' Conference
Professor of economics
Rector of the University of Miskolc
Chairman of the Committee of Statistics of Department IX of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
President of the National Statistical Council

**DR. GLATZ Ferenc**
Former President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
Historian
Director of the Institute of History
Member of international committees preparing the eastward enlargement of the European Union

**DR. HALM Tamás**
Hungarian Society of Economists

**DR. HORN Péter**
Invited to represent the Hungarian Academy of Sciences
4. **What is the value of the Economic and Social Council?**

The composition of the Council ensures the expert base and mediator’s role that may reach to a rational compromise acceptable to all in comprehensive issues affecting the economy and society, and in the discussion of national strategies recommended for handling the problems explored.

The most important tasks of the ESC:

- The study of comprehensive macro economic and social issues affecting the economy and society
- Assessment of the given condition of the economy and society
- Discussion of the national strategies recommended for handling the explored problems, especially in the following areas:
  - Economic and social policy,
  - Development policy,
  - Policy of labour and employment,
  - Social insurance and healthcare,
  - Strategy of European integration,
  - Other social strategies.

Ever since its formation the Council has held consultation on the programmes of Hungarian development linked to the main directions of the EU (European Plan, National Concept of Development Policy, National Concept of Territorial Development) and on the “100 Steps” programme of the government. It has published its stand related to the former one. Further on, it has proposed the drawing up of a Social Contract on the basis of the study of the well-known Spanish, Irish, and Finnish examples, to be prepared by the Council. The President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Dr. Kosáry Domokos, has held the position of President of the Society of Hungarian History and has received the French Legion of Honour (1997) and the Grand Cross of the German Order of Merit (2003). The President of the Conference of College Directors-General, Dr. Roz József, has held the position of Rector of the Budapest College of Economics and has received the Officer’s Cross of the Republic of Hungary (2004).
Academy of Sciences, representing the academic sphere, was invited to prepare and coordinate the Social Contract. The work has been in progress with the involvement of experts.

5. /or under another serial number / International relations

The Economic and Social Council has developed close co-operation with the European Economic and Social Committee. A particularly important stage of it is to be the high-level conference on the mid-term assessment and re-launch of the Lisbon Strategy on 9–10 March 2006 in Budapest. The conference would survey the work of assessment done by the organised civil society on Union level, and would address the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the European Union to be held in spring 2006.

The Hungarian Economic and Social Council has been represented at the sessions of presidents and secretaries general of the economic and social councils of Union Member States ever since its formation. The statement issued by the presidential meeting of the national economic and social councils held in November 2005 in Paris on the topic of the Lisbon Strategy contains Hungarian proposals, too.

The Hungarian Economic and Social Council is member of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS).

The Economic and Social Council is open to participation in bilateral and multilateral international co-operations. A good example, among others, of this is co-operation in the ‘TRESMED’ project of the respective Austrian and Spanish organisations, or the establishment of direct contacts with the Bulgarian, Lebanese and Turkish Councils, and participation in the inter-institution event of Austrian, Slovene, Hungarian and Croatian organisations linked to programmes bringing the Union closer to the citizens, to be held in late April 2006.