

## Elections in Hungary 2014

### Summary

General elections were held in Hungary on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2014, upon a new election system. According to preliminary results, the reigning alliance of Fidesz and Christian Democrats (KDNP) won a two-third majority of parliamentary seats with 44.5 percent of the popular vote. With this result, under the previous electoral system, Fidesz-KDNP would have taken a solid absolute majority as well. Although the joint leftish opposition ('Unity') tried to 'convert' national elections to a 'personal referenda' on Prime Minister Orbán himself, they suffered a serious defeat (only 26 per cent). As a result, divergent tensions will be accelerated among them and fragility will lead to separate candidation and separate lists on the upcoming EP elections of 25th May. Even overthrowing previous opinion-polls, far-right party of Jobbik came in as third (20.5 per cent), which shows the continuous strengthening of the radicals in Hungary – as well as in other European countries. In more than 40, previously socialist-dominated constituencies (e.g. North-Eastern Hungary) Jobbik got ahead of the joint left: this implicates that disappointed leftish voters are searching for radical answers.

Parties	Total results	
	Vote	%
FIDESZ-KDNP	2 135 960	44,54 %
MSZP-EGYÜTT-DK-PM-MLP	1 246 465	25,99%
JOBBIK	985 028	20,54 %
LMP	252 372	5,26 %

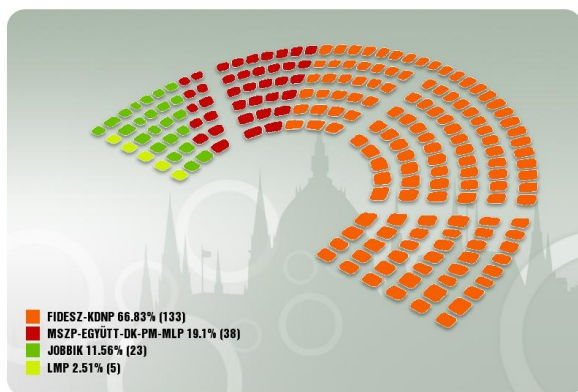
### The new election system

The new Hungarian laws on elections were introduced in 2011 and 2013. Although there are important changes in the system, the guiding principle has not changed, as the Hungarian electoral system has been functioning as a **mixed system** since 1990. The new system – as well as the old one – features party lists as a proportional element as well as individual constituencies as a 'first past the post' element – so the system has never been a primarily proportional representation system. The legislator introduced new laws on the election system due to various reasons:

- **Unconstitutional decree-level regulations on the borders of constituencies.** The Constitutional Court ruled in 2005 as well as in 2010 that the (previously) existed electoral districts were unconstitutional with regard to huge disproportionalities in the number of voters between districts [In the former system, there were variations among the number of electors in voting districts almost as high as 300% (Constituency No. 12 in Pest County: 74,000 persons, Constituency No. 06 in Veszprém County: 27,000 persons)]

- **Lowering the number of MPs from 386 to 199** – ‘reducing political elite’ had been an old promise of parties since 1990
- **Guaranteeing voting right for ‘ethnic Hungarians’ living beyond Hungarian borders** – in 2010, the legislator guaranteed a ‘symbolic’ voting right for Hungarian citizens living outside Hungary, without a permanent Hungarian residence. As these Hungarians can cast their vote exclusively for party lists, by the virtue of their numbers and the weight of their votes, they do not exert a significant influence on the outcome of the elections (This means 1-2 mandates. Not counting Hungary, 24 EU Member States ensure voting rights for its citizens abroad, even if they do not possess a domestic address)

### The results



The final turnout was 61.9 percent (slightly lower than 64.38 in the first round of the 2010 ballot). According to the preliminary results based on a count of 99 percent of the votes, Fidesz won 44.5 percent of the vote, giving the incumbent party a projected 133 seats in the downsized 199-seat chamber. Due to a couple of close races, it was not clear whether Fidesz at this stage had secured a supermajority, as votes of Hungarians casting their ballots at embassies all around the world will be added to domestic votes only in the upcoming

days (final results of constituencies will be officially published on 12th April, while official, but still appealable results on national lists will be available on 25th April).

The left-of-centre ‘Unity alliance’ (MSZP-EGYÜTT-DK-PM-MLP) secured 26 percent, translating into 38 seats. Radical nationalist Jobbik surged with 20.5 per cent, corresponding to 23 seats, while green party LMP, with 5.3 percent of the vote, got five seats.

### First comments

Incumbent Prime Minister Viktor Orbán declared the results an overwhelming victory, while EPP President Joseph Daul and EC President Jose Manuel Barroso congratulated Mr. Orbán. Leaders of ‘Unity’ said they ‘acknowledged’ the results of the election but they refused to congratulate Fidesz. The radical nationalist Jobbik leader said his party had not reached its goal of ‘putting a line under the past 24 years yet’, but support for the party was steadily growing. Greenish-leftish LMP, everything turns out as it currently appears, narrowly managed to stay in the Parliament with 5 MPs.

## Brief analyses



As the ruling conservative alliance of Fidesz-Christian Democrats gained around 44-45 per cent of the total vote (~2.1 out of 4.8 million), while the leftish opposition gained only 26 per cent (~1.2 out of 4.8 million), it seems quite clearly that the politically active population gave an ‘authorization’ for a stable government in the next four years. The significant popular support of the ruling parties was regionally balanced as well:

out of 106 constituencies Fidesz-KDNP won altogether 96 – while Unity only 10. As one of the leaders of ‘Unity’ acknowledged, Sunday's election was a ‘serious failure’ for them and a ‘huge disappointment’ for their supporters. The already divided opposition parties managed to agree to run on a ‘joint list’ only in January 2014 and they tried to ‘convert’ national elections to a ‘personal referenda’ on Prime Minister Orbán himself. On Elections Night, opposition leaders already announced that they will run separately on the upcoming EP-elections on 25th May – which forecasts a divided opposition for the future as well.

## The upcoming weeks

**Until the 25th April** – deadline for preliminary legal results of national elections

**Until the 1st (or 2nd) May** – deadline for the Supreme Court to decide on appeals against preliminary legal results

**Until the 6th May** – deadline for the Head of State to convene the inaugural session of the new Parliament

**On the 6th May** – Head of State shall nominate the Prime Minister on the inaugural session of the new Parliament

According to Hungarian constitutional customs, the new Government will inaugurate within a few weeks after the inaugural session of the new Parliament. On the other hand, there are also rumours, that the new government will be officially formed only following the EP-elections.