

Schopper Gabriella
Magyar Lupus Egyesület
KÖZHASZNÚ CIVIL SZERVEZET



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hungarianlupusgroup.org · sle.hu
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Novartis Europe
Lichtstrasse 35, 4056 Basel, Switzerland

To: Ms. Iris Zemzoum, President
E-mail: first.last@novartis.com

Subject: Application for Grant

Dear Madam President, Iris Zemzoum

I am Zoltán Purgel from Hungary, President of the Hungarian Lupus Group.

From June 3rd to 6th, I attended the EULAR Congress in London. I met and spoke with several Novartis representatives, primarily regarding the CAR-T cell therapy currently being introduced in Hungary, and subsequently, about a much more unpleasant matter... It was your colleague who suggested that I contact you directly to resolve this conflict, which is why I am reaching out to you by letter.

Among all European lupus patient organizations, Novartis denies financial support solely to the Hungarian organization. When discussing financial matters with representatives of other European lupus groups, it is always embarrassing for me when they mention that their organizations face no funding issues because they receive significant financial support from the pharmaceutical companies involved, including Novartis, amounting to approximately 3,000 to 5,000 EUR annually. I always listen to this with a sense of shame, and in response, I can only say that we receive nothing; in fact, in 2024, Novartis Hungary even rejected our request for a nominal support amount of approximately 220 EUR.

We feel that this is discriminatory, deeply humiliating for us, and that Novartis Hungária Kft. is either not fulfilling its corporate social responsibility or is doing so unfairly.

Even the London representative of Novartis admitted that this situation is absurd.

Prior to this, I sought advice on the matter from Hungarian partner physicians as well as two international advocacy foundations. They advised me to legalistically address a letter to the European head of Novartis in any event. If these negotiations do not lead to a resolution, we are advised to launch a public social initiative backed by media coverage. This campaign would call for a boycott of Novartis products and, based on the principles of democracy and public support, initiate a petition demanding the dismissal of several employees of

Novartis Hungária Kft., including Managing Director Colette Matz, Erzsébet Fehér, Zoltán Vadász, as well as the members of the committee responsible for reviewing support applications.

As background to this matter, in December 2024, the Hungarian Lupus Association turned to Novartis Hungária Kft. for a nominal support amount of approximately 220 EUR. After more than two months, we were informed that they could not support our request. (From this funding, we would have financed the excess printing costs of the 2024/1 issue of our patient information magazine titled *Pillangó* [Butterfly]. Therefore, Novartis Hungária Kft. rejected the partial funding of a project providing a tangible, transparent, and free service to people living with autoimmune diseases.) Yet, we are an honest, transparent organization where, for instance, everyone performs their duties without a salary, strictly as genuine volunteers. Furthermore, Novartis is involved in the CAR-T cell therapy program intended for people living with autoimmune diseases, so it cannot even be argued that the company has no interest in our patient community. This support would have financed merely 4.5% of the total project—ultimately, another pharmaceutical company stepped in to help, one that is not even involved in the manufacturing or distribution of medications for people with autoimmune conditions.

I kindly ask for your cooperation in this matter to help resolve this dispute in a reassuring and satisfactory manner.

Budapest, 16 June 2026.



Sincerely: Purgel Zoltán
Managing Director

