

Laudation of

DR. MÁRIA HERCZOG PhD  
sociologist

on the occasion of granting her  
the JUSTITIA REGNORUM FUNDAMENTUM AWARD



**Dr. Mária Herczog**, sociologist, graduated at Marx Károly University, and began to work as a fellow researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1981 participating mainly in family research activities. From 1984 she worked as research organizer and junior lecturer at the General Education Department of Eötvös Lóránd University. Afterwards, under the direction of Katalin Talyigás and Katalin Gerencsér she established the Pest County Social Policy Department. From 1985 she participated in the preparatory process of the national social worker training program at Eötvös Lóránd

University under the direction of Zsuzsa Ferge and later she became lecturer, as well.

The special fields covered by her doctoral thesis were welfare and child protection in Pest County summarizing the findings of research carried out concerning the situation of infant homes and high infant mortality rates. The thesis explored the background of the closure of an infant home in Zsámbék, raising child protection and sociological concerns.

In 1989-90, she was visiting fellow at the Department of Social Work Social Administration of the University of Western Australia, in Perth where she gave lectures on family sociology and social policy to PhD students. In the meanwhile, she became member of the International Federation of Social Workers, participated several international conferences addressing children's rights and child protection and study-tours, organized amongst others by the Case Western Reserve University of Cleveland or a study-tour on social work in Israel in 1991.

In 1992, she became researcher of the National Institute of Criminology where she worked until 2007. In the same year, she launched the Family, Child, Youth Journal, still being the only professional journal in this field. As senior researcher of the National Institute of Criminology, she dealt with problems like family background, institutional education of young offenders and alternative solutions for foster parenting, alternative conflict resolution and mediation and, as a result of this work she published several studies in Hungary and abroad.

Between 2004 and 2012 she was member of the National Equal Opportunity Authority.

She was co-author and co-editor of several works of sources. In 1994, as co-editor with Vera Hazai she published the book titled *International practice of child protection, Child abuse and Neglect, Together or Separated, Reconciliation and compensation*, but we should also mention the 1200-page *Child Protection Meritum*. In the framework of the EU's antidiscrimination program,

she was editor of the so called „Blue Book”, a manual on the application of the UN Convention on the Right of the Child published in 2009 and was co-editor of two books written for children and professionals on children’s rights.

In 1995, she was granted the Batthyányi-Strattman László Award for her work performed in the field of child protection. In 1997, she defended her doctoral dissertation (PhD-Doctor of Sociology) exploring actual dilemmas of child protection and possible directions of future development.

She participated from the very beginning in the preparatory works of drafting the child protection law and remained actively involved in this work until the adoption of the law. In 1998, she was appointed director of the National Institute of Family and Social Policy aimed to assist the implementation of the newly adopted law on child protection. She performed this duty until the end of June 2000, when the institution was restructured and reorganized. Following this, she worked as a director of research and later until 2007 as senior researcher in the same institute.

In 1998, she was temporary scientific expert of UNICEF heading a research carried out in six countries concerning child protection and professional child care system. The final report of this research presented a great contribution to UNICEF’s following decisions on possible forms of assistance and better distribution of resources.

Since 1998 she’s been participating as a scientific expert in the WHO’s working group on violence and child abuse prevention. She worked as a temporary scientific expert in WHO’s working group against violence and in the so called *Guidelines Guidelines* working group assisting the elaboration of national plans for the prevention child abuse and negligence. Since 2005 she’s been working as national focal point of WHO on violence prevention.

In 1997-2002, as temporary scientific expert of the Council of Europe she participated in the revision of the Recommendations on the prevention of children’s sexual exploitation for commercial purposes and in the drafting of the new recommendation.

In 2003, within the framework of the EU DAPHNE I program, under the direction of the University of Birmingham she participated in a project covering 8 countries on exploring the conditions and circumstances of institutional care of children of age 0-3. In 2001, she participated as senior researcher in the project launched by the National Institute of Criminology exploring domestic violence and the situation of children taken into institutional care in Budapest.

In 2005, within the framework of the program Daphne II she shared her experiences and hold training courses to professionals on good practices of de-institutionalization under the coordination of the University of Birmingham. As a follow-up to this program, she was co-author of the publication exploring the number and characteristics of children aged 0-3 in care in Europe.

In 2007, she was elected member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. In 2010, she was re-elected for the post. In 2004-2010 she was member of the European Economic and Social committee representing civil society.

Since 2007 she was board member of EUROCHILD, an active network of organizations and individuals working in and across Europe to improve the quality of life of children and young people, in Brussels. In June 2010, she was elected president of EUROCHILD.

With granting the Justitia Regnorum Fundamentum Award to Mrs. Mária Herczog the Ombudsman recognizes her outstanding scientific and practical work performed in the field of the protection of children's rights.

28 June 2013, Budapest