

**Further information, Public Relations:**

Bálint Horváth, Head of Department, Senior Counsellor

State Audit Office of Hungary, Department of Communication and Institutional Relations

Phone: +36 1 484 9145 Mobile: +36 20 238 6939

E-mail: sajto@asz.hu Web: www.asz.hu ; www.aszhirportal.huMedia: [ÁSZ Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/asz) ; www.facebook.com/penzugyiszemle

**ÁLLAMI
SZÁMVEVŐSZÉK**

THE AUDIT OF THE INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM OF CHILD PROTECTION

Summary for the Press

Audit on the task performance of central and municipal operators providing personal care (17189)

The State Audit Office of Hungary has completed the audit of the child protection institutional system concerning the period between 2011–2015. The SAO concluded that the effectiveness of the child protection system improved in the key areas facilitating the upbringing of children within families. The effectiveness of the child protection institutional system, however, did not improve. The requirements of the transparent and accountable use of public funds and responsible asset management were not observed in the child protection branch. The audit revealed several irregularities in the activities of both the central and the municipal operators and in the operation of the system.

With its audit, the SAO contributes to the functioning of a child protection institutional system that is sustainable on the long run, focuses on the family-type upbringing of children, increases the equal opportunities of the children in need, builds on vulnerability-related prevention, and supports reintegration in the family.

In case of the central operators, the audit revealed major irregularities in connection with the regular and orderly operation and transformation of the child protection institutional system. Following its establishment at the end of 2012, the Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Child Protection responsible for the operational maintenance of central child protection institutions operated without its tasks, responsibilities and authorities being regulated for nearly two and a half years after its foundation as there were no organisational and operating regulations. The financial management procedures of the centrally maintained institutions were unregulated until the second half of 2015, their internal regulations were insufficient. All of this resulted in the fact that the responsible management of public funds, as well as the transparency and accountability of regular operation were not ensured. During the transformation of the institutional system, the deeds of foundation were not amended either in 2012 or in 2013; therefore, they did not reflect the actual state. The lawful execution of asset management agreements relating to the assets belonging to the National Land Fund lacking, the legal standing of the assets actually used by the central institutional system remained in disorder after the transformation. In the centrally operated framework, monitoring the operation of the institutions by the operators showed an improving tendency, which is indispensable to ensure that the requirements for responsible management and for performing tasks with high professional standards are met.

The local governments did not establish proper regulations the child protection institutional system under their operational maintenance and they did not ensure orderly operations. The audit revealed shortcomings with regard to the forms of care providing personal care and in connection with regulating their use, as well. The local governments operated the child protection warning system, which provides the basis of the child protection activity, mostly appropriately. The local governments on occasion did not operate the institutions providing basic child care as required by the law for that particular type of settlement. The activity and task performance of the institutions—especially in the case of settlements with a smaller population where child protection activities were provided in the form of partnerships—were not supervised by the majority of the municipal operators, furthermore, they were insufficiently assessed and not monitored properly. The municipal operators predominantly did not ensure that the child protection tasks were properly, economically and transparently provided at high professional standards.

The central and municipal operators did not establish aims, targets, indicators or deadlines that could be used for performance assessment in connection with the child protection and child care services under their authority, and in some cases they did not even monitor that aims and tasks determined were fulfilled, either. The monitoring of the fulfilment of strategic tasks related to child protection activities providing personal care could not be ensured as indicators were not defined and there were no regular assessments.

With regard to the child protection task performance providing personal care, the SAO, on the basis of the performance indicators it determined, concluded that: the results of the task performance of the centrally operated institutional system improved in the highlighted areas where the focus is on the upbringing of children in a family environment, such as placing children under 12 with foster parents, and adopting children in the under 10 age group. Meanwhile, in other areas, deteriorating results could be observed. The task performance of the municipal system in connection with basic child welfare services was a stable success in case of child welfare services and daytime care provided for the children, while the rate of children permanently leaving temporary care to home care did not show an improvement.

The SAO notified the government offices in the counties where the audited municipalities did not perform any of their child protection tasks. Furthermore, in order to facilitate the performance of tasks in compliance with the regulations, it issued warning letters to the mayors of 60 audited municipalities and to the Director General of the Directorate-General for Social Affairs and Child Protection.

The State Audit Office of Hungary, as the supreme financial-economic and economic audit institution of the Hungarian National Assembly, is an independent fundamental institution of the democratic system of institutions. Its mission is to promote the transparency of public finances through value creating audits, performed on a solid professional basis, thus contributing to 'good governance'. Through its recommendations, the SAO promotes the regular, economical, efficient and effective use and utilisation of public funds.