

Hungary elections: Fidesz's victory overshadowed by the new opposition's success

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Local and European Parliament (EP) elections were held in Hungary on 9 June. Voter turnout reached a record high of 59%. The Fidesz-KDNP government coalition, which obtained 44.5% of the votes, won 11 out of the 21 seats allocated to Hungary in the EP; the new TISZA opposition party won 7 seats (29.7%), the liberal-left alliance formed by the Democratic Coalition (DK), the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) and the Dialogue party got 2 seats (8.1%), and the far-right Our Homeland Movement won 1 seat (6.8%).

In the local elections, Fidesz secured a majority in the assemblies of all 19 counties. The most intense race was for the position of mayor of Budapest, especially after Fidesz candidate Alexandra Szentkirályi transferred her votes to Dávid Vitézy, who was endorsed by the opposition Hungarian Green Party, just two days before the election. Ultimately, Vitézy lost to the incumbent mayor Gergely Karácsony, who was backed by a broad liberal-left opposition coalition, by a slim margin of just 324 votes. Fidesz, however, will hold 15 out of the 25 mayoral positions in county cities. Compared to the 2019 results, the party has regained control of three cities (Miskolc, Eger and Salgótarján), while the opposition won in two cities previously governed by Fidesz (Győr and Nagykanizsa).

Commentary

- The figure of 44.5% support represents a clear victory for the Fidesz–KDNP coalition over the opposition, but it is also the worst result for Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's party in the history of the European Parliament elections (not since 2004 has Fidesz won less than 50% as an opposition party). Compared to the vote five years ago, the party's support level is almost 8 percentage points lower, and it has lost two seats in the European Parliament. This outcome is particularly disappointing for Fidesz, as their campaign was exceptionally intense and cost several times more than that of the opposition. If the results of the EP elections are treated as a popularity poll ahead of the parliamentary elections in the spring of 2026 (local elections are less indicative in this regard because TISZA did not participate in them to the full extent), Orbán cannot be certain of maintaining his current constitutional majority, and will have to take the opposition more seriously.
- The result achieved by the TISZA party (29.7%) has not been matched by any opposition group in a race against Fidesz for a long time. The European Parliament elections were the first opportunity for TISZA's leader, Péter Magyar, to test his popularity beyond street

rallies. It took him just a few months to achieve this result, which makes his success even significant. At the beginning of the year Magyar was still linked to Fidesz, but since then he has not only emerged as a leader of the protest movement against Orbán but also as a critic of the existing opposition (see [The 'Rise up, Hungarians' movement: a new challenge to Fidesz's domination](#)). However, if he wants to win in 2026, he will need to not only capitalise on his present success but also build up the party's structures and refine his political agenda.

- The biggest losers of the election are the 'old' opposition parties, especially the DK-MSZP-Dialogue coalition and the centrist Momentum Movement, which suffered the most in the race against Magyar to be seen as the 'new' opposition. Despite being a newcomer to the political scene, he achieved a result comparable to that of the six-party opposition coalition in the 2022 parliamentary elections. This development is likely to lead to reshuffles within the existing opposition, shift the focus of the Fidesz's narrative to this new rival, and may bring an end to the two-decade-long rivalry between Orbán and former Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, who is still a major player in the opposition.