

## Viktor Orban easily sweeps to victory for the third time running in the Hungarian elections

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Results

Outgoing Prime Minister Viktor Orban easily won the general election in Hungary on 8th April and there will retain office for another four years. His party, the Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union (FIDESZ-MPP), allied to the People's Christian Democratic Party (KDNP) led by Zsolt Semjen, won 48.53% of the vote [1] and is due to take 134 of the 199 seats in the Orszaggyules, the single house in Parliament, i.e. the majority of 2/3. He again took advantage of electoral redistricting and of the tailor-made voting system. According to political analysts with this electoral system the FIDESZ-MPP would have won each of the general elections that have taken place over the last 25 years.

The Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik), a nationalist party, won 19.63% of the vote taking 25 seats. Its leader Gabor Vona linked his political fate to the results of this general election and is contested within his own party. He failed to be re-elected, announcing as a result his decision to quit as head of the party.

On the left, the Socialist Party (MSZP), chaired by Gyula Molnar and allied with Dialogue for Hungary (PM), a social-democratic, ecologist party led by Timea Szabo and Gergely Karacsony, won 12.44% of the vote and 20 seats. Doing Politics Differently (LMP), an ecologist party led by Akos Hadhazy and Bernadett Szel won 6.98% of the vote and 9 seats and finally the Democratic Coalition (DK), a social liberal party of former Prime Minister (2004-2009) Ferenc Gyurcsany won 5.62% of the vote and 8 seats.

Turnout was clearly higher than in the previous elections on 6th April 2014, which until the announcement of the first results, maintained hope on the part of the opposition. Nearly seven Hungarians in 10 turned out to vote (69,41%), which is higher by 7.68 points and the second highest in democratic Hungary than the general election on 8th and 29th May 1994.

The opposition parties achieved the highest results in Budapest, whilst the most rural areas in Hungary remained loyal to the outgoing Prime Minister's party, a distribution of votes to be seen everywhere in Europe. Moreover, according to the exit polls, the youngest voters opted more for the opposition than for FIDESZ-MPP.

### Results of the general elections of 8th April 2018 in Hungary

Turnout: 69.41%

Political Parties	% of votes won	No. of seats won
<b>Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union/People's Christian Democratic Party (FIDESZ-MPP/KDNP)</b>	48.53	134
<b>Movement for a better Hungary (Jobbik)</b>	19.63	25
<b>Socialist Party-Dialogue for Hungary (MSZP- PM)</b>	12.44	20
<b>Democratic Coalition(DK)</b>	6.98	9
<b>Doing Politics Differently(LMP)</b>	5.62	8
<b>Others</b>	6.80	3

1. The results (still incomplete) of this text only relate to the proportional vote.

<http://www.valasztas.hu/dyn/pv18/szavossz/hu/I50.html>

"We have won, Hungary has won a decisive victory. This historic victory offers us a chance to continue to defend ourselves and to defend Hungary," maintained Viktor Orban when the results were announced. "The future of the country is at stake. We are not just satisfied with electing parties, the government, and the Prime Minister but we are also choosing the future of our country" he declared after having fulfilled his civic duty in Budapest.

The outgoing Prime Minister, a great admirer of Russian President Vladimir Putin and champion of an "illiberal democracy" focused his electoral campaign on immigration. "In my opinion the stake in this general election is simple: do we want to become a country of immigration?" insisted Viktor Orban, who adopted the slogan 'Hungary First'.

Orban stands as the defender of Hungarian identity, qualifying the refugees as "Muslim invaders" and refers to national interest to justify his policy to limit certain freedoms, his control of the economy, the media etc ... He also often makes use of the conspiracy theory. Hence, he has accused George Soros, an American billionaire of Hungarian origin, the President of the Open Society Foundation, of conspiring against Hungary by financing networks of influence in the EU and the UN, to act against Budapest and accusing him of working on a plan to islamise Europe by forced immigration. "The Hungarians have always tended to think that behind historic events dark forces are pulling the strings," declared political expert Kristof Szombati.

"In a country in which the checks and balances have been weakened over the last 8 years, most voters do not have access to all of the information necessary to vote. However, Viktor Orban has succeeded in mobilising his electorate in surprising numbers. We thought that the opposition would do better," indicated Bulcsu Hunyadi., an analyst with the think tank Political Capital.

"In Europe, to be re-elected for the third time, is rare all the same. We are in a climate in which those on their way out are being ousted, in which all parties in office are having problems. Even weakened Viktor Orban only has a fragmented opposition and a civil society that finds it difficult to prove that there is a strong, credible alternative," stresses Jean-Michel de

Waele, a political expert from the Free University of Belgium, who concludes "the problem in Hungary is that there is no strong, credible, democratic opposition to offer any prospects."

"It's a tsunami for the FIDESZ-MPP giving Viktor Orban great legitimacy due to the high turnout, including at international level," declared Daniel Hegedüs, a political expert who has forecast that for the months to come there will be an "increase in the attacks against the critical fringes of civil society." "Victory for V.Orban will mean that his rhetoric will become increasingly aggressive," said Edit Zgut, an analyst from the think tank Political Capital. Indeed, Viktor Orban has already announced the closure of "organisations committed to politics", amongst others those that focus on Human Rights.

As for the opposition, although the Movement for a Better Hungary is still the second most powerful party in Hungary, it is struggling to move forward in comparison with the election on 6th April 2014. Its voters do not seem to have been convinced by the party's recent development. The radicalisation of FIDESZ-MPP, which has hardened its discourse over immigration issues and the EU over the last few years, indeed pushed the party led by Gabor Vona to move more to the centre. "Jobbik failed to respond to the demand for radicalisation that came from society following the migratory crisis in 2015. It then confused its image by trying to erase its xenophobic tendency in order to diversify its electorate," maintained Andras Pulai of the pollster Publicis.

The opposition, whose campaign focused on countering cronyism, the embezzlement of European funds by the government in office, the need to invest in education and healthcare, as well as increasing wages and pensions, struggled because it is divided and fragmented.

Originally from Szekesfehervar (north-east of Lake Balaton), aged 55, Viktor Orban is a graduate in law from the University of Lorand Eötvös of Budapest (in 1989, he studied for a few months at Pembroke College at the University of Oxford thanks to a grant awarded by George Soros). He was one of the founder members of the Alliance of Young Democrats in 1988. Two years later he was elected MP (he was re-elected at each general election) and in 1993 he took the chairmanship

of the party. In 1998 he became the youngest Prime Minister in Europe at the age of 35 before having to withdraw four years later before a left-wing opposition that won the election on 7th and 20th April 2002, a defeat that Orbán never really accepted. He had his revenge however 8 years later in 2010, the year in which he became head of government again.

“Viktor Orbán won the general elections on an anti-immigration ticket and in Europe, populist parties will not miss the opportunity finding inspiration in this winning formula,” declared Tamas Boros of the

think tank Policy Solutions, adding “the high level of legitimacy that this new term in office offers him also provides him with munition in his battle against the European Union.” Viktor Orbán’s victory is not good news for Brussels. The Hungarian Prime Minister likes to vilify the European Union and is quick to oppose its decisions (such as Brussels’ commitment to relocate 160,000 refugees from Syria, Iraq and Eritrea within the 28 Member States). However, he has always resisted crossing the red line which would deprive him of the European funds which his country so badly needs.

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