

CEFAS REPORT ON THE HUNGARIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

APRIL 3RD , 2022

INTRODUCTION

Hungary has just held elections to renew its parliament. In order to ensure that the European standards regarding transparency and neutrality in electoral processes are met, the Center for Studies, Formation and Social Analysis (CEFAS), sent an electoral observation mission which stayed in the country for 10 days. The following report presents the main findings of this mission and the comments that its members have considered worthy to include.

THE HUNGARIAN ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The electoral system works as a connector between the sovereignty of the people and the representative democracy. The legitimacy of democracy will depend, among other aspects, on its proper functioning.

Hungary has a mixed electoral system, where a parliament of 199 deputies is elected. 106 of the members of Parliament are elected by a majority system in one member constituencies and 93 deputies are elected on proportional lists, with a compensatory mechanism.

In the proportional system, there is a threshold of 5% for single parties, 10% for joint lists of two parties, and 15% for joint lists of more than two parties. There is a partial compensation orientated to ensure a more proportional result. The votes that are not computed in the majority system are counted in the proportional system (as long as the party has presented a national list).

For a national list to be registered, a party needs to nominate candidates in 71 constituencies (out of 106), within 14 (out of 19) counties, all of them in addition to Budapest. This limitation may create certain difficulties when presenting a political party, but it seems justified to prevent the proliferation of false parties, which present themselves just to get funds. The opposition, for its part, maintains that it is an instrument to increase the majority of the government.

We have noticed some criticism about the division of the constituencies, going so far as to criticize Hungary as a case of Gerrymandering. In other words, the Government has modified the constituency boundaries to benefit a particular party. To avoid these accusations, it is recommended to reach the widest possible agreement on the electoral law. It must be stated that there is the possibility of voting in another district other than the one in which you reside.

The voting takes place in public buildings. The polling stations are made up of neutral volunteers and party volunteers. The neutral members are elected by the town hall/municipal council. Only the citizens chosen by the city council receive remuneration for the work done on the election day. It is the proactivity of all the parties that guarantees the formation of neutral polling stations which can correctly control the voting.

The ballots come to the polling station in a sealed envelope, counted. In order for them to be valid, the voters must first show their identification, and a member of the polling station must seal the different ballots which will be given to each one of them. The seals of each polling station belonging to each district are unique and different. For this reason, the system guarantees that only polling stations can have these stamps. The voter marks the circle of the political party they want to vote for (or the “yes” or “no” option in a referendum), introduces the ballots in an envelope and, finally, inserts them in a ballot box. It is important to highlight that the first voter in the morning also inserts proof that the ballot box is empty before introducing the first vote that contains it.

The Hungarian electoral system allows voting from home due to mobility difficulties. Hungarians must call before noon (12:00 pm) on election day to the National Elections Office if they want to vote at home. In this way, the National Office notifies the polling station, and his name is checked with the list of voters to avoid double voting. The electoral desk always matches the number of voters who vote at the college and from home.

The polling stations close at 19:00, then the counting of votes begins. Throughout the election day, one member of the polling station writes down the number of people who have voted for the parliamentary elections and the referendum. The electoral desk compares this number at the end of the day with the final number of votes cast at the polls. Thanks to this system, they check if there are more votes than people who voted.

The counting process begins with the opening of the envelopes and sorting the different types of ballots. Once they are classified according to types, the members of the election desks separate the ballots by political parties to count them a maximum of three times. A minimum count of two times is always done. If there are differences in the first two counts, a third is made. The curious thing about the system is that the delegates of the parties are in charge of counting, for the first time, the votes of those parties that are not theirs. In this way, transparency is guaranteed. Thanks to this double review, both the citizens elected by the city council and the representatives of the parties can be direct participants in the two control points.

The results are sent to the National Elections Office (central office) through a secure network by a computer on the public network. This computer only works using two official identification cards.

In our opinion, this system makes it very difficult to manipulate the electoral results, although some improvements will be suggested when commenting on the development of the election day.

POLITICAL PARTIES

Hungary has a diverse political landscape in which parties of all ideologies have their space. Thus, we find from groups such as Mi Hazánk or Jobbik - parties traditionally positioned to the right of the political axis - to other groups such as Momentum or MSZP, policies which are oriented towards more progressive measures.

Currently, and since 2010, the Fidesz party governs together with KDNP with a large majority, although in these last elections, the opposition has united to maximize its chances.

The major political parties are as follows:

1. Current government: coalition Fidesz-KDNP

FIDESZ

Fidesz has a conservative, nationalist and right-wing populist ideology.

Since 2010, Fidesz has dominated Hungarian politics at the national and local level on a joint list with KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party). The party also holds majorities in the legislatures of most counties, especially in the countryside.

The party's representative is Viktor Orbán. He is currently the Prime Minister of Hungary, as he also was in the period 1998-2002. With these latest elections, Orbán begins his fifth term in office.

KDNP

KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party) defends a conservative ideology.

The party began to gain prominence in Hungarian political life in 1998, when it began to collaborate with Fidesz. In fact, many consider the KDNP to be nothing more than a satellite party or a split of Orbán's party. Today, it governs in coalition with Fidesz.

The representative of KDNP is Semjén Zsolt.

2. Opposition: Egységben Magyarországért (United for Hungary)

To maximize their chances, in October 2021 six opposition parties (DK, Jobbik, LMP, Momentum, MSZP, and Párbeszéd) used a popular primary to select a single candidate. The winner, Péter Márki-Zay, is an independent conservative with no party affiliation.

After the creation of Egységben Magyarországért, Marki-Zay was elected in their primary elections to become their representative and run for the parliamentary election against Viktor Orbán. Péter Marki-Zay has also served as mayor of Hódmezővásárhely since 2018, and is the co-founder of Mindenki Magyarországa Mozgalom (Everybody's Hungary Movement). However, he has run as an independent candidate in the 2022 elections.

Jobbik

Jobbik is a political party with radical and nationalist roots. In its early days, the party described itself as a Christian, conservative and patriotic party, whose goal was the protection of Hungarian interests and values.

Today, Jobbik one of the largest political forces in the country. It is also considered an opposition party to the current government, although its deputies have never voted against Orbán.

Since 2019, the party's leader is Péter Jakab.

MSZP

The Hungarian Socialist Party defines itself as a social democratic party with a center-left position.

Between 2002 and 2010, the party governed in coalition with SZDSZ (The Alliance of Free Democrats, dissolved in 2013). However, after a period of protests and internal scandals, the party lost power in the 2010 elections to the coalition formed between Fidesz and the KDNP. Today, MSZP is part of and leads the opposition coalition.

Since 2018, its leader is Tóth Bertalan.

PM

Párbeszéd (Dialogue for Hungary) or simply PM, is a Green Party created in 2013 by eight members of Parliament that left LMP (Politics Can Be Different). The party focuses on issues such as green politics, social democracy, feminism and pro-europeanism.

Its leaders are currently Karácsony Gergely and Szabó Tímea. Gergely is also the mayor of Budapest since 2019.

DK

Demokratikus Koalíció (The Democratic Coalition) is a social-liberal political party led by former Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány. Founded in 2010 as a faction within the MSZP, the DK split from the MSZP in 2011 and became an independent party.

DK has defended European federalism in the past, including proposals such as action against child poverty, an EU-wide minimum pension, or an EU minimum wage.

LMP

LMP-Green Party of Hungary is a liberal-green political party. The party has its origins in a social initiative of an NGO with the purpose of reforming Hungarian politics.

LMP shares common ideologies with most green parties. The key issues are environmental protection, sustainable development and the fight against corruption in the current political elite.

Its leader is János Kenderney.

Momentum

Momentum is a centrist party founded in 2017. Since its origins, the party has advocated for the political replacement of the political elite, in which they include the current ruling parties.

Momentum is generally pro-European, pro-globalization and anti-Putin. The party's social views are largely progressive, as it supports same-sex marriage, decriminalization of cannabis and abortion rights.

Since 2021, the party's leader is Anna Donáth.

3. Other parties

Although Fidesz-KDNP and Egységben Magyarországért have dominated the election – with 53.10% and 35.04% of the votes respectively, representing 88.14% of the total votes – there are other parties that hold some significance.

On the one hand, MKKP (Two-tailed Dog Party) becomes a political party officially in 2014. It is a satirical party whose main activity is street art parodying the Hungarian political elite. In the 2018 elections, MKKP won about 2% of the vote, although no seats. Its representative is Gergely Kovács.

On the other hand, Mi Hazánk Mozgalom (Our Homeland Movement) is a far-right party created by former Jobbik members. The party positions itself against the LGTBI movement, defends the death penalty and promotes vaccination hesitancy regarding Covid, among other issues. Its representative is László Toroczkai.

The parties running in the parliamentary elections have had the opportunity to access the different media (television, press, radio, online content, etc.) to promote their election campaign, approach voters and communicate their government proposals.

In line with the country's media landscape, both Fidesz-KDNP and the Opposition have been able to access the media most in line with their respective ideologies. Today, Hungary presents media plurality, with both conservative and progressive media, so the parties have been able to receive the exposure they wanted, as the following figures¹ show:

Political party	TV commercials	Radio commercials	TOTAL
FIDESZ-KDNP	75	55	130

¹ https://nmhh.hu/cikk/227483/Valasztas_2022

Coalition	78	48	126
MKKP	100	0	100
Mi Hazánk	60	48	108
MEMO	59	42	101

On television, the parties have turned to Duna TV and RTL Club, traditionally conservative channels. However, this only goes to show that the Opposition has space on media that a priori could be considered unfriendly.

In the case of radio, the ads have been broadcast exclusively on Kossuth Radio, a station that is also close to the most conservative ideas.

Likewise, it is also worth remembering the importance that social networks have gained in recent years, a medium whose freedom and scope allows parties to disseminate as much information as they wish.

Finally, it should be noted that the presence of posters and electoral information in the different cities has been full. All localities, especially Budapest, show a wide plurality, with campaigns of all parties, their candidates and main proposals.

CAMPAIGN FUNDING

Campaign finance is regulated by the Law on Party Finance and the Campaign Finance Act. Political parties are partially financed from public funds. Without prejudice to the foregoing, this legislation does not provide limits on individual donations², except those that come from foreign sources, which are prohibited.

The State Audit Office (SAO) and National Treasury Office (NTO) are responsible for the overall supervision of campaign funding. All contestants must submit to the SAO and NTO a report showing invoices, campaign contributions, expenditures and donations within 15 days of the elections date. However, only donations over HUF 500,000 (1.355, 81 euros) are revealed in campaign financing reports.

² Donations appear to be a less significant source of revenue than public funding. However, the importance of donations are increasing in each election.

Individual candidates, parties setting up a party list and nation minority self-government with a national minority list may benefit from public financial resources. According to article 1 of CEMP Act, each individual candidate can spend HUF 1 million (2.712,85 euros)³. Nevertheless, for politicians who are setting up a party list or integrated in a national minority list, this amount is increased up to HUF 5 million (15.564,24 euros) per candidate⁴. At the end of the elections, nominating organizations and independent candidates have to return the funds that they have been allocated if they get less than 1% of the votes. We think that the right of every party to get some funds before the elections is a very good characteristic of the Hungarian electoral system which makes it more plural and representative.

Foundations also play an important role in the financing of parties because there are no funding limits established for organizations associated with political parties⁵. In that sense, banks are becoming important players by granting favourable loans to political parties.

It must be taken into account that this financing can be used only during the election campaign period⁶ and for campaign-related activities, a term that encompasses any activity which could influence the will of the voters, such as posters distribution, direct approaches by a nominating organization or candidate and political advertising.

In relation to the audit system, it is necessary to differentiate between Treasury and SAO audit. The first institution is in charge of supervising whether the expenditure falls within the category of material expenditure, the supporting documents comply with the Invoice Act and VAT Act or if the expenditure was paid by treasury card or by bank transfer during the campaign period. On the other side, the SAO audit -which is carried within one year of the election- has as its main goal to audit *ex officio* (with Treasury support)

³ According to Transparency International “this is a huge step in the combat against corruption in campaigns because if the state covers the campaign expenditures in a transparent way, it whitens the campaign”. <https://transparency.hu/en/kozszeaktor/valasztasok-part-es-kampanyfinanszirozasa/>

⁴ This Budget can be increased annually by the consumer price index established by the Central Statistical Office for the year preceding the year in question.

⁵ However, they have to report the funding in their annual financial reporting.

⁶ The election campaign period runs, according to article 139 of the EP Act, from the 50th day preceding the day of voting until the end of voting on the day of voting. In this respect, the President of the Republic must set the dates for the general election to Members of Parliament, local government representatives and mayors.

the individual candidates who have been granted representation and parties whose party list has obtained at least 1% of the total valid votes cast on the party list if they complied with the provisions of the CEMP Act.

Furthermore, SAO studies how the nominating organizations have used the subsidies and the support allocated from the central budget during the election campaign period to finance the expenses related to the election campaign activities; or if these organizations -together with their candidates- have complied with the HUF 5 million limit per candidate; and whether the parties have used the resources provided for in article 4 of the Political Parties Act to finance their expenditure⁷.

Each candidate and nominating organization shall publish in the Hungarian Gazette- within 60 days of the parliamentary election- the amount, source and method of use and other funds and material support spent on the election. In case some candidate or nomination organization violates the provisions on the limitation of election campaign expenses, it has to pay -within 15 days of the notification of the SAO- twice the amount used in excess of the total amount that may be spent on the election.

During the election campaign, political advertisements can be published only by those institutions that are qualified as “press products” and are listed in the official register. The press product shall send its advertising price list to the SAO within 5 working days of the election being called. According to Act 36 of 2013 on the electoral process, electronic platforms are available for political advertising free of charge in both commercial and public service media.

MEDIA AND PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The configuration of the media landscape in Hungary and the ability of the different political parties to express their views through the different information channels have been controversial during the last years.

⁷ Most of the interlocutors from opposition political parties and CSO questioned the impartiality of the SAO. About this, OSCE stated that “lack of regulation and control of third-party campaigning, including on social networks, detracts from the transparency of campaign finances and might allow for circumvention of the expenditure limits”.

In order to properly understand the situation, we must bear in mind that the regime change which took place during the last decade of the 20th century did not affect the media as much as could be imagined. Although a democratic system was established in Hungary, the old communist elite remained in control of most of the Hungarian TV channels and newspapers and kept a strong influence in society.

As highlighted in the doctoral thesis *Freedom of the Media in Hungary, 1990–2002*, written by Péter Bajomi-Lázár:

“The underdevelopment of the institutional system was a main factor responsible for the persistence of political pressure on the media. The institutions that guarantee the political and financial independence of the broadcast media and the print press were established too late, or were poorly designed, or not at all in post-communist Hungary. In particular, the approval and ratification of the Radio and Television Law was delayed until 1996 and the structures it established to safeguard the editorial independence and financial autonomy of public service media outlets were inadequate.”⁸

With the accession of Hungary to the European Union, numerous media outlets were liberalized and the standards improved enough to allow its integration as a full member state. However, the corruption of the different governments and their actions in front of the media led to greater political interference. Corruption in Hungary was of such magnitude that the citizens preferred in the 2010 elections to opt for the alternative vision of Viktor Orbán, who has since assumed leadership of the country, executing remarkable transformations in the media.

The arrival of Fidesz was the starting point of sustained effort to “rebalance” the media landscape through several means, including the creation of new media outlets and the promotion or the exploitation of property changes in the big media groups. According to most of the organizations with which we had the opportunity to talk, this process has led to a situation in which conservative and liberal media have more or less the same strength, especially if we take into account that, today, internet and the different social networks are as important as TV channels and newspapers and they tend to be found in the liberal

⁸Freedom of the Media in Hungary, 1990–2002 Péter Bajomi-Lázár Ph.D. thesis submitted to the Political Science Department at the Central European University, 2003, p. 194
https://politicalscience.ceu.edu/sites/politicalscience.ceu.hu/files/basic_page/field_attachment/bajomi_thesisedited.pdf

camp. However, those who are closer to the opposition forces consider that the so called “rebalance” has actually put most of the media outlets in governmental hands.

In the course of our mission in Hungary, we have observed that, as in many other countries, public media outlets tend to align themselves with the government, but we have not reached the conclusion that it is impossible for the opposition parties to appear on them or that there is an arbitrary assignment of time to the detriment of the opposition. The data regarding the number of radio and TV commercials in the campaign that we have already commented seems eloquent. We must also remember that it is a common practice in many countries to allocate media time to political forces according to their importance in Parliament, something which can create important differences.

Special criticism has been made of the Media Council, a media control body with members appointed by the parliament, in which all media outlets must register to operate legally. The panel is able to impose fines of up to €700,000 on media outlets for "unbalanced news coverage", material it finds to be "insulting" to a particular group or "the majority" or which it finds to violate "public morality". "Serious" infractions can lead to denial of registration. The role it has played in some media integrations processes has also been controversial, the Council being accused of permitting the concentration of conservative media outlets while preventing the progressive ones from doing the same. Regarding this issue, it is important to note that we don't know of any intervention of this council during the campaign, that it is the Parliament who appoint its members with a reinforced majority of 2/3 and that its powers may serve to prevent insults or offences directed towards all kind of social groups, without regarding their political views.

On the day that Hungary took over the six-month rotating presidency of the EU, the media law came into force and drew much criticism from the European Union itself and member states. Orbán met with the President of the European Commission and expressed Hungary's willingness to modify the law as requested, but only if the same changes were applied to all EU member states. In view of the fact that no changes have been made at the EU level, Hungary fully maintains its law, and, in our opinion, it is not easy to argue that, because of its existence, the Hungarian people lacks freedom or information when voting.

CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT

The 2022 campaign took place in quite a particular context, different from that of almost all previous campaigns. To the already difficult situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts between Hungary and the European Union and the war in Ukraine must be added as factors that could have distorted the results of the elections. However, our impression is that none of these factors has prevented the Hungarians from voting with great freedom and maturity.

Although certainly difficult to evaluate, the COVID crisis doesn't seem to have had an important impact on the personal voting decision of Hungarian people. Unlike other governments in Europe, the Hungarian government has been fairly reasonable in its management of the pandemic and, therefore, the Hungarian people have not made of the COVID a big issue during the campaign. Only some new parties have used the pandemic to gain popularity with limited effect, since the government prevented the political use of sanitary measures by lifting most of them. The lifting of the sanitary restrictions have also eased the act of going to vote and, in consequence, the Hungarian citizens have been able to express their views without the problems which have characterised the elections held in other countries during the last years.

The conflicts with the European Union and, particularly, with the European Commission, which has decided to retain the Next Generation funds that had been allocated to Hungary, have not been a game changer either. The country's relative financial health allows its government to carry out its main policies without any major problems and, therefore, the people are not feeling the weight of the European decision. It could even be argued that the negative to release the funds have played into the hands of the government since it has reinforced the Hungarian national pride and it has also proved for many citizens that the economic measures taken by Viktor Orbán were adequate and necessary.

It is worth noting that this conflict has also created a lot of rhetorical tension between those who portray Hungary as a country which constantly betrays European values - supposedly those of the European Union- and those who considered it the leading country in the defence of true-European values. Despite this, the election results show that the Hungarians refuse to be forcefully integrated in one of these two camps: they have overwhelmingly voted for a staunch opponent to Brussels 'elites' but, at the same

time, they have declined to endorse his views on sexual morality with a strong voice. It is therefore possible to conclude, that the Hungarian people had a good deal of independence when voting on April 3th.

Regarding the war in Ukraine, several surveys indicate that Hungarians are divided on the issue of war responsibility, but also that a large majority of them agree with the stance adopted by their government.

In line with other European countries, Hungary has defended Ukraine's territorial integrity, it has condemned Russian aggression and it gave its consent to EU sanctions. However, the opposition parties advocate for sending weapons to Ukraine and adopting a more hostile policy towards Moscow, a position which does not seem to find an echo among voters.

According to the results of an opinion poll carried out by the Századvég Institute, 47% of Hungarians believe that both Russia and Ukraine are responsible for the outbreak of the war, while 32% are convinced that the main responsibility lies with Putin, but an overwhelming 90% of the population approves the non-intervention policy of the Hungarian government. The same fact is also reflected in a survey conducted by Opinio, which showed that 72% of Hungarians is against intervention in Ukraine⁹. This important support to the government position on the Ukrainian crisis could have helped Orbán to get a good result in these elections, since a prudent leader is often appreciated in times of uncertainty and danger.

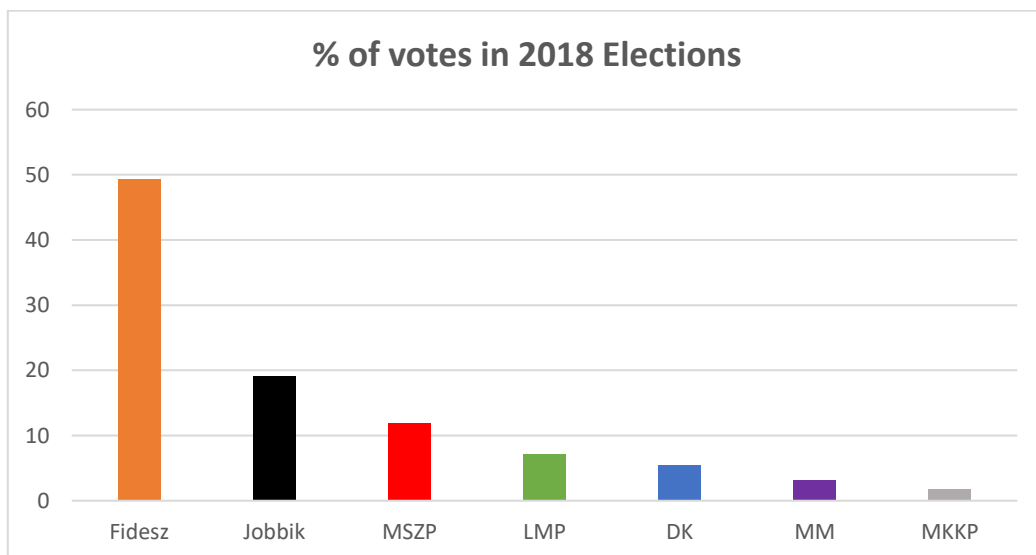
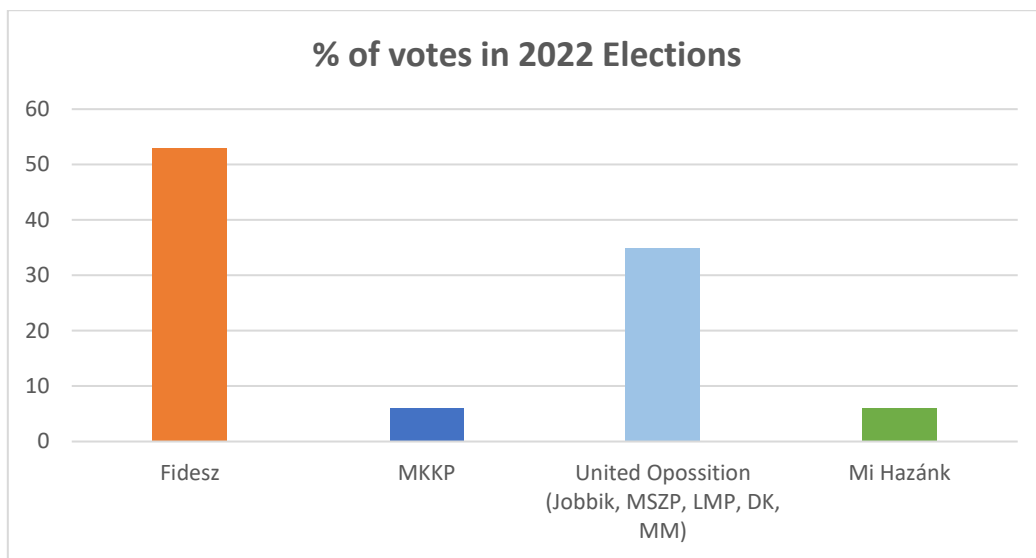
THE ELECTION DAY

On April 3rd, Hungarian voters were called to choose the new 199 members that will conform the National Assembly of Hungary for the upcoming 4-year mandate. On the same day of the elections, there was also a referendum consisting of four questions about sexuality morals and education. The referendum vote followed the same criteria than the elections, but a participation of 50% was required for the results to be binding. There has been some debate about the convenience of having the elections and the referendum the

⁹ <https://hungarytoday.hu/hungarians-ukraine-foreign-aid/>

same day, but this solution was agreed by all the parties and the results prove that the electoral results have not determined those of the referendum.

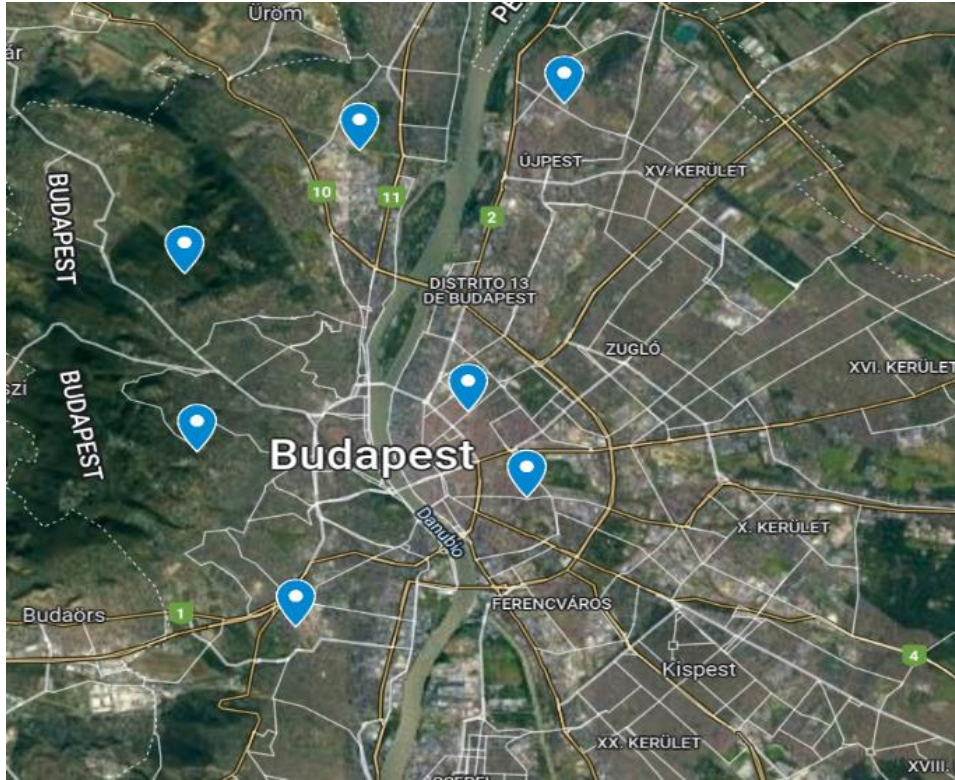
Throughout the entire electoral campaign, which officially starts 50 days prior to the Election Day, the estimations given by national and international polls showed a clear victory for Fidesz across the country, with few exceptions in some districts of Budapest. Indeed, the party has widened its ruling capacity compared to the 2018 Parliamentary Elections, with two-thirds qualified majority achieved at the National Assembly¹⁰.



¹⁰ [Laws requiring a two-thirds \(qualified\) majority - House of the National Assembly - Országgyűlés \(parlament.hu\)](https://parlament.hu)

On the Election Day, the ten-member delegation from CEFAS had the opportunity to visit a relevant number of electoral offices in Budapest and several rural areas near the borders with Slovenia, Slovakia and Croatia:

1. Andornaktálya
2. Bacs
3. Balatonfüred
4. Barcs
5. Budapest District II
6. Budapest District VI
7. Budapest District VIII
8. Budapest District XI
9. Budapest District XII
10. Demjén
11. Eger
12. Esztergom
13. Gödöllo
14. Gyöngyös
15. Hatvan
16. Kerecsend
17. Nagykovacsi
18. Parád
19. Pécs
20. Somogy
21. Székesfehérvár
22. Tihany
23. Veszprém
24. Zamardi



In general, the nation-wide voting did happen without any significant issues.

Everywhere we found good manners, civility and a great desire to make sure that these elections count. However, we have a few recommendations on how to improve the regular course of the Election Day:

1. We were able to observe that the 150-meter rule without electoral activity was not respected on some occasions. We believe that it is necessary to avoid these kinds of practices as they can influence the ultimate decision of voters.

2. On the polling station regulations, point 4 of section 11 ("Assistance to voters in voting"), says: "a person who cannot fill out the ballot by himself due to physical disability or any other reasons can use a helper of his/her choice [...]". "Any other reason" is very ambiguous and can lead to justify any violation of the right to secrecy of voting. In this case, we recommend a more specific list of cases to minimize the ambiguity of the norm.

3. A clear identification of the party delegates at the polling station shall always be required through an easily verifiable certificate. To ensure the veracity of the different delegates in each school, it is necessary to go to the National Elections Office to check the names and the different supporting documents of each representative. In this sense, as the checking system can become problematic, it would be more useful to use proxy accreditation. Furthermore, it would also be positive to prevent delegates from taking part in the electoral desk to maximize neutrality.

4. Another remarkable improvement is related to the moving ballot box. Although the number of votes requested is low, there is the risk of electoral fraud since two people from different political parties safeguard the ballot box while outside the electoral office. In this case, we recommend voters choose postal voting over the moving box to increase safety and, if that is not possible, then a third member of the desk should accompany the other two when leaving the office.

5. When visiting rural electoral offices in East Hungary, we were informed that there is a clear disaffection within the Romani community, which happens to be the largest minority in the country. Particularly in the county of Heves, a group of Romani gypsies were seen to be voting "like robots" which drew the attention of the delegates around.

When investigating this matter, we found out there are news articles that claim these practices are frequent in every election. Although we were not able to prove this, we strongly encourage the Administration to make an effort to integrate these minorities within the democratic system.

CONCLUSION

To conclude we would like to congratulate the Hungarian people for the successful organization and development of the 2022 parliamentary elections.

For more than a week, we have been getting the feel of the country, talking with members of public and private institutions, political leaders, associations and citizens. As expected, a lot of different visions and priorities showed up, but the Hungarians have been able to express them in a perfectly democratic way. The COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine or the increasing polarization that we often see in many European countries could have had a disturbing impact in the Hungarian elections. However, the Hungarian people have proved its maturity by avoiding the excesses that many analysts expected to see during the campaign.

Like any other electoral system, the Hungarian one is not perfect and there is still room for improvement. We have pointed out some details that could be modified to ameliorate the guarantees on voting days and there is no doubt that moderation should inspire the action of any government which enjoys a 2/3 majority in parliament, especially when dealing with sensitive matters like media legislation. Despite this, we are convinced that the Hungarians have access to a wide variety of information sources, that the different parties are free to express their ideas and that there is no reason to doubt about either the fairness or the transparency of these elections.

Let us hope that the Hungarian example will be followed all over Europe and that the new Hungarian government will soon be able to start working with its European partners to better the life of all the citizens across the continent.

