

The local election in Hungary: a landslide victory for the right-wing

On 3 October candidates of the Fidesz party and their partners, the Christian Democrats, won in the local election in most towns and gained the majority of the vote in provincial parliaments and local councils. The ruling right has a constitutional majority in parliament and has taken over nearly total power also on the local level.

Following this success it can be expected that the government, which has been delaying the announcement of unpopular decisions, will undertake more decisive reform measures. The government has already announced that it will maintain the budget deficit at the level of 3% of GDP. As early as in autumn another package of austerity measures will be presented.

Fidesz politicians will rule in 22 out of the 23 largest towns (a Socialist has held his position as mayor of Segedin). Fidesz will for the first time take over power in Budapest which has up to now been a stronghold of the centre-left. After staying in power for five terms, the Liberal Gabor Demszky will be replaced by Istvan Tarlos from Fidesz as mayor of Budapest. In 19 of the 23 districts of Budapest the mayors will also be representatives of the right. Fidesz (mainly in coalition with the Christian Democratic People's Party) has secured over half of the seats in each of the 19 provincial parliaments and the parliament of Budapest as well as a clearly dominant position in local councils. The ruling right will have 596 local governors with the Socialists able to boast only 49. The Socialists have however maintained the position of the most important force in opposition. The extreme-right party Jobbik, which has gained as much as 17% of the vote in the parliamentary election, will have only three local governors. It overtook the Socialists only in a part of communes in the North-Eastern part of the country. <boc, mag>