



# Public food procurement reform in Hungary:

## A TRUE window of opportunity for pulses?

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### Background

Public food procurement has a critical role in the food supply chain as it reaches out thousands of consumers and producers. Around 2010 the need for a sustainability shift in public catering has been realized by society, government and private actors in Hungary. Public caterers are in the centre because:

- They can influence consumption patterns, and contribute to the fight against obesity, diabetes, and other food related health problems.
- They buy ingredients in large quantities, therefore they can also influence the quality standards and viability of agriculture and food processing.

Initiatives to reform the public catering system emerged since 2010 led by public, private and social actors.

### Timeline

2010 Canteen best practice (Mintamenza) Program

2011 Recommendation by the Chief Medical Officer of State

... 2014 37/2014 Decree of the Ministry of Human Resources SuperCanteen (Szupermenza) by Hungast

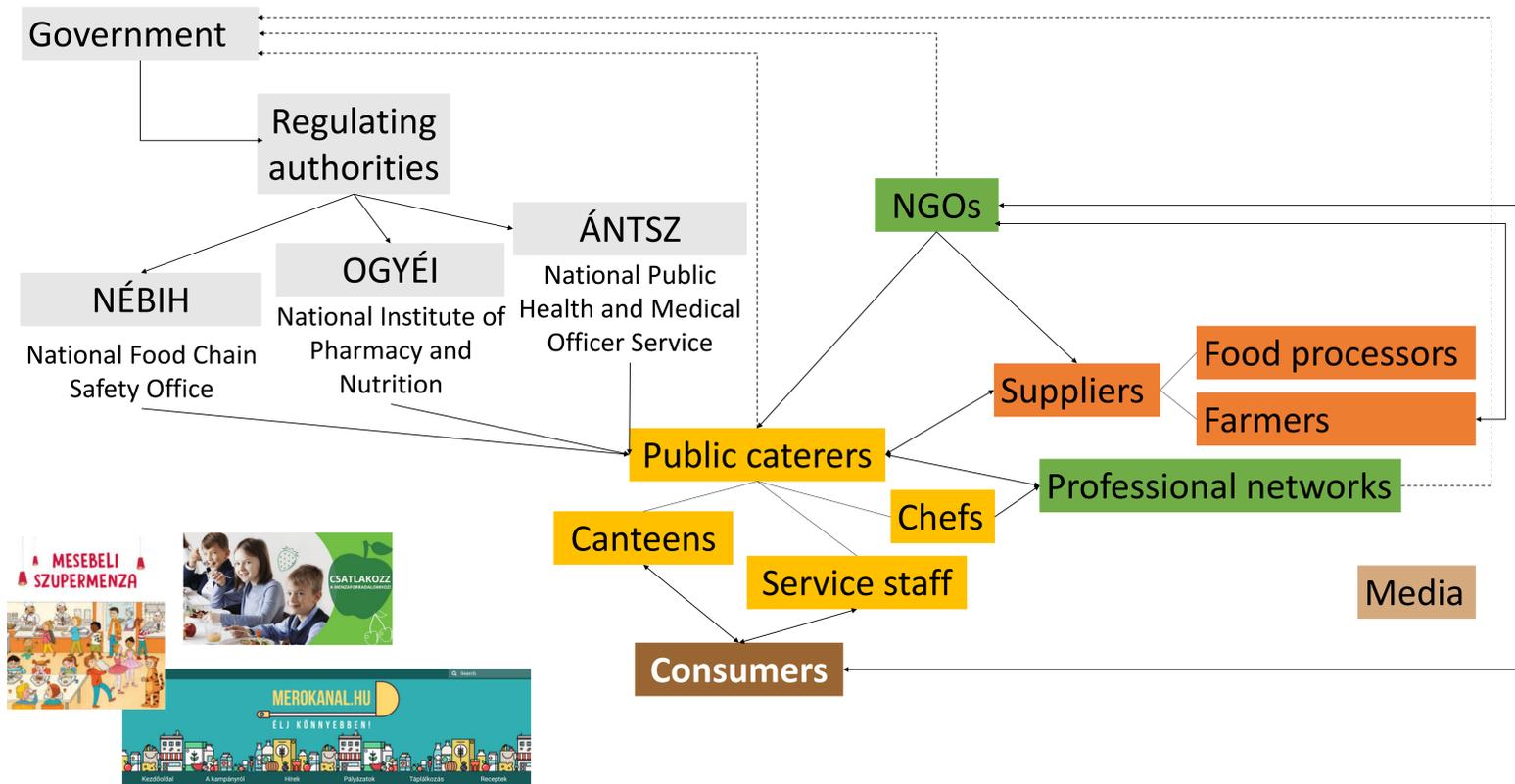
2015 37/2014 Decree come into force  
Bad media coverage, public outcry  
Professional lobby groups getting active

2016 Amending regulation (more smooth transition) Experiential quality control for canteens by NÉBIH

2017 Amending regulation come into force  
Improving media coverage  
HAMM by Hungast (National Ingredients in Hungarian Canteens)

2018 Canteen Revolution (Menzaforradalom) by Greenpeace

### Key players



### Why public food procurement matters in Hungary?

- Over 1.1 million people eat in public canteens every day
- Children consume 35-65% of their daily energy intake in schools
- More than 20% of children are overweight or obese
- 23,6% of public canteens - quality controlled by the National Food Chain Safety Office in 2016 - were scored the two lowest grades, showing considerable gaps in food safety

### What is in it for pulses?

- Reforms mainly focus on increasing proportion of fresh fruits and vegetables, decreasing amount of salt, fats and sweeteners, and increasing proportion of organic food
- Dried legumes are considered as protein sources (same official status as meat products), meat is still the prioritized protein source
- Abrupt changes in the menu is not well perceived by consumers
- Dried legumes are served once in every two weeks, green legumes are served more frequently
- New, innovative recipes are emerging for pulses
- Lack of legumes of Hungarian origine limits processing/serving options (quality problems of imported pulses)

**Bringing pulses to the forefront is still to come in Hungarian public catering.**

