

To the Members of the European Parliament,

On March 26, 2026, following a smear campaign in regime-affiliated media, the Hungarian government launched an unprecedented attack against investigative reporter Szabolcs Panyi, charging him with the grave crime of espionage. The prominent journalist, working for independent outlets *Direkt36* and *VSquare*, has been accused of “spying for a foreign state.”

This charge rests on a foundation of illegal surveillance. The key evidence used against Panyi is a secret recording of his conversation with a source, made without his knowledge and released in edited form through Hungary's government-aligned media.

In the recording, Panyi and his source are heard discussing Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó's communications with his Russian counterpart. Szijjártó has reportedly provided Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov with “direct reports on what was discussed” during breaks in EU council meetings.

The government's actions against Szabolcs display a new level of Viktor Orbán's assault on one of the few independent media left in the country. Among other award-winning investigative work, Panyi and his colleagues have exposed Russian influence operations in Hungary and documented the government's deepening ties to Moscow.

The charges against Szabolcs Panyi are not an isolated incident. For years, the Hungarian government has deployed state-owned and regime-aligned media to smear independent journalists and discredit their reporting. What is happening now represents a grave escalation: the Orbán government is mobilising the country's law enforcement and intelligence apparatus as instruments of political persecution.

It is an act of revenge, with the regime using its power to intimidate a journalist who has exposed multiple cases of the government's wrongdoing, including of members of Viktor Orbán's government and his inner circle. These charges are the regime's response. Their aim is not justice, but intimidation: to signal to every investigative journalist in Hungary what awaits those who hold power to account. In Orbán's Hungary, journalism itself has become a crime.

These are not actions of an EU country which abide by the rule of law and freedom of the media. This is little Russia.

We, the undersigned journalists, call on EU institutions, member state governments, and international press freedom bodies to respond with urgency. The persecution of Szabolcs Panyi must not be met with silence.

Name and Surname	Media organization	Country
Šarūnas Černiauskas	Siena	Lithuania
Wojciech Cieśla	FRONTSTORY.PL	Poland
Sanita Jemberga	Re:Baltica	Latvia
Tünde Szabó	Átlátszó Erdély - Transparent Transylvania	Romania
Ana Poenariu	Public Record	Romania
Maciej Możański	FRONTSTORY.pl	Poland
Anuška Delić	Oštro	Slovenia
Vaidas Pilkauskas	Kas vyksta Kaune	Lithuania
Ingrid Gercama	OCCRP	Netherlands
Anna Gielewska	VSquare, FRONTSTORY	Poland
Tamás Bodoky	atlatszo.hu	Hungary
Jurate Damulyte	News outlet „15min“	Lithuania
Sergio Sangiao	infoLibre	Spain
Răzvan Luțac	Snoop.ro	Romania
Rita Miliūtė	"Redakcija"	Lithuania
Bence Varga	Átlátszó	Hungary
Danielė Patapaitė	Laisvės TV	Lithuania
Karolina Pekarskienė	LAISVĖS TV	Lithuania
Liucija Zubrute	VERSLO ZINIOS	Lithuania
Edoardo Anziano	IрпиMedia	Italy
Gabija Tapiniene	Laisves media group	Lithuania
Aivaras Lukošius	LaisvėsTV	Lithuania
Jurga Tvaskienė	LRT	Lithuania
Ioana Moldoveanu	Snoop.ro	Romania
Šarūnas Rudys	Laisvės TV	Lithuania

Holger Roonemaa	Delfi Estonia / OCCRP	Estonia
Paul Radu	OCCRP	The Netherlands
Kira Zalan	OCCRP	US
Hanna Solti	Átlátszó	Hungary
Doscaș Cătălin	Buletin de București	Romania
Lukas Diko	Investigative Centre of Jan Kuciak	Slovakia
Luc Caregari	Reporter.lu	Luxembourg
Florin Râșteiu	Buletin de București	Romania
Dmitry	Velikovskiy	Russia
Atanas Tchobanov	BIRD.BG	Bulgaria
Karolína Farská	Investigative Center of Jan Kuciak	Slovakia
Cătălin Anghel-Dimache	Buletin de București	Romania
Tom Stocks	Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)	UK
Miranda Patrucic	OCCRP	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Nacho Calle	infoLibre	Spain
Andrei Ciurcanu	RISE Project	Romania
Pavla Holcova	investigace.cz	Czech Republic
Tomas Martynas Pupalaigis	Laisves TV	Lithuania
Gabija Kučinskaitė	Siena	Lithuania
Viktor Kiššimon	ICJK	Slovakia
Carl Schreck	OCCRP	United States
Martin Laine	Delfi Estonia	Estonia
Darius Chmieliauskas	Lietuvos žurnalistų draugija	Lietuva
Nick de Jager	Follow the Money	Netherlands
Ovidiu Vanghele	Center for Investigative Media (Centrul de Investigatii Media - Romania)	Romania
Mona Dîrțu	PressOne	Romania
Andrew Sullivan	OCCRP	USA

Iurie Sanduta	RISE Moldova	Republic of Moldova
Zoltán Sipos	Átlátszó Erdély	Romania
Oliver Kund	Delfi	Estonia
Lőrinc Tálos	atlatszo.hu	Hungary
Romana Puiulet	RISE Project	Romania
Nicolae Cuschevici	RISE Moldova	Republic of Moldova
Zenaida Tataru	Friends For Friends Foundation	Romania
Emilia Sercan	PressOne	Romania
Margaux Farran	OCCRP	France
Jonny Wrate	OCCRP	United Kingdom
Elena Loginova	OCCRP	Ukraine
Codruța Simina	Misreport	Romania
Antonio Baquero Iglesias	OCCRP	España
Arpád Soltész		Czechia
Biro Attila	Context.ro	Romania
Emmanuel K Dogbevi	NewsBridge Africa	Ghana
Carmel N. Pilotti	OCCRP	Papua New Guinea
Sana SBOUAI	OCCRP	France
Shaya Laughlin	OCCRP	Malta
Nicolae Brega	OCCRP	Romania
Karolis Juršys	15min	Lithuania
Eli Moskowitz	OCCRP	Spain
Inga Springe	freelance Latvian investigative reporter	Latvia
Daniel Flis	Frontstory.pl/VSquare.org	Poland
Nicholas Karides	Institute for Mass Media	Cyprus
Piret Reiljan	Delfi Meedia	Estonia
Marta Vunš	Delfi Estonia	Estonia
Karolina Szmygin	Fundacja Reporterów	Poland
Javid Abdullayev	Mikroskop Media	Azerbaijan, Germany

Matt Kasper	Meydan TV	Germany
Alexander Yarashevich	Buro Media	Belarus in exile
Berenika Serwatka	Fundacja Reporterów	Poland
Aliaksei Hulitski	Buro Media	Belarus (in exile in Lithuania)
Kseniya V.	Buro Media	Poland
Martin Laine	Delfi Estonia	Estonia
Ireene Kilusk	Delfi Estonia	Estonia
Tom Bolsius	Follow the Money	the Netherlands
Tadeusz Michrowski	Frontstory.pl	Poland
Peter Matjašič	Reference Circle	Spain
Urszula Kifer	„Pismo” magazine	Poland
Lois Kapila	Dublin Inquirer	Ireland
Anuška Delić	Oštro	Slovenia
Szymon Jadczyk	WP.pl	Poland
Jakub Stachowiak	Tvn24	Polska
Kamila Wielogórska	Tvp	Poland
Amund Trellevik	Freelance investigative journalist	Norway
Jakub Patočka	Deník Referendum	Czech Republic
Grzegorz Łakomski	TVN24	Polska
Anastasiia Morozova	Onet.pl	Poland
Zuzana Vlasatá	Deník Referendum	Czech Republic
Roman Imielski	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Karolina Wysota	Money.pl	Polska
Birte Schohaus	Follow the Money	Netherlands
Daniel Kotecký	Deník Referendum	Czech Republic
Michal Hořejší	Deník Referendum	Czechia
David Binar	Freelance	Czechia
Nico Schmidt	Investigate Europe	Germany
Mei-Ling McNamara	Investigate Europe	Ireland

Jitka Komendová	Deník Referendum	Czech Republic
Natalia Zaba	Freelance	Poland
Anna Absolonová	Deník Referendum	Czech Republic
Maciej Duda	TVN24	Poland
Vadim Makarenko	Ringier Axel Springer Polska	Poland
Josef Slerka	Investigace.cz	Czech Republic
Sofia Spirkova	investigace.cz	Czech Republic
Zuzana Šotová	investigace.cz	Czech Republic
Attila Kálmán	Investigate Europe	Hungary
Dávid Pásztor	investigace.cz	Czechia
Tamara Kanuchova	VSquare, The European Correspondent	Slovakia
Barbora Šturmová	investigace.cz	Czech Republic
Michal Komárek	investigace.cz	Czech Republic
Paweł Reszka	Tygodnik Polityka	Polska
Paul May	investigace.cz	Czech Republic
Agata Żelazowska	Gazeta Wyborcza	PL
Andreas Tun Hedfors	freelance / SVT	Sweden
Joanna Krawczyk	CORRECTIV.Europe	Germany
Inese Braze	Re:Baltica	Latvia
Ewa Furtak	Wyborcza	Poland
Mirosław Maciorowski	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Przemysław Jedlecki	Gazeta Wyborcza	Polska
Alicja Zboinska	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Robert Robaszewski	Gazeta Wyborcza	Polska
Rafał Górski	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Bartosz Wieliński	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Otakar Bureš	Deník Referendum	Czech Republic
Anna Kwiatkowska	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Annija Petrova	Re:Baltica	Latvia

Dominik Łowicki	Gazeta Wyborcza	Polska
Janusz Jaros	Wyborcza.pl	Polska
Michał Kokot	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Patrycja Maciejewicz	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Artur Brzozowski	Gazeta Wyborcza	Polska
Marcin Mastalerz	Polska Agencja Prasowa	Polska
Maciej Chołodowski	Gazeta Wyborcza	Polska
Veronika Kotmanová	Budějcká Drbna	Czech republic
Magdalena Lemańska	Forbes Poland	Poland
Marcin Hołubowicz	Wyborcza	Poland
Jurek Jurecki	Tygodnik Podhalański	Poland
Migle Kranceviciute	Investigative journalism centre "Siena"	Lithuania
Bartłomiej Kuraś	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Jana Krescanko Dibáková	SME	Slovenská republika
Matúš Kostolný	Denník N	Slovakia
Fatima Karimova	Mikroskop Media	Azerbaijan
Kai E. Iliev	The European Correspondent	Bulgaria
Aleksander Gurgul	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Mirek Tóda	Denník N	Slovakia
Kristina Vejnborder	Voxpot	Czechia
Emilia Dłużewska	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Dominika Maciejasz	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Beata Biel	TVN24+	Poland
Natalia Waloch	Gazeta Wyborcza/Wysokie Obcasy	Polska
Apolena Rychlíková	Page Not Found	Česko
Zoltán Szalay	Napunk	Slovakia
Liuba Şevciuc	CU SENS	Moldova
Erik Moora	Delfi Meedia	Estonia
Zdislava Pokorná	Deník N	Česká republika

Michal Tomeš	Deník N	Czechia
Lukáš Werner	Deník N	Czech Republic
Urszula Pieczek	Gazeta Wyborcza	Polska
razvan robu	publicrecord.ro	romania
Ada Constanda	Snoop.ro	Romania
Lukas Prchal	Deník N	Czech Republic
Andrzej Kublik	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Tomasz Jakubowski	Gazeta Wyborcza	Polska
Bertold Kittel	TVN	Polska
Elisabetta Tola	FACTA	Italy
Kyriakos Pieridis	Cyprus Investigative Reporting Network - CIReN	Cyprus
Marketa Boubinova	Denik N	Czechia
Maria Pankowska	TVN24	Poland
Filip Zajíček	Deník N	Czech Republic
Mikołaj Chrzan	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Marco Boscolo	FACTA.eu	Italy
Marcin Lewicki	Press Club Polska	Polska
Michal Musil	Magazin Reporter	Czech Republic
Jarosław Włodarczyk	Press Club Polska	Poland
Anna Gromnicka	Press Club	Poland
Jan Cywiński		Polska
Magdalena Kicinska	Press Club	Polska
Marek Chorvatovič	Denník N	Slovensko
Michal Zablocki	independent journalist	Poland
Alžběta Medková	A2	Czech Republic
EDYTA MIKOŁAJCZYK	TVP POLONIA	POLAND
Magdalena Rigamonti	Onet.pl	Poland
Marek Sekielski	Kombinat Medialny	Poland
Szymon Piegza	Onet.pl	Poland

Jaap Arriens	Sipa USA	Poland
Agata Grzybowska	Press Club Polska	Poland
Michal Špína	A2 Cultural Biweekly	Czechia
Jaroslav Kmenta	Reportér magazín	Czech
Arkadiusz Nadolny	TVP 1 "Reporterzy"	Poland
Paulina Socha-Jakubowska	Press Club Polska	Poland
Adam Lach	Press Club Poland	Poland
Stefan Hrib	.týždeň, Slovak weekly	Slovensko
Estera Prugar-Wójcicka	TVN24	Poland
Filip Titlbach	Deník N	Czechia
Miroslaw Lipowski	Mediacode	Polska
Alicja Gardulska	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Grzegorz Celejewski	Gazeta Wyborcza	Polska
Jan Klamm	A2	Czechia
Pawel Konzal	Lepsze.org (Better life foundation)	Poland
Piotr Zbroziński	Press Club Polska	Poland
Greete Palgi	Delfi	Estonia
Robert Feluś	Uniwersytet SWPS	Poland
Dominika Wielowieyska	Gazeta Wyborcza	Polska
Brygida Grysiak	TVN24	Poland
Lilia Saul Rodriguez	OCCRP	MEXICO
Agnieszka Dobkiewicz	Gazeta Wyborcza	Poland
Beata Balogova	SME	Slovakia
Paulo Pena	Investigate Europe	Portugal
Krzysztof Gołębiowski	KAI, emeritus journalist	Polska
Anca Mihai	Public Record	Romania
Agnieszka Filek		Poland