



European Democratic Citizenship Awards

Category : Campaign of the Year

Name of Campaign : 100 thousand against the internet tax

Description of the campaign:

The "100 thousand against the internet tax" (<https://www.facebook.com/Ne.legyen.Internetado>) was a campaign that was launched to prevent the government of Hungary to implement the proposed internet-tax. Even though the governing party of Hungary won three elections in 2014, our campaign forced them to withdraw their senseless internet tax proposal. We managed to achieve this via creating a primarily online community and complimenting this with an extremely strong street presence, making this the biggest demonstration in the modern history of Hungary.

Impact achieved by your Campaign:

Our movement organised the biggest opposition demonstration in the past 25 years in Hungary. The reelected Orban government with their 2/3 parliamentary majority had no other choice but to withdraw their proposal. For this government, this was a first - and the last time so far when, facing an unparalleled civil opposition, they had to abort completely their plans. The success of the protest sparked further civic protests against the government's policies; we supported many of them with our Facebook-page and our protest-expertise. There were also locally organised internet tax protests in many rural cities - in many of them these were the first protests since the 1956 revolution. (The governing party did not listened to these protests and in the subsequent months it lost 35-40% of their supporters and all the three parliamentary by-elections since then.) (The Orban government has authoritarian tendencies. The Freedom House downgraded Hungary to "semi-consolidated democracy" <http://tasz.hu/en/political-freedoms/semi-consolidated-democracy-freedom-house-downgrades-hungary>)

What makes the initiative innovative?

"The handling of the topic, wide alliance of civilians, strong social media presence and spectacular protests:

The topic: We handled the topic as everyone's issue. We not only talked about the democratic problems with the internet tax, but also about as a financial burden, especially for poor people.

As such, by finding a topic that motivated a very wide range of civilians, we managed to create an overarching alliance, united for a common purpose. This is extremely rare in today's Hungary's political scene. We initiated a civic alliance so other big Facebook-pages also advertised our protest.

We have had no alliance with or support from any political party, us, civilians did everything.

The third innovation was the very strong Facebook-campaign which happened in a timely manner: right after the news broke about the planned internet-tax. We used many funny memes and quickly reached more than 220 thousands likes on the Facebook-page and 45 thousand attendants on the Facebook-event (up to now this is the biggest civic political Facebook-page and event in Hungary).

Fourth innovation: we focused the protest to the people's action, the common experience. We had very short speeches, so the marching and the common mobile light showing was the most important in the protest. (We imported to Europe this ""mobile light"" protest from the Hong-Kong protests in the previous month.) This mobile light became the symbol of the protest. Pictures: <https://goo.gl/ay6oes> (The <https://www.battleforthenet.com/net-neutrality> campaign held our successful protest as an example (<https://goo.gl/HuXvXW>) and uses the picture of our protest on their front page (their campaign later also succeeded.))"

Contribution to European values:

Freedom of expression and of the media, freedom of assembly, democracy, equality, pluralism.

Website or promotional materials:

Facebook-page: <https://www.facebook.com/Ne.legyen.Internetado> , pictures: <https://goo.gl/ay6oes>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/11195733/100000-Hungarians-march-against-internet-tax.html>;

<http://www.euronews.com/2014/10/31/hungary-shelves-internet-tax-after-mass-protests/>