



## *The Day of Reception*

Quarter-Century of Service

The 4000th gift eyeglasses

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A violin can also be a social tool





# Quarter-Century of Service



In 2014,  
the Hungarian Charity  
Service of the Order of Malta  
celebrated its **25th** anniversary.



cover photo: Memorial celebration of the Day of Reception at the scenery installed  
on the original location of the refugee camp (August 14, 2014)



*“When we, Germans, celebrate the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in the autumn, we know very well that it required many Hungarians’ bravery, who paved the way for people coming from the GDR towards liberty and the German reunification. Therefore, we, Germans were and will be wholeheartedly grateful to the Hungarian people.”*

Excerpt from the message German Chancellor Angela Merkel sent to the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta



*The Association of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta was founded on 4 February 1989, and the Court of Budapest registered the organisation six days later. On 4 February 2014, in honour of the 25th anniversary, the Hungarian Post issued 500,000 copies of commemorative Maltese stamps, each with a nominal value of HUF 300. On 10 February, a thanksgiving mass was held at Holy Family Parish Church in Zugliget, which was packed with volunteers and helpers coming from all over the country. At the anniversary, Mr. Zoltán Balog, Minister of Human Capacities, personally greeted Father Imre Kozma, Chairman of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta.*



In the course of the jubilee, the Maltese groups, institutions and regional centres reviewed essential events of the past quarter century at commemorations and thanksgiving masses. On 14 August, on the Day of Welcoming, hundreds of people recalled the historic events at the celebration of the anniversary held in the garden of Zugliget church. On 14 August 1989, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta opened the first camp for East German refugees in the garden of Zugliget church, triggering the largest humanitarian action of former Europe by this. Since then, this day is celebrated each year as the Day of Welcoming. During the following three months, 48600 East German refugees spent some time in the camps. At the 25th anniversary, German Chancellor Angela Merkel expressed her appreciation to Father Imre Kozma and the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in a video message. Fra' Matthew Festing, the Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, also sent a video message. The mass in the church of Zugliget was celebrated by Cardinal Péter Erdő. On the occasion of the event, the Hungarian National Bank issued a commemorative Maltese coin with a nominal value of HUF 2000.





## Message to the MPs

In spring 2014, parliamentary elections were held in Hungary. As at other parliamentary elections before, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta sent a message to all members of parliament on the day of the inaugural meeting of the new parliament, requesting the politicians to tackle child poverty. The most important messages of the letter undersigned by Father Imre Kozma were propagated on a 30 metre long and 11 metre high banner on the wall of the centre of the Charity Service at Batthyány Square, opposite the Parliament Building.







Maltese 'Presence' method

## *Presence at Mésztelep in Tatabánya*

The Charity Service opened a community centre at Mésztelep in Tatabánya. More than one thousand people live in the substandard rented housings constituting the neighbourhood. As a result of the rehabilitation programme based on the Maltese 'Presence' method, which was initiated by the local government and electric supply company EON, the situation of numerous illegal occupants and problematic leased properties was settled, and during the refurbishment of the power supply system of the neighbourhood, most of the housings were equipped with special prepayment meters.

It was important since a generation had grown up there that took it for granted that electricity can be consumed free of charge, via a simple wire connected to the poles.

As a result of the changes, the consumption in the neighbourhood reduced by half, and theft of electricity, which caused a loss of HUF 80 million per year, was cut back. The director of EON claims that the company alone could never achieve such a result; the programme of the Maltese Charity Service was essential to success.

*As his first official visit, the state secretary for social affairs of the new government formed after the elections went to Mésztelep in Tatabánya; Mr. Károly Czibere went there to study the Maltese 'Presence Programme'.*



# Thousands of people have escaped *their debts*

More than two thousands consumers falling into arrears escaped their debts as a result of the common arrears management programme of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta and EDF DÉMÁSZ, where the contribution by the service provider company amounted to HUF 15 million.

The needy families could participate in the programme through tenders, and after paying 50% of the outstanding amount, they could claim the settlement of the remaining debts. During the arrears management programme, hundreds of families escaped the risk of disconnection, and electricity was supplied again to numerous consumers who had been disconnected before.



## The **4000th** gift eyeglasses







In 2014, the 4000th eyeglasses made in the framework of the programme of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta entitled 'Good Eyesight Given as a Gift' were ready for the donation. The Charity Service makes free eyeglasses to children of needy families, and to homeless people. The team of volunteer doctors performs thousands of examinations every year in the slums, in neighbourhoods where Roma people live and in small lagging towns, and they prescribe eyeglasses to patients suffering from poor eyesight. The programme is efficient since people affected receive the eyeglasses directly after a few days of waiting, and not the recipe.

The team of doctors of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta consists exclusively of volunteers, who help at weekends or during their holiday. 11 doctors participate in the work, representing 11 different specialties.

In general, they perform simple examinations in the consulting room furnished in a tent; they check blood pressure, estimate blood glucose levels and perform eye examination, but they also place a great emphasis on estimation of the mental health conditions. In addition to the examination, they also provide medical care for the patients, as far as possible. Lifestyle-related diseases are mainly attributable to poverty, however, the doctors endeavour to help by giving advice on what changes can be done despite the circumstances. The team of the doctors visits all disadvantaged sub-regions in Hungary. They perform the examinations even under poor conditions; if there is no consulting room available, they examine their patients in a gymnasium, office or in a military tent they took along.





## Drying out houses *after flood*

In Obrenovac, Serbia, the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service dried the walls of eighty houses with its own and other machines borrowed from other Maltese organisations. After the flood in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Hungarian volunteers worked on the site for more than a month. After drying the water-damaged walls of the buildings, they brought new household appliances, refrigerators, washing machines and stoves to the families, according to the demands of the people affected by the flood.

## Season ticket for *bread to people in need*



During their joint action, the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service and the local government of District 3 of Budapest issued season tickets for bread, entitling to buy bread at half price, selling out one thousand kilograms of bread in this way every month. The families in need receive the tickets from the social office of the local government, and they can buy bread at half price in the social bakery of the Maltese Charity Service. Half of the workers employed in the social bakery are people with changed working ability; their bakery products are consumed in the institutions of the Charity Service and other social organisations, but people living in the vicinity also often buy them.





# How to perform the inclusion *of the Roma settlements?*

What can European countries do for Roma people crowded in slums? Who should do the next step and how can lagging communities be helped? During the past two years, the EU integration project called PAIRS (Effective Programmes for the Active Integration/Inclusion of the Roma in South-East Europe), which is led by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta and held its closing conference in Budapest on 19 November 2014, sought answers to these questions in eight countries.

In the PAIRS project, successes and failures of integration projects aiming at acceptance and integration of the Roma communities in Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine were investigated. On the basis of experience gathered, detailed plans for programmes and general recommendations applying to all countries were drawn up.

The recommendations submitted to governmental and public bodies help to reveal and eliminate social mechanisms which re-create inequalities. According to the most important conclusion, which was confirmed by all countries, all organisations concerned with the integration must mutually learn from each other, since integration of Roma people is a complex process which requires pedagogy, sociology, social work and community development.





# A story book about disabled children

The first story book by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta was published on the spring book fair.

The volume entitled *The Guardian Angel - Tales about Acceptance* was offered to the Charity Service by *Erika Bartos*, the most successful Hungarian fabulist in recent years. The book with its tales describing disabled children and teaching how to accept them reaped considerable success; all copies had been sold out by December.

The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta spent all income from it on aiding families bringing up disabled children.





# A violin can also be *a social tool*

In September 2014, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta and Symphonia Foundation launched a programme to create opportunities, on the basis of methods of music education. El Sistema method, which aims at helping children living in slums, was launched in Venezuela forty years ago. In Hungary, this method was first used by Symphonia Foundation and was tested by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in the Roma settlement in Monor. In the year of the experiment, seventy children learnt to play music; by the end of the year, they knew several dozen short pieces of music, they had numerous performances and their performance at school improved by one and a half mark in average. By playing music together, those children could experience success, they had achievable goals, and, what is more, they were accustomed to orderliness. After the evaluation of the results

of the experiment, the music programme was launched at fifteen new places in September 2014. In the schools selected in small disadvantaged towns, more than nine hundred children applied, exceeding many times the organiser's preliminary expectation; therefore the Maltese Charity Service initiated a countrywide action for collecting musical instruments, and received musical instruments offered for the children over months.





