



Political Elections in Hungary

Context, Results, Scenarios and Strategic Implications

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Executive Summary

The 2026 Hungarian parliamentary election marked a historic turning point in Hungary's political development, ending sixteen years of uninterrupted rule by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the Fidesz–KDNP alliance. The newly formed Tisza Party achieved a landslide victory with a two-thirds parliamentary majority, allowing it to govern alone and pursue constitutional and institutional reforms.



Figure 1: Hungary National Assembly

The election reflected growing public dissatisfaction with economic stagnation, inflation, corruption, declining public services, and the highly centralized political system that had emerged under Orbán's leadership. While Fidesz maintained support among older and rural voters, Tisza successfully mobilized younger generations, urban voters, moderate conservatives, and disillusioned former Fidesz supporters by focusing on anti-corruption, institutional reform, and improving living standards rather than ideological polarization.

The campaign represented a broader rejection of the political model associated with Orbán. Economic pressures, frozen European Union funds, concerns about democratic backsliding, and scandals involving corruption and abuse weakened the legitimacy of the governing system. At the same time, Péter Magyar positioned himself as a credible alternative capable of combining political change with stability and a renewed relationship with Europe.

Domestically, the election opens the possibility of major institutional transformation. Tisza's supermajority gives the government the power to reform the judiciary, public administration, media regulation, and constitutional structures established during the Orbán era. However, the transition is expected to remain politically contentious, as Fidesz retains significant social support, media influence, and institutional networks despite losing power. Internationally, the election carries major implications for the European Union and regional politics. Orbán had become one of the EU's most prominent nationalist and Eurosceptic leaders, often obstructing collective European policies regarding Russia and Ukraine. The new government is expected to pursue closer cooperation with European institutions, restore relations with key regional partners, and reduce Hungary's political isolation within the EU.

Country Overview:

Official name: Hungary (*Magyarország*)

Form of state and government: Parliamentary Republic

Capital: Budapest

Institutional System: Parliamentary Democracy

Parliament: National Assembly (*Országgyűlés*)

Head of State: Tamás Sulyok

Head of Government: Viktor Orbán

Official Language: Hungarian

Currency: Hungarian Forint (*HUF*)

Area: Approximately 93,030 km²

Population: 9.5 million

- Ages 0–14: about 14% (~1.37 million people)
- Ages 15–24: about 11% (~1.00 million people)
- Ages 25–39: about 24% (~2.19 million people)
- Ages 40–54: about 21% (~1.95 million people)
- Ages 55–64: about 10% (~1.03 million people)
- Ages 65 and above: about 20% (~1.98 million people)

Membership in International Organizations:

- European Union
- NATO
- United Nations
- OECD

Major cities:

- Budapest - Political, economic, and cultural center
- Debrecen - Major eastern regional hub
- Szeged - University and research hub
- Miskolc - Industrial city in northern Hungary
- Pécs - Historic and cultural center in southern Hungary

Figure 2: Map of Hungary





Political and Electoral System

Hungary's political system combines parliamentary democracy with a strong executive branch, where the Prime Minister exercises significant political influence through a centralized governing structure. Although Hungary formally maintains democratic institutions and competitive elections, the dominance of the ruling coalition led by Fidesz and the Hungarian Civic Alliance has produced a highly majoritarian political environment characterized by limited opposition influence, increasing centralization, and concerns regarding democratic backsliding within the European Union.

The Hungarian political system has increasingly evolved from a competitive multi-party democracy into what many scholars describe as a dominant-party system. Opposition parties remain active but fragmented, while the government maintains substantial influence over public administration, state institutions, and the media environment.

Hungary is administratively divided into 19 counties and the capital city of Budapest. Local governments manage regional administration and public services, although recent reforms have centralized several administrative functions under the national government.

Electoral Thresholds

Hungary uses a mixed electoral system that combines majoritarian and proportional representation.

Of the 199 parliamentary seats:

- 106 seats are elected from single-member constituencies using a first-past-the-post voting.
- 93 seats are allocated through national party lists using proportional representation.

Political parties must surpass electoral thresholds to enter parliament through the party-list system:

- Single political parties require at least 5% of the national vote.
- Joint lists of two parties require a 10% threshold.
- Joint lists involving three or more parties require 15%.

The electoral system also incorporates a compensation mechanism that redistributes “surplus votes” from constituency races to party lists. Scholars and election observers have argued that this mechanism tends to disproportionately benefit larger parties with nationwide organizational strength, particularly the ruling coalition.

Government Formation Process

Following parliamentary elections, the President of Hungary formally nominates a candidate for Prime Minister, generally the leader of the largest political party or coalition in parliament. The nominee must then receive a majority of votes in the National Assembly to assume office.

The President, currently Tamás Sulyok, fulfills mainly ceremonial and constitutional duties. Executive authority is concentrated in the office of the Prime Minister, who oversees government policy, cabinet formation, and state administration. Since 2010, Viktor Orbán has occupied the role, remaining the dominant figure in Hungarian politics through successive electoral victories by the Fidesz–KDNP alliance.



Pre-Election Context

Before the election, Hungary was experiencing economic and social tensions that increasingly undermined public confidence in Viktor Orbán’s government and the broader political-economic system associated with Fidesz. Although Orbán’s model of “Orbánomics” initially promised economic sovereignty, national development, and protection from external pressures, by the early 2020s its structural weaknesses had become increasingly visible. Rising inflation, deteriorating public services, corruption scandals, and growing dependence on foreign industrial capital contributed to widespread public dissatisfaction. At the same time, the government’s confrontations with the European Union over rule-of-law concerns resulted in the suspension of billions of euros in EU funds, placing additional strain on Hungary’s economy and state institutions.

These overlapping crises created a political environment in which many voters began to question not only Orbán’s leadership but also the sustainability of the governing model that had dominated Hungary for more than a decade. It was within this context of economic hardship, institutional decline, and political disillusionment that a new opposition force, led by Péter Magyar and the Tisza movement, emerged as a credible challenger ahead of the election.

Prime Minister Orbán’s economic framework instrumentalized state intervention and economic nationalism. Under this model, the government applied high taxes on foreign-dominated service sectors, while providing state subsidies to industrial manufacturing, particularly the automotive and electric vehicle EV battery sectors. To diversify its economic partnerships and reduce reliance on Western markets, Budapest courted capital inflows from Asian countries such as China. The goal of this strategy, “Eastern Opening,” was to secure alternative sources of loans and investments so the government could evade the EU’s demands regarding the rule of law. For Asian companies, investing in Hungary allowed them to build factories inside the EU common market, effectively dodging Western tariffs on goods shipped from Asia. However, this strategy failed to protect Hungary from its financial crisis.

Back in early 2022, Viktor Orbán provided a massive fiscal stimulus package to the population. While this initially boosted his popularity, it ultimately backfired, leading to the highest inflation rate in the EU (peaking at 25.7% in 2023), which significantly eroded domestic living standards. Hungary’s economy remained tied to Western and EU-based capital, which remained dominant, accounting for 71% of Hungary’s total foreign direct investment (FDI) stock, while Chinese investment stood at a marginal 1.4%. Furthermore, these new Asian factories were built specifically to supply parts to German automakers, so when the European car market slowed down, Hungary was left completely exposed. Instead of “saving” the economy, this “Eastern Opening” created severe internal strain. Since Brussels had frozen €18-22 billion in EU funds (roughly 10% of Hungary’s GDP) over corruption concerns, the government was forced to starve its public services budget to finance these foreign industrial zones.

As national resources were funneled into these industrial projects, basic public infrastructure began to collapse; healthcare, transport, and schools faced severe budget cuts. This decline was visible in the education system where the “Revenge Law,” suppressed teachers protesting low salaries. This coercion caused a massive shortage of qualified teachers and contributed to a 25% student functional illiteracy rate. This phenomenon drove emigration among younger demographics who chose to leave the country rather than face domestic stagnation.



At the same time, corruption has increasingly become an endemic issue. According to Transparency International's 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Hungary scored 41 out of 100 points, ranking 82nd globally out of 180 countries evaluated and Hungary ranked last among all 27 European Union member states, cementing its position as the country perceived to have the highest level of public sector corruption in the EU.

In addition, a major “Padon Scandal” in early 2024 called into question the legitimacy of the “child-friendly” image Fidesz put forth. The scandal began at a Hungarian children's home where the director abused ten boys, and his deputy, Endre Kónya, was jailed for blackmailing the victims into covering up the crimes. In April 2023, President Katalin Novák quietly granted Kónya a full pardon, countersigned by Justice Minister Judit Varga, a move that went unnoticed until the independent news outlet 444.hu discovered the registry documents and exposed the cover-up in February 2024. Katalin Novák was the face of his family policy for years as the Minister for Family Affairs before becoming President. Furthermore, the Justice Minister who countersigned it, Judit Varga, was one of Orbán's closest allies. The scandal cast a shadow of hypocrisy over a government espousing Christian family values while simultaneously covering up child sex crimes, an image that was untenable to many voters.

After this scandal, Péter Magyar soon emerged as the leader of a new opposition party: Tisza. For many voters, the election became not simply a rejection of Orbán personally, but of the governing model associated with him. Magyar managed to oust Viktor Orbán after 16 years in power. Magyar's rapid rise has been remarkable, transforming him from a Fidesz insider into Hungary's most potent challenger to Viktor Orbán.

Main Parties and Leaders



- **Leader:** Péter Magyar
- **Ideology:** Conservative and center-right party, ran on a pro-European, anti-corruption, centrist, and populist platform.
- **Electoral Base:** Voters under 30 overwhelmingly backed Magyar, with some estimates suggesting close to 90% support among younger demographics.
- **Main themes:** Anti-Corruption & Rule of Law, Pro-European Realignment, Public Services, Institutional Reform.
- **Seats won:** 141/199
- **Popular vote:** 53.18%



FIDESZ

FIDESZ

- **Leader:** Viktor Orbán
- **Ideology:** a Christian nationalist and far-right party that is seen as authoritarian and has increasingly identified itself as illiberal. In an alliance with the Christian Democratic People's Party, Fidesz was seeking a fifth consecutive term (sixth overall).
- **Electoral Base:** Fidesz retained its strongest support among pensioners and older rural voters. The party increasingly appeared disconnected from younger Hungarians, while demographic trends further weakened its long-term electoral position. Beyond generational politics, many younger voters were also motivated by broader frustrations with economic stagnation, political centralization, and limited social mobility.
- **Main themes:** Sovereignty & Anti-Federalism, Cultural Conservatism, Foreign Policy Ambivalence, Economic Nationalism.
- **Seats won:** 52/199
- **Popular vote:** 38.61%

OUR HOMELAND MOVEMENT (MHM)



- **Leader:** László Toroczkai
- **Ideology:** Mi Hazánk is a radical, far-right nationalist party. Its core pillars are hardline Euroscepticism, strict anti-migration stances, aggressive right-wing cultural conservatism opposing LGBTQ+ and progressive movements.
- **Electoral Base:** The party's base is highly dedicated and skews toward younger, nationalistic men. Geographically, its strongest support comes from economically depressed rural areas, villages, and small towns in Eastern and Southern Hungary.
- **Main themes:** Ultranationalism, Hardline Anti-Immigration, Euroscepticism, Law and Order.
- **Seats won:** 6
- **Popular vote:** 5.63%

Tisza Party: **141 seats** Fidesz: **52 seats** Our Homeland Movement: **6 seats**

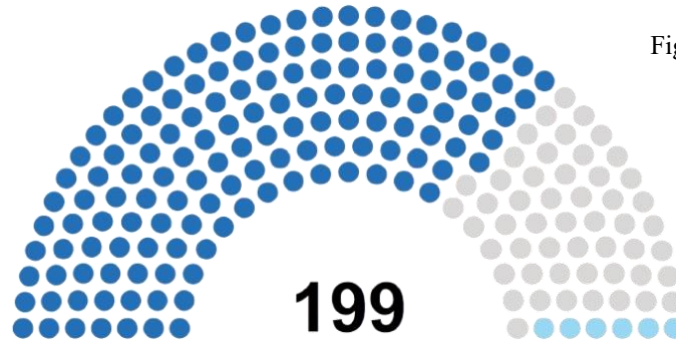


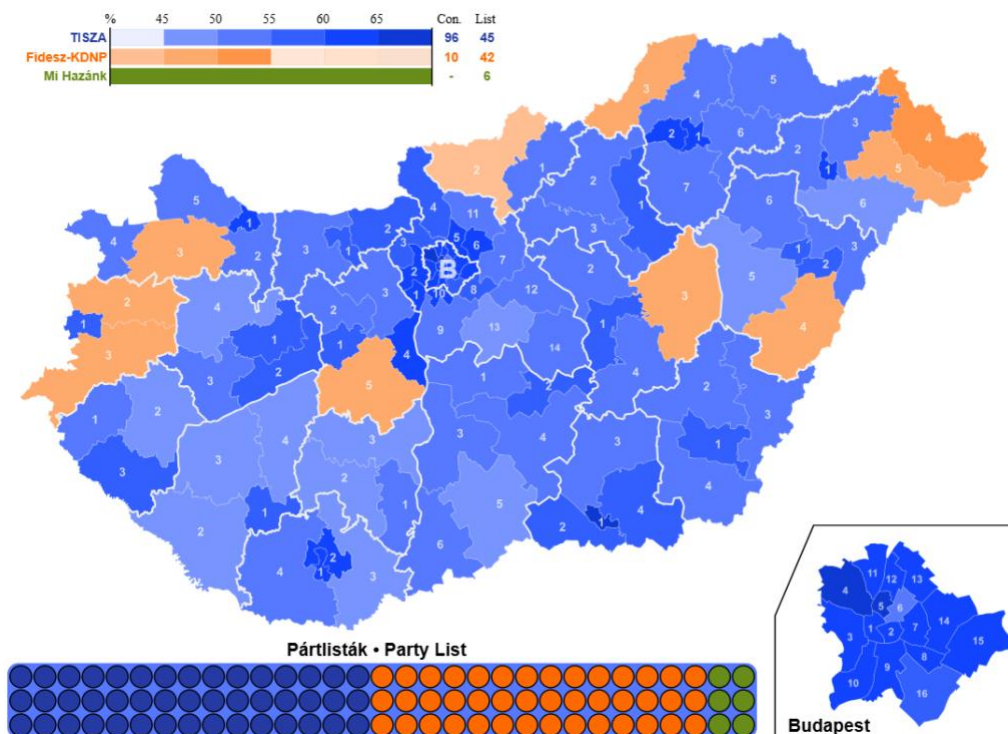
Figure 3: Seats

Results of the 2026 Hungarian Parliamentary Election

The figure below shows the winning party by single-member constituency.

A darker shade indicates a higher vote share, while results for the national proportional list are displayed in the bottom left:

Figure 4: Hungary Parliamentary Election Map





The Electoral Campaign

The Hungarian electorate experienced a competitive electoral campaign ahead of the 2026 general election on April 12. For the past 16 years, the Fidesz party has dominated Hungary's political landscape. However, this time the governing party faced a single credible challenger: the Magyar-led Tisza Party.

The "spark" behind the rise of the Tisza party was the "Pardon Scandal" in early 2024. In a single day (the 10th of February 2024), two of the country's top officials (the president and the justice minister) resigned, and Péter Magyar, an insider married to the latter, publicly broke with the entire system. In a Facebook post, he accused the system of being a corrupt political product designed to enrich a tiny elite. From this, the Tisza party was born and quickly became a powerful symbol: "*Árad a Tisza*," meaning "the Tisza is flooding". This motto perfectly captured the idea of a natural wave of change that was about to "wash away" the old system.

People responded: first tens of thousands, then hundreds of thousands; all of this wasn't just about street protests, but it soon translated directly into votes. In fact, the Tisza party won nearly 30% of the vote in the EU elections.

To understand the movement, we first need to understand the leader: Péter Magyar.

As a former member of Fidesz, a lawyer and a diplomat, he wielded criticism with legitimacy befitting an insider-turned-outsider. He positioned himself as a pro-European conservative liberal and vowed that the Tisza party would never form an alliance with any of Hungary's old opposition, which he denounced as inherently corrupt. In this way, Magyar benefited from his former association with Fidesz, drawing support from its strong opposition and supporters who have grown disillusioned with the party's excesses. This position is clear with his more traditional social views, emphasizing the importance of national cultural heritage and supporting Fidesz-imposed immigration controls.

An essential question regarding the election remains: how did Hungary arrive at such a competitive electoral scenario after years of single-party political dominance? Answering this question reveals the political exhaustion among the Hungarian population, as well as the campaign strategies adopted by each side in their effort to mobilize voters and secure electoral support.

A defining characteristic of the campaign was the strong personalization of political leadership.

The Tisza party designed a political programme to appeal to voters beyond the traditional divisions of Hungarian politics. Instead of focusing on divisive ideological issues, the party centered its campaign on tangible themes that resonated with daily life, such as corruption, and the decline of public services. This strategy allowed Tisza to avoid competing with the more ideologically developed Fidesz on issues where the governing party traditionally held a stronger advantage, particularly cultural topics. In this way, Tisza placed greater emphasis on broadly shared concerns, accountability, and collective repair. Tisza's emergence therefore represents not only the appearance of a new opposition force but also a broader challenge to the stability of Hungary's established political order.

Magyar's campaign adopted a communication strategy that complemented his political platform, avoiding state-controlled media and appealing directly to voters on social media and YouTube. His approach signified brand



differentiation by steering clear of the communication style of establishment politicians against whom he was condemning. Add to that grassroots strategy, a relentless cross-country campaign tour where he delivered multiple speeches per day. Péter Magyar and his team went on an 80-day tour, visiting every corner of the country: the aim was to personally connect with people, especially in the smaller towns. These initiatives created the impression of an authentic, modern, and accessible leader.

In contrast, Viktor Orbán continued to emphasize winning issues from past elections, cashing in political capital on polarizing culture-war topics such as migration, gender politics, and the war in Ukraine, in fact Orbán’s campaign conditioned voters with warnings that an opposition victory would drag Hungary into the war in Ukraine. The Fidesz campaign is basically based on an entirely “false story”, he was not campaigning on Hungarian domestic interests, he was not talking about health care or hospitals, he was telling the Hungarians that they were possibly facing a possible threat of invasion from Ukraine. Through these themes, Orbán structured political conflict around cultural divisions and distinctions between insiders and outsiders, presenting himself as the defender of Hungarian identity and national sovereignty. Yet these themes found less resonance in this election because the combined pressure of economic stagnation and high inflation forced voters to prioritize immediate material concerns over ideology. Ultimately, the tangible pressure of a rising cost of living made it increasingly difficult for the electorate to prioritize state-driven identity politics over the everyday struggle to afford basic goods and services.

Electoral Polls

Pollster	Date	Tisza Party	Fidesz - KDNP	Mi Hazánk
Medián	20 March 2026	58%	35%	4%
21 Research	28 March 2026	56%	37%	5%
Nézőpont	24 March 2026	40%	46%	6%
Actual Election Result	12 April	53.2%	38.6%	5.6%

Election Results

The 2026 Hungarian general elections resulted in the formation of a Parliament in which the Tisza party holds a two-thirds majority (141 seats), with the remaining third consequently distributed among the other two parties, Fidesz and Mi Hazánk Mozgalom. This distribution is markedly disadvantageous for the Mi Hazánk Party, which secured only six seats compared to the fifty-two won by the Fidesz party.

Detailed Result:

PARTY	MAJORITARIAN		PROPORTIONAL		TOTAL SEATS
	VOTES	SEATS	VOTES	SEATS	
TISZA	3 333 415	96	3 385 890	45	141
Fidesz	2 215 225	10	2 458 337	42	52
Mi Hazánk Mozgalom	345 252	-	358 372	6	6
Demokratikus Koalíció	65 302	-	70 298	-	0
Magyar Kétfarkú Kutya Párt	38 924	-	51 965	-	0
National minorities	-	-	41 871	-	0
Jobbik Magyarországért					
Mozgalom	7 832	-		-	0
Magyar Munkáspárt	4 187	-		-	0
Others	1 292	-		-	0
Independent	20 967	-		-	0

Analysis of the Vote

The 2026 Hungarian elections mark a historic turning point in the country's political landscape, with the defeat of Fidesz and Viktor Orbán after sixteen years in power and the rise of the pro-European TISZA party led by Péter Magyar. The vote highlights a highly mobilized electorate eager for change, as demonstrated by the record voter turnout registered since the fall of the Hungarian People's Republic.

The election results confirm the nature of the Hungarian system, which is entirely geared towards ensuring governability at the expense of parliamentary representativeness. This is evidenced by the presence of only three



parties (TISZA, Fidesz, Mi Hazánk Mozgalom) represented in the National Assembly, despite around ten parties having competed in the general election. In any case, the elections highlight the decline of Orbán's long-standing political dominance, the search for a more pro-European alternative, and the continued presence of a radical right that still maintains a stable electoral base.

Who wins and who loses

Fidesz emerged as the main loser of the elections, not only because it had been in power since 2010 and lost around 800,000 votes, but above all because, due to the mechanisms of the electoral system, it suffered a drastic reduction in parliamentary seats, which fell from 135 in 2022 to 52 in the current legislature. This defeat was particularly significant not only because it led to the formation of a new government but also because the Hungarian electoral system, traditionally favorable to the dominant party, amplified the impact of Fidesz's decline in public support. Mi Hazánk Mozgalom consolidated its position, retaining the 6 seats it had already secured in the previous legislature while gaining several tens of thousands more votes than in the 2022 elections, despite a decline recorded in the 2024 European elections.

Tisza emerged from a split within the previous governing majority and quickly established itself as the main opposition force, winning the elections thanks in part to support from other political actors and strong voter mobilization. Tisza obtained over 3.3 million votes, surpassing even Fidesz's historical best results and securing a large parliamentary majority with 141 seats. The 2026 election recorded the highest voter turnout since the fall of the People's Republic of Hungary, signaling increased political contestation and engagement among broad sections of the population.

Among significant development compared to past elections is the absence of the "Egységben Magyarországért" coalition, which had previously won 57 seats as the main opposition to Viktor Orbán's government, and the loss of the single seat held in both 2018 and 2022 by the party representing the German-Hungarian minority.

Electoral flows

To better understand the electoral flows, it is useful to observe how support gradually shifted from the governing Fidesz-led bloc to the new opposition force represented by Tisza. A substantial portion of voters who had previously supported Viktor Orbán turned to Péter Magyar, seen as a credible alternative capable of capturing the growing dissatisfaction that had accumulated over 16 years of government. Tisza's success seems to stem not only from its ability to attract votes from the traditional opposition but also from its capacity to win over moderate and conservative segments that had previously been closer to Fidesz.

At the same time, a more radical segment of the electorate continued to support Mi Hazánk Mozgalom, which consolidated its position by maintaining a stable parliamentary representation. This trend suggests that a segment of the nationalist and Eurosceptic electorate did not identify with either Tisza or with Fidesz, instead preferring a more extreme and ideologically distinct option.

A particularly significant development concerns the dissolution of the former opposition coalition "Egységben Magyarországért." The 2022 alliance, built as a highly heterogeneous platform primarily aimed at challenging



Orbán, failed to gain support over time, paving the way for a new political dynamic centered almost exclusively on the competition between Fidesz and Tisza. In this sense, the 2026 elections do not appear to reflect a traditional ideological left–right divide, but rather a transition from a system dominated by a single hegemonic party to one characterized by a new polarization between continuity and political change.

Urban/Rural vote

Several factors influenced voting behaviour and help explain the observed political and social transformations. Among the most significant is the geographical distribution of electoral support, namely the differences between votes cast in large urban areas and those in rural or peripheral regions.

The 2026 Hungarian elections confirm a strong territorial polarization of the electorate. In general, major cities and urban centres that are more economically and culturally integrated with the European Union showed more pronounced support for pro-European opposition forces, while rural and peripheral areas remained the main electoral strongholds of Fidesz and nationalist parties.

Budapest provides the clearest illustration of this dynamic: the capital recorded strong backing for Tisza, largely driven by an urban electorate that is younger and more oriented towards pro-European and liberal positions. By contrast, many rural areas in eastern and southern Hungary continued to support Fidesz, where the party maintains a strong political and administrative foothold built over years in government.

This territorial divide reflects deep economic and social differences. Voters in large cities, generally more integrated into European economic networks and with better access to services, education, and employment opportunities, tend to support parties favoring European integration and political change. Conversely, rural and peripheral areas, more dependent on support networks built by Fidesz and more sensitive to issues of stability, security, and national identity, continue to show a stronger inclination towards conservative and nationalist parties.

Differences by social class

It is difficult to define the impact of social class on voting behaviour in strictly sociological terms; however, a clear pattern emerges linked to education levels, which are often associated with broader economic and cultural differences among voters.

Fidesz maintained a significant presence among less educated groups and in economically vulnerable areas, largely due to its ability to present itself as a guarantor of economic stability, security, and the protection of national interests. In these contexts, issues such as the cost of living, inflation, family policies, and the defense of “ordinary citizens” against political and institutional elites. At the same time, a portion of the more dissatisfied and radicalised electorate continued to support Mi Hazánk Mozgalom, which is particularly successful in attracting social segments more exposed to economic insecurity and broader discontent with the political system.

The 2026 elections show that the traditional link between working-class voters and major governing parties has gradually weakened. A share of the electorate that once consistently supported Fidesz appears to have shifted toward Tisza as a new alternative, while another segment continues to support nationalist and populist forces that place economic and identity-related issues at the center of their agenda.

Generational differences

Another relevant factor in the 2026 Hungarian elections is the age of the electorate. As in many other contexts, significant generational differences also emerge in Hungary, helping to explain the political change observed in the country. Older voters remain a key pillar of support for Fidesz. After more than fifteen years in power, Orbán's party still maintains a strong presence among segments of the population that place greater importance on political stability, family-oriented social policies, and institutional continuity. In particular, in rural areas and small towns, older voters generally remain more closely aligned with the political system built by Fidesz over its years in government.

By contrast, younger generations appear far less inclined to support the outgoing governing party and have played a significant role in Tisza's rise. Among younger voters, especially in urban areas and within more highly educated groups, there is a stronger demand for European openness, political renewal, and economic and institutional modernization. Magyar has managed to capture part of this electorate by positioning himself as a figure of change, while still maintaining a political profile that engages in more moderate and conservative segments.

At the same time, a portion of younger voters who are more radicalized or disillusioned continues to support Mi Hazánk Mozgalom, particularly among those exhibiting greater distrust towards European institutions and the traditional political system.

Themes that weighted the most

A particularly significant element for understanding the 2026 Hungarian elections concerns the issues that most strongly shaped voting behavior. After more than 15 years of Orbán's government, the electoral campaign focused primarily on domestic and pragmatic concerns rather than traditional ideological cleavages.

Key issues included the cost of living, inflation, and the country's overall economic situation. In recent years, Hungary has experienced sustained price increases and economic difficulties, which have significantly affected support for Fidesz. Although the government continued to present itself as a guarantor of stability and social protection, a growing share of the electorate perceived its responses to everyday problems as insufficient, particularly regarding wages, public services, and purchasing power.

Relations with the EU also played an important role in the electoral competition. On the one hand, Fidesz maintained a nationalist and Eurosceptic rhetoric, emphasizing national sovereignty and the defense of Hungarian interests; on the other, TISZA built much of its campaign on the idea of re-engagement with Europe and the need to overcome Hungary's political isolation within European institutions.

At the same time, issues such as healthcare, corruption, and institutional function contributed to a growing demand for political change, especially among urban and younger voters. Péter Magyar's profile benefited from this climate, as he managed to position himself as a credible alternative not only to Orbán but also to a political system increasingly perceived as overly centered around Fidesz.



The electoral behavior observed in the 2026 Hungarian elections does not appear to be reducible to a strictly ideological confrontation. Voters did not realign in a coherent and unified way around a single traditional political bloc but instead showed a strong tendency to prioritise pragmatic considerations related to the economy, quality of life, and the demand for change following Fidesz's long-standing dominance.

To a large extent, the vote also took on a protest dimension against the outgoing government. A significant share of the electorate expressed fatigue with the political system built around Viktor Orbán, which many perceived as overly centralized and insufficiently responsive to the country's everyday problems. In this context, TISZA succeeded in attracting highly heterogeneous support, coming not only from the traditional opposition, but also from former moderate and conservative voters disillusioned with Fidesz.

The 2026 elections can therefore also be interpreted as an "electoral revolt" against the political establishment consolidated over the past decade. Rather than a clear ideological shift in the electorate, the vote seems to have expressed widespread demand for political renewal, greater European openness, and concrete attention to the economic and social difficulties experienced by voters.

Overall evaluation of the system

Despite the historic defeat suffered in 2026, Fidesz remains a politically relevant force within the Hungarian political system. Although it lost government power and much of its parliamentary representation, the party still retains a broad and deeply rooted electoral base, particularly in rural areas and among older segments of the population. At the same time, Mi Hazánk Mozgalom also maintains a stable presence, confirming the existence of a significant political space for nationalist and radical forces.

The main transformation, however, lies in the end of a system dominated almost exclusively by Fidesz for over fifteen years. The rise of Tisza has introduced a new political equilibrium, driven by a strong demand for change and the search for an alternative capable of combining political stability with greater openness towards Europe. The Hungarian political system, therefore, does not appear to be in crisis in terms of participation or electoral competitiveness, as demonstrated by the record turnout in 2026, but it does show increasing social and territorial fragmentation. Clearer divisions are emerging between large cities and rural areas, between younger and older generations, and between voters with different levels of education. These cleavages contribute to making a more polarized and competitive political landscape than in the past.

Government Formation

Majority needed: The Prime Minister of Hungary is elected by the 199-seat National Assembly following the President of the Republic's proposal. Under the Fundamental Law, more than half of all parliament members must support the selection, meaning that at least 100 votes are needed to vote in a Prime Minister. Tisza, holding 141 seats, is well positioned above the required threshold to elect Péter Magyar as Prime Minister without external support. In theory, the President of the Republic possesses agenda-setting power because the National Assembly votes on the person he proposes.



Tisza's overwhelming victory also places the party above the two-thirds threshold required for constitutional reform, meaning that the formation of this government is not only about forming an executive but also about giving the incoming government the legal capacity to amend the constitutional and cardinal-law framework inherited from Orbán. This matters since parliamentary control in Hungary extends beyond ordinary legislation: the National Assembly also plays a role in electing or appointing several senior public officials, including members of the Constitutional Court, the President of the Curia, the Prosecutor General, and the President of the State Audit Office. Tisza is therefore acquiring the constitutional authority to reshape the institutional architecture of the Hungarian state in its entirety, including the legal framework, the judiciary, the prosecution system, the audit bodies, and the media regulatory environment.

Possible coalitions: The results of the 2026 election make coalition formation unnecessary. Often in parliamentary systems, a change of government after a fragmented election requires negotiations among parties, coalition agreements, the distribution of cabinet portfolios, and confidence-building arrangements. In this case, the seat distribution and Tisza's dominance remove this layer of politicking and uncertainty. Tisza can form a single-party government since it controls an absolute majority of seats and does not need Fidesz-KDNP, Mi Hazánk, or any other party to reach the parliamentary threshold for government formation. This concentration of parliamentary power also increases Tisza's political responsibility: unlike a coalition government, it will have limited ability to blame partners for delays, compromises, or failures in the reform process.

A coalition with either Fidesz-KDNP is therefore both unnecessary and politically implausible, as the election represented a direct transfer of power away from Viktor Orbán's governing bloc after 16 years in office. Additionally, a coalition partnership with Mi Hazánk is similarly unlikely, given that its support is irrelevant for the election of the prime minister or the passage of ordinary legislation. The most realistic configuration is therefore a single-party Tisza government, with Fidesz-KDNP as the main opposition and Mi Hazánk as a smaller radical-right opposition force. Therefore, the relevance of party relations in Hungary lies not primarily in building a governing majority, but in anticipating the political and institutional resistance the new government may face.

Convergences and incompatibilities between parties: Tisza's campaign and post-election agenda have focused on restoring the rule of law, combating corruption, institutional reform, and rebuilding Hungary's relationship with the European Union. For example, Magyar's supermajority could facilitate reforms needed to unlock EU funds frozen due to Orbán's rule-of-law shortcomings.

By contrast, Fidesz enters the new parliament as a weakened but still important opposition actor. Although Fidesz's loss reduces its ability to shape the political agenda, the Orbán camp retains a territorial network of local party offices and Fidesz-aligned municipal governments, a loyal voter base, influence in parts of the media, and links to certain economic sectors. This reality means that Tisza's parliamentary dominance does not automatically translate into uncontested political dominance across society or the state. Government formation is, therefore, institutionally straightforward, but the broader transition of power may still be politically contentious. Fidesz cannot block legislation by parliamentary vote alone, but it can criticize, mobilize supporters, and frame Tisza's institutional changes as politically retributive rather than democratically corrective. The distinction matters: if Tisza replaces Fidesz-era appointees through transparent, merit-based procedures and new legal frameworks, the process is more likely to be accepted as institutional restoration. If it relies heavily on ad hoc dismissals, fast-



track constitutional amendments tailored to remove specific officeholders, or partisan appointments to replace partisan appointees, the reforms will be vulnerable to accusations of political reprisal, which could undermine their domestic and international legitimacy.

The main incompatibility is therefore not a programmatic coalition of conflict, but an institutional one. Tisza is expected to seek changes to the system built under Orbán, while Fidesz is likely to defend its political legacy and use its remaining institutional, media, and social resources to oppose or slow the transition. The first months of the new government are likely to involve intense political confrontation, especially around constitutional reform, de-oligarchizing, media pluralism, and accountability for the previous administration's excesses and abuses.

Ongoing negotiations: As mentioned above, post-election negotiations are less about forming a coalition and more about organizing the transfer of power, the inaugural session of parliament, the election of the prime minister, the allocation of parliamentary offices, committee structures, and ministerial hearings. The President of the Republic must convene the constitutive sitting of the new National Assembly within thirty days of the election. The president then proposes a candidate for prime minister, who must be elected by the National Assembly.

On 9 May 2026, the new National Assembly held its inaugural session. Péter Magyar was elected prime minister with 140 votes in favour, 54 against, and one abstention, and was sworn in the same day. Under the Fundamental Law, ministers are appointed by the President of the Republic on the Prime Minister's proposal, and the government is established once the ministers are appointed. On 12 May, President Sulyok appointed the 16 members of Magyar's cabinet, formally completing the government-formation process. The transition from election to fully formed government therefore took approximately one month, consistent with the accelerated timeline that Magyar had publicly called for.

Government formation in Hungary after the 2026 elections is numerically clear but politically consequential. At the same time, a supermajority does not eliminate all institutional constraints. The government may have the votes to amend laws, but implementation will still depend on administrative capacity, cooperation within state institutions, judicial interpretation, and political legitimacy. The Hungarian case does not revolve around coalition uncertainty or centrist bargaining. Instead, it revolves around the transformation of an electoral landslide into executive and constitutional power. Tisza can form a government alone, but the broader question is how it will use its two-thirds mandate: whether to pursue a controlled reconstruction of democratic institutions, a rapid dismantling of the Orbán-era system, or a more confrontational process that deepens political polarization. For this reason, the Hungarian case should be read less as a coalition-formation problem and more as a mandate-management problem: the decisive question is whether Tisza can convert parliamentary dominance into institutional reform while preserving political legitimacy.

Domestic Implications

Rule-of-Law and Institutional Reconstruction: The most immediate domestic implication concerns the structure of the Hungarian state itself. With 141 of 199 seats, Tisza controls not only a governing majority, but

also a two-thirds supermajority. This gives the new government the legal capacity to amend the constitutional and cardinal-law framework that structured Hungarian politics during Viktor Orbán's 16 years in office.

The central domestic battle will therefore be institutional. Tisza's mandate opens the possibility of restoring rule-of-law standards, increasing transparency in public life, improving checks and balances, and revising institutions shaped under Fidesz. However, the process will not be automatic. Many key offices are still occupied by Orbán loyalists, including the presidency, the prosecutor general, the central bank leadership, the State Audit Office, the Media Authority, the Curia, and the Constitutional Court.

This means that the election creates both an opportunity and a risk. The opportunity is that Tisza can legally pursue reforms that would have been much harder under a simple majority government. The risk is that rapid institutional change may be perceived as partisan replacement rather than democratic reconstruction. The challenge will therefore be to dismantle the inherited illiberal structures while preserving procedural legitimacy and avoiding the impression that one dominant-party system is simply being replaced by another.

Anti-corruption and Public Administration: Among the most prescient and visible early challenges for the new government will be dismantling the system of corruption and patronage established by the previous administration. Tisza's programme links the restoration of the rule-of-law with the recovery of EU funds, the reform of public procurement, and the recovery of misused public assets. Measures such as joining the European Public Prosecutor's Office, strengthening public procurement transparency, and tightening conflict-of-interest rules would mark a clear break with the governance model associated with the Orbán period.

Domestically, this agenda matters for two reasons. First, it addresses a major source of public dissatisfaction, namely the perception that state resources and public contracts were used to sustain politically connected networks. Second, it is directly linked to Hungary's fiscal capacity, since reducing waste, reforming procurement, and restoring access to EU funds could create room for investment in public services.

However, several challenges could emerge. Investigations into past procurement irregularities will depend on prosecutors and judges appointed under the Orbán government, whose willingness to cooperate with the new administration is uncertain. Recovering misappropriated assets requires complex legal proceedings that may take years to produce results. Furthermore, if anti-corruption efforts are perceived as politically selective, they could deepen polarization rather than restore public trust.

Economic Policy and Fiscal Constraints: Improving the economy will be a decisive test of Tisza's domestic legitimacy. The new government inherits a difficult fiscal environment, public services under strain, and high expectations for visible improvement after a campaign centered on living standards, healthcare, education, corruption, and state performance. Tisza's economic approach combines fiscal consolidation, recovery of EU funds, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, and a more predictable business environment.

A central element is the attempt to unlock suspended EU funding and redirect it toward healthcare, education, transport, infrastructure, and business support. This makes EU fund recovery a domestic policy issue rather than simply a matter of foreign relations. If funds are released quickly, they could ease budget pressure and strengthen



the government's ability to deliver early results. If they remain delayed, the government may face a difficult trade-off between fiscal discipline and social investment.

Tisza has also set the objective of reducing the budget deficit from 5% or more of GDP to below 3%, while meeting euro-entry criteria by 2030. This implies a strong emphasis on fiscal credibility, but it also creates tension with the party's promises to expand healthcare, education, social support, and infrastructure investment. The domestic political risk is that voters may expect rapid improvements in public services, while the government may need to sequence reforms more slowly because of budgetary constraints.

Taxation and Redistribution: Tisza's tax agenda suggests a partial shift away from the previous model of broad state intervention and toward a combination of targeted tax relief, progressive elements, and support for lower-income workers. The programme includes a reduction in income tax for workers earning below the median wage, a cut in the tax rate on the minimum wage from 15% to 9%, and a commitment not to increase employment taxes.

At the same time, the party has proposed a 1% tax on wealth exceeding 1 billion forints, which would introduce a more explicitly redistributive element into the Hungarian tax system. This combination allows Tisza to present itself as both business-friendly and socially corrective: reducing the burden on lower earners and small businesses while asking more from the wealthiest households. The political challenge will be whether these measures can raise enough revenue to finance public-service promises without undermining investor confidence or provoking resistance from economic elites linked to the previous system.

Welfare, Pensions, and Social Policy: These are likely to be a central arena of domestic competition, with the tension between electoral expectations and fiscal constraints playing backdrop. Tisza's promises, including doubling family allowances and raising social-sector wages, require substantial and sustained public spending. However, the government also needs to reduce the budget deficit, maintain investor confidence, and manage uncertainty around EU fund disbursement. If the pace of fiscal consolidation prevents rapid welfare expansion, disappointment among Tisza's electorate could erode support. At the same time, scaling back or reforming the family subsidy system inherited from Fidesz carries political risks, since these measures have been central to Hungarian social policy for over a decade. Tisza has committed to maintaining and extending existing family benefits, preserving the 13th and 14th-month pensions, and introducing targeted support for retirees and vulnerable households. Its programme also includes doubling family allowances and maternity-related benefits, investing in elderly care, raising wages in the social sector, and addressing abuses in state child protection services.

This reflects a broader attempt to shift Hungarian politics from identity-based mobilization toward state performance and quality of life. Under Orbán, Fidesz relied heavily on cultural nationalism and anti-EU messaging to consolidate its support. Tisza's strategy instead emphasizes measurable improvements in public services, anti-corruption, and living standards as the primary axis of political competition. Therefore, public expectations will be especially high because Tisza's victory was partly driven by dissatisfaction with declining public services, inflationary pressures, and corruption. The welfare agenda may therefore help consolidate support among lower-income and older voters, but it also adds fiscal pressure at a time when the government is trying to reduce the deficit.



Education and Health: These two policy areas will be closely watched as indicators of Tisza's governing performance. Education, in particular, became one of the most visible sources of social dissatisfaction during the later Orbán years. Tisza has promised to re-establish an independent education ministry, reduce administrative burdens for teachers, restore university autonomy, increase methodological freedom, and dismantle the state textbook monopoly.

In healthcare, Tisza aims to increase public health spending to 7% of GDP by 2030, raise annual health funding by at least 500 billion forints until that target is reached, reduce waiting times, upgrade regional hospitals, and strengthen prevention. The political logic is clear: improving healthcare and education would allow the government to show that institutional reform has tangible effects on everyday life. The risk is equally clear since these sectors require sustained financing, administrative capacity, and time; failure to deliver quickly could weaken the government's legitimacy.

Media and Public Sphere: Media reform is likely to be one of the most visible and conflictual domestic issues. Tisza has pledged to strengthen the independence of public media and the judiciary. The restoration of media pluralism is also part of the wider institutional restructuring expected after the election. The domestic importance of this issue goes beyond media regulation. Under Orbán, Fidesz built a tightly controlled media ecosystem through two main mechanisms: first, by turning the public broadcaster MTVA into a government mouthpiece that systematically platformed ruling-party messaging; and second, by concentrating private media ownership through the Central European Press and Media Foundation (KESMA), a structure created in 2018 into which dozens of regional and national outlets were consolidated, effectively eliminating independent editorial lines in large parts of the printed and online press. The resulting information environment meant that a majority of Hungarian voters consumed news that was either directly or indirectly aligned with Fidesz, giving the party a structural advantage in every electoral cycle.

Dismantling this system would require several measures: enacting a new, independent public media law; restructuring MTVA's governance to remove political control over appointments and editorial decisions; and introducing transparency rules for media ownership to prevent hidden concentration. Reversing KESMA's dominance is legally complex because the foundation's structure is protected by cardinal laws that require a two-thirds majority to amend, which Tisza now holds. However, media reform could also become a focal point for accusations of political revenge if changes are implemented without transparent legal safeguards.

Immigration and Security: Tisza's domestic agenda does not imply a significant turn on migration. The party has taken a firm position against illegal migration, supports maintaining the southern border fence, opposes EU migrant relocation quotas, and rejects the EU migration pact. This suggests that the Hungarian electorate, across both Fidesz and Tisza voters, remains broadly responsive to a security-oriented approach to migration, and that Tisza sees no electoral advantage in departing from this stance, even as it pursues a broader institutional and European reset.

On security, Tisza has committed to increasing defense spending toward NATO's 5% of GDP target by 2035, while rejecting the deployment of Hungarian troops to Ukraine and opposing the revival of conscription. Specifically, regarding Ukraine, the party does not support fast-track EU accession and has proposed a binding



referendum on the question. Domestically, this allows Tisza to present a more Western-oriented strategic posture while maintaining caution on politically sensitive issues such as military engagement and migration, where the party has signaled continuity rather than rupture.

Energy and Strategic Autonomy: Tisza has pledged to eliminate Hungary's dependence on Russian energy by 2035, review the Russian-built Paks II nuclear project, double the share of renewables by 2040, and launch a large-scale energy-efficiency programme for households and companies. The party also intends to maintain and extend household energy price support, indicating that energy transition will be framed not only as geopolitical diversification but also as a cost-of-living issue. The domestic challenge will be balancing affordability, energy security, and decarbonization. Reducing Russian dependence would mark a major strategic shift, but the transition will require infrastructure investment, alternative supply arrangements, regulatory reform, and careful management of household costs.

Centre-periphery Relations and Territorial Politics: The election also has implications for relations between Budapest, smaller towns, rural areas, and peripheral regions. Tisza's programme includes stronger municipalities, decentralized decision-making, upgrades to regional hospitals, repairs to public transport, rural development, and support for small and medium-sized enterprises. This matters because Fidesz retains local structures and a loyal voter base even after losing national power. Therefore, the center-periphery question is both administrative and political for Tisza. Improving local public services, strengthening regional hospitals, and supporting municipalities could help the new government consolidate support outside Budapest. At the same time, local networks associated with the previous governing party may remain in important channels of opposition to mobilization and institutional resistance.

Party System and Political Stability: The election sharply simplifies Hungary's parliamentary party system. Only three forces are represented in parliament: Tisza, Fidesz-KDNP, and Mi Hazánk. This weakens the older fragmented opposition and makes Tisza the central governing alternative to Fidesz. At the same time, Fidesz remains politically relevant because it retains local organisation, media influence, economic ties, and a loyal electorate. The domestic implications of the 2026 election are defined by a rare combination of strong parliamentary authority and difficult implementation conditions. Tisza has the votes to act, but its success will depend on whether institutional reform, anti-corruption measures, economic stabilization, and public-service investment can be delivered in a way that strengthens democratic checks and balances rather than simply recentralizing power under a new majority.

International Implications

The 2026 Hungarian elections not only signaled the decisive defeat for Orbán but also raised a pivotal question: what does Orbán's decline and the ascendancy of Péter Magyar mean for Europe? Consequently, what are the core international implications that this shift has brought to the global stage?

Russia: Hungary had been a stronghold of Euroscepticism and Russian political influence in the EU since Orbán's government consistently represented a useful outlier opinion in the EU, if not an outright ally to Moscow. Therefore, Orbán's loss deprives Russia of a leader who disrupted EU funds and a coordinated European effort to materially support Ukraine by stalling sanctions and obstructing Ukraine's EU membership negotiations.



- **Security and Corruption:** Magyar has repeatedly promised to investigate the various corruption and espionage scandals connected to Russia. Addressing these issues will help close a critical vulnerability in EU security policy. A strong example is the “Kremlin Hotline” investigation, which involves Hungary's Foreign Minister, Peter Szijjártó, sharing sensitive, internal details of European Commission meetings and EU sanctions deliberations directly with Moscow. Szijjártó has not denied the calls that took place but has framed the leak as a “clumsy intervention” by foreign secret services. He affirms that maintaining a line to Moscow is “sovereign diplomacy” necessary for Hungary’s energy security. Péter Magyar explicitly called out the behavior, stating that under the Hungarian Penal Code, this is defined as treason.
- **Energy:** In contrast to other EU member-states, which have sought to decouple from Russian energy since 2022, Orbán’s Hungary dramatically increased its energy dependence on Moscow. Magyar has signaled its intention to become independent of Russian oil and significantly increase its share of renewable energy. However, Magyar would like to achieve this aim by 2035, far behind the EU’s 2027 REPowerEU Plan timeline.
- **Gas and Oil:** Hungary is connected to the European gas network with all its neighbors (except Slovenia) and can buy gas through LNG terminals in Greece or Poland. Oil is trickier: Hungary relies heavily on the Druzhba pipeline, which traverses Ukraine and has faced operational issues since late January.

Ukraine: The war in Ukraine remains a heavily politicized topic in Hungary. Although Péter Magyar and the Tisza Party did not portray themselves as explicitly pro-Ukrainian during the campaign, their approach nevertheless marks a distinct departure from Orbán’s hostility.

- **The Minority Rights Issue:** Hungary and Ukraine are launching expert-level talks to resolve a long-standing dispute over the rights of roughly 100,000 ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine's Zakarpattia region. These rights were inadvertently restricted by a 2017 Ukrainian language law that mandated Ukrainian as the primary language of study after the fifth grade, a policy originally designed to counter Russian influence. This diplomatic engagement signals a sharp departure from years of strained relations under former Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who frequently invoked the minority rights issue to justify anti-Ukraine policies, block EU funding, and refuse financial or military aid. Under Hungary's new leadership, the nations are repairing bilateral ties. Hungarian Foreign Minister Anita Orbán and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha have expressed strong optimism online about building constructive, mutually beneficial relations based on trust.
- **EU Funds:** Under former PM Orbán, Hungary blocked a €90 billion EU aid package for Kyiv. While the new Prime Minister, Péter Magyar, has promised to stop holding EU funding hostage, Brussels is waiting for real results. Over €18 billion in EU funds for Hungary remain frozen. The new government is currently rushing to pass democratic reforms to convince the EU to finally unlock those billions.
- **Ukraine's EU Accession:** Unlike Orbán, Magyar does not outright oppose Ukraine’s accession to the EU. However, he stated during a conference that he’s not in favor of Ukraine’s rapid accession to the EU. In interviews, Magyar has noted that Ukraine must undergo the exact same rigorous procedures and meet the same preconditions as any other candidate country. Magyar has explicitly stated that the EU should prioritize admitting long-standing candidate countries from the Western Balkans (like Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania) before Ukraine. He warned that skipping these countries in favor of a rapid accession for



Ukraine would cause the EU to "lose credibility" in a region that has been waiting and making major commitments for many years.

Germany: Berlin is Hungary's most important partner and investor, particularly through automotive brands such as BMW, Audi, and Mercedes-Benz, which maintain footprints in the country.

- **Investment:** The Tisza party movement banks on a heavy anti-corruption approach, and for German investors, this means a transition towards a more transparent legal framework. Orbán's rule-of-law disputes had frozen billions in EU funding. With Magyar actively moving to repair ties with the European Commission, the release of these funds will stimulate the Hungarian economy, directly benefiting German industrial and construction projects in the region. It is a critical economic relationship that Magyar fully intends to maintain and excel in.

Poland and Regional Partners: Tisza's foreign policy in this area offers one of the clearest contrasts to Orbán's platforms, aiming to reset relations with key regional partners.

- **Rebuilding the Warsaw-Budapest Axis:** Poland and Hungary historic alliance collapsed following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine due to their diametrically opposed stances on Moscow. For Magyar, repairing ties with Warsaw is the absolute precondition for reviving the Visegrád Group (V4) as a meaningful bloc for Central European cooperation.
- **Slovakia:** Tisza plans to pursue constructive relations with Bratislava while actively seeking a negotiated settlement over the criminalization of the public questioning of the Beneš decrees, an issue Orbán largely ignored. However, this will require delicate diplomacy, as Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico may oppose Magyar's positions both for domestic political gain and out of loyalty to his close ties with Orbán.

Beyond the European continent, what about the non-EU relations?

China: Through the "Eastern Opening" strategy, Orbán aggressively resisted EU tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles (EVs) and turned Hungary into a primary destination for Chinese mega-investments. Under Péter Magyar, this relationship will experience a gradual, pragmatic recalibration rather than an aggressive rupture. In fact, he explicitly stated in his post-election press conference that he is open to pragmatic cooperation and would welcome a visit to Beijing, recognizing China as one of the world's strongest economies.

- **Focus on the local benefits:** Tisza's designated Foreign Minister, Anita Orbán (no relation to Viktor), has pointed out that while Chinese imports grew exponentially under Fidesz, Hungarian exports did not keep pace. Moving forward, the government's goal is to ensure Chinese factories do not operate as isolated "enclave economies." Instead, they will be forced to strictly comply with European environmental, labor, and safety standards, while actively integrating Hungarian small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) into their supply chains.

Israel: Similar to the Ukraine question, Orbán's Hungary typically played the role of outsider to European consensus with regard to Israel. Magyar has signaled that Israel will remain an important economic partner, a diplomatic connection reinforced by significant cultural, economic and demographic ties, including one of



Europe's largest domestic Jewish communities. However, Hungary's behavior within the European Union will likely change. Under Orbán, Budapest regularly utilized its veto power to block collective EU resolutions and sanctions targeting Israel, serving as a reliable diplomatic shield. Magyar signaled an end to this automatic obstruction, stating that Hungary will evaluate future EU initiatives on a case-by-case basis.

- **ICC:** Péter Magyar has promised to keep Hungary in the International Criminal Court (ICC), in contrast to Orbán, who wanted to leave the court. In April 2025, then Prime Minister Orbán hosted Netanyahu in Budapest, refusing to execute the ICC warrant and granting him immunity. To permanently shield the Israeli leader, Orbán initiated Hungary's formal withdrawal from the ICC. Under the court's statute, withdrawal takes exactly one year to become legally effective. Since Hungary filed its official notification with the United Nations Secretary-General in June 2025, the country is scheduled to officially exit the court on June 2, 2026. If this occurs, Hungary will become the only European Union member state outside the jurisdiction of the ICC. Magyar has stated that his administration would rescind the withdrawal before the June 2 deadline, thereby maintaining membership in the ICC. This decision directly impacts Netanyahu's scheduled visit to Hungary in October 2026. Magyar has explicitly confirmed that under his leadership, Hungary would uphold its treaty obligations, stating that any individual wanted by the ICC who enters Hungarian territory must be taken into custody. Some countries, however, have argued they can remain ICC members without enforcing such warrants: Italy granted immunity to the Israeli leader, and Germany's leadership expressed that an arrest was functionally unimaginable.

The Blueprint Effect?

The collapse of the Fidesz government and Viktor Orbán is not merely impactful to close observers of Hungarian politics. Fidesz's loss is a significant ideological and symbolic blow to the political project of U.S. President Donald Trump and the broader "MAGA International" movement. Viktor Orbán appeared to many as an example to follow: a democratically elected populist in NATO and the EU who consolidated executive control to forge an "illiberal democracy" and stay in power for almost two decades. Orbán's example was highly influential on figures surrounding Donald Trump, who observed Hungary to learn how to systematically capture the state bureaucracy, dismantle public programming, and weaponize state power to control the media landscape.

Trump has routinely praised Orbán, and it should not be discounted that Vice President JD Vance flew to Hungary in early April, just days before the vote, to publicly align himself with the embattled Prime Minister in a final attempt to boost his re-election campaign. Populists around the globe used Fidesz as a model for governance, adopting Orbán-style politics in their domestic approaches. This support was wide-ranging and highly visible. In mid-January, Orbán posted a video on X showing major right-wing leaders backing him, including former Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Alice Weidel of Germany's AfD, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. During a visit to Budapest in February, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio explicitly stated that President Trump was deeply committed to Orbán's success because his success is the US's success.

Fidesz's decisive defeat, even as the table was tilted, demonstrates a potent example that Orbán-style populist politics are not indomitable. Crucially, Orbán did not lose because rural Hungarians suddenly embraced liberal



policies and European integration, but because his illiberal model stopped delivering prosperity, the rule-of-law, and functioning public services. The difference is essential. Magyar's victory, therefore, offers a lesson to political opponents around Europe and the globe. For example, in Germany's politically fractured landscape, liberal and centrist parties are facing significant populist pressures with a clear message: defending democracy must be paired with visible competence, anti-corruption efforts, and tangible improvements to everyday material security. A similar parallel can be drawn with Albania, where Prime Minister Edi Rama and the Socialist Party (PS) have held continuous authority since 2013 and adopted a similar governance model. Tisza's achievement offers a crucial guide for the Albanian opposition, and it demonstrates that defeating a strong incumbent by recycling old politicians or building mismatched alliances is a losing strategy.

Yet these lessons may resonate most deeply in the United States. It is already well-established that Donald Trump drew significant inspiration from Viktor Orbán, with profound consequences for American politics. Since returning to the White House for his second term, Trump has adopted an imperial approach to the role. He has withdrawn from significant international bodies like the World Health Organization and the Paris Climate Agreement, publicly contemplated both abandoning NATO and annexing Greenland, attempted to override judicial and legislative institutions by expanding executive power, and embraced an unprecedented transnationalism in office to enrich his family and political allies. Furthermore, he has openly flirted with the idea of an unprecedented third term in office while steadily blurring the line between national interests and personal ambition.

Meanwhile, the Iran War and the subsequent closure of the Strait of Hormuz have triggered severe energy shortages, skyrocketing cargo shipping costs, and global commodity inflation. These economic pressures are actively eroding the American standard of living and undercutting Trump's "America First" and affordability agenda, which were instrumental to his victory in the 2024 election. Much like the situation in Hungary, the mounting contradictions of a populist, nationalist government that fails to deliver basic prosperity may cause it to collapse under the weight of its own hypocrisy. With a Republican setback increasingly likely in the 2026 midterm elections, Trump's broader political ambitions face a steep uphill climb towards 2028. The Hungarian example demonstrated the ultimate vulnerability of illiberal democracies: no path to permanent power is absolute when the state stops functioning for its citizens.

Risks and Scenarios

Main risks:

Institutional Resistance and Legal Obstruction: Tisza's two-thirds majority gives the new government formal power to amend the constitution and revise cardinal laws, but several important state institutions remain shaped by Fidesz-era appointments. These include the presidency, the Constitutional Court, the prosecutor general, the Curia, the Media Authority, the State Audit Office, and the leadership of the central bank. As a result, the Tisza may face resistance from these key offices through constitutional review, legal challenges, bureaucratic delay, prosecutorial inaction, or institutional non-cooperation. Tisza's main challenge may be whether they can effectively instrumentalize its parliamentary supermajority to neutralize or override these Fidesz-aligned figures while avoiding a constitutional crisis.

Budgetary and Economic Constraints: The new government inherits strained public finances, weak public services, and high expectations for visible improvement. Healthcare, education, transport, and social services all require investment, while Tisza has also committed to fiscal consolidation and restoring economic credibility. Access to suspended EU funds is therefore central to the domestic agenda, since it could ease fiscal pressure and support reform in key sectors. If EU funding is delayed or released only gradually, the government may face a difficult balance between fiscal discipline and social spending.

Reform Overreach: Tisza now holds the same type of constitutional power that Fidesz used to reshape Hungary's political system. De-Orbánisation may be popular among voters who want accountability, but it could also be framed as a partisan purge, especially by partisan media. This risk is not abstract. If Tisza uses its two-thirds majority to pass constitutional amendments tailored specifically to remove incumbent Fidesz-appointed officials before the end of their mandates, or to shorten fixed terms for officeholders such as the prosecutor general or Constitutional Court judges, the reforms could be portrayed as eliminating political opponents rather than restoring institutional independence. The same applies to appointments: if replacement candidates are selected primarily on the basis of anti-Orbán credentials rather than professional qualifications, the new government will struggle to claim it is rebuilding a depoliticized state. The domestic and international legitimacy of the transition depends on whether institutional changes follow transparent, generally applicable criteria or are perceived as ad hoc measures designed to clear the field of rivals. The key challenge will be to restore checks and balances without reproducing the majoritarian logic that Tisza claims to oppose.

Fidesz Countermobilization: Fidesz has lost executive power, but it remains politically relevant. The party retains local structures, a loyal voter base, influence in parts of the media, and links to economic sectors. This gives Orbán's camp the capacity to frame reforms as revenge, mobilize supporters, exploit legal disputes, and wait for economic disappointment. The risk is not immediate governmental collapse, but the gradual rebuilding of Fidesz as an opposition force if Tisza fails to deliver.

Fragile social coalition: Tisza's electoral coalition is broad, but not necessarily ideologically cohesive. Magyar's decisive victory was less an endorsement of his politics than a reflection of Orbán's growing unpopularity, concerns with corruption, declining public services, inflation, and voter fatigue. Broad-based support then creates a wide-ranging set of constituents who will be difficult to satisfy all at once. If the public perceives anti-corruption

measures as too slow or ineffective, EU funds remain blocked, or living standards fail to improve, voters may begin to feel they have merely swapped one party for another. The coalition that brought Tisza to power may then fragment.

Scenarios

Scenario 1: Managed Democratic Reconstruction

If all goes right, Tisza will use its two-thirds majority to carry out a controlled and legally grounded reconstruction of the state. This would include constitutional and cardinal-law reforms, stronger judicial independence, public media reform, accession to the European Public Prosecutor's Office, tighter public procurement rules, and measures to unlock EU funds. This scenario requires procedural discipline. Tisza would need to show that institutional reform is not merely a replacement of Fidesz loyalists with Tisza loyalists, but a genuine restoration of checks and balances. Transparent appointments, consultation with civil society and professional bodies, and clear legal criteria for institutional changes would be essential. If successful, this scenario would strengthen democratic legitimacy, improve relations with the EU, increase investor confidence, and weaken Fidesz's argument that the transition is politically vindictive.

The domestic consequences would be significant. A managed reconstruction would give Tisza the opportunity to connect institutional reform with everyday governance, especially in healthcare, education, anti-corruption policy, and public administration. It would also reduce the likelihood of a rapid Fidesz comeback, since the new government would be able to demonstrate that a balanced electoral playing field produces practical results rather than only political conflict.

Scenario 2: Institutional Siege and Uneven Reform

The most likely near-term scenario is a contested transition wherein Tisza has the votes to act, but Fidesz-aligned officeholders, courts, media networks, economic interests, and local structures resist the government's agenda. Even with a supermajority, dismantling entrenched power across the state will require careful constitutional reform and political navigation. In this scenario, the government would survive and pass major reforms, but the first 12 to 18 months would be marked by legal disputes, institutional conflict, bureaucratic friction, partisan media attacks, and battles over appointments. Fidesz would be unable to block ordinary legislation by parliamentary vote alone, but it could still challenge the government's legitimacy and slow implementation through institutions and networks built during its time in power.

This scenario would not necessarily mean failure. It could still lead to meaningful reform, especially because Tisza has legal tools that a simple-majority government would lack. However, reform would be uneven and politically costly. The main danger would be reform fatigue: voters may see constant confrontation without quick improvement in public services, living standards, or administrative performance. If that happens, Tisza's broad electoral coalition may begin to weaken even if the government remains institutionally secure.

Scenario 3: Economic disappointment and political backlash



In the final scenario, Tisza wins several institutional battles but fails to deliver rapid material improvement. Hungary faces fiscal pressure, underfunded public services, and exposure to external economic shocks. At the same time, the new government has promised investment in healthcare, education, social services, transport, and business support.

This creates a risk of expectation mismatch. If EU funds remain delayed, public-sector reform is slow, or fiscal consolidation requires unpopular measures, Fidesz could argue that Tisza has produced instability without prosperity. The opposition would not need to prevent all reforms; it would only need to convince enough voters that the costs of the transition outweigh the benefits. Fidesz's remaining media mouthpieces, local networks, and loyal electorate would make this strategy viable.

This scenario could gradually erode Tisza's legitimacy. The danger is not necessarily an immediate return to power for Fidesz, but a political environment in which the new government's supermajority becomes a burden rather than an asset. Because Tisza governs alone and holds exceptional parliamentary power, voters may assign it full responsibility for delays, compromises, and failures.

Indicators to monitor

The most important indicators are the speed of EU fund negotiations, the handling of senior institutional appointments, the legal design of constitutional reforms, the independence of public media reform, the budget strategy, and early measures in healthcare and education. Another key indicator will be Fidesz's opposition strategy: whether it focuses on parliamentary criticism, legal obstruction, street mobilization, or a longer-term effort to rebuild support through local and media networks.

Overall, the central risk is not that Hungary becomes ungovernable, but that reform becomes polarized, legally contested, or economically disappointing. Tisza has the parliamentary tools to dismantle much of the Orbán-era system, but success will depend on avoiding three traps: institutional obstruction, economic underdeliver, and majoritarian overreach.

Concluding Assessment

The 2026 Hungarian elections resulted in Fidesz's historic defeat after 16 years of government. Magyar's pro-European TISZA party, founded less than 6 years ago won with a supermajority of 141/199 seats. TISZA attracted over 3,3 million voters from moderate conservatives, traditional opposition and former Fidesz electors in a record voter turnout.

The present electoral system disproportionately amplified Fidesz decline which collapsed from 135 to 52 seats, as the system was designed to be favorable to the dominant party. Given the supermajority TISZA can govern alone, also with the two-thirds majority needed for constitutional reform. Now, the challenge will be on managing the supermajority mandate to peacefully reconstruct institutions without conducting a partisan purge.

TISZA's program focuses on rule-of-law, anti-corruption, unlocking of frozen EU funds, deficit control (below 3% GDP threshold), investments in healthcare and education, but maintaining strict immigration policies. The success implementation of the agenda lies in the institutional resistance from Fidesz loyalist appointee, high public expectations and fiscal constraints, the fragility of TISZA heterogeneous electoral coalition. The fragility of the government is in its capability of democratic reconstruction of the rule of law, while institutional siege and institutional hardball remain two plausible scenarios, along with uneven reform and misuse of the parliamentary supermajority.

At international level, Magyar is likely to repair ties with both the European Union and Ukraine, distancing from Moscow and recalibrating ties with China.

The significance of Orban's defeat is a clear demonstration to worldwide illiberal governance regimes, they can collapse if they fail to deliver their promises, in Hungary's case: prosperity and functioning public services. This offers a lesson for populism movements globally, especially the United State, which, in November is predicted to experience a very similar outcome.

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Figure 1: Hungary National Assembly; Source: The orange files. Available in <https://theorangefiles.hu/national-assembly-election-system/>

Figure 2: Map of Hungary; Source: GIS Geography. Available in <https://gisgeography.com/hungary-map/>