To the President of Hungary

Mr. President

As authors of the scientific paper "Planned hospital birth versus planned home birth" published by the internationally renowned Cochrane Collaboration, we write regarding the current situation of Dr. Ágnes Geréb who is facing a 2 year prison sentence.

Based on the best scientific studies available we concluded in our review "that all countries should consider establishing home birth services with collaborative medical back up". This conclusion has been backed up by the equally renowned British National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). In Hungary, Dr. Geréb has always been a supporter of this approach and its seems ironic that at a time when Hungary is moving further in this direction that it does so without the involvement of its most experienced practitioner in homebirth.

Birth is an intimate process, not all women have the same need, some feel safe in hospitals other in birth clinics or at home. There is a need for a variety of settings and support. Agnes Geréb’s experience as an obstetrician and midwife recognized this year ago, and she set out to develop the maternity care of the future. She welcomed fathers into the birthing room in the early 70’s, a practice that is now widespread in many countries around the world. She also brought evidence based knowledge about birth to Hungary when she invited international researchers in birth to Hungary in the 1990’s. Furthermore she developed services for pregnant and birthing women, practices that were not otherwise available to them.

For women in Hungary to genuinely feel that they have the freedom of choice (between alternatives based on solid scientific research) and for licensed independent midwives to be able to work without fear of prosecution they now look to you in this moment for a signal through you that Hungarian society supports the values that Ágnes Geréb represents.
Values and practices that should have a place in all future Hungarian maternity policies and services.

Additionally, we would hope that you will also take into account the many humanitarian reasons why Dr. Gerèb should remain with her family and also be rehabilitated into her maternity community rather than being imprisoned.

Thanking you for your attention in taking these matters under consideration,

We remain yours sincerely,

Yours sincerely

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