

Elections in Hungary: the triumph of Péter Magyar

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The parliamentary elections on 12 April produced a landmark result, granting the opposition a constitutional majority and bringing to an end Viktor Orbán's 16-year rule. Based on 98.9% of the votes counted so far, the TISZA party secured a landslide victory with 53% of the vote, while the Fidesz-KDNP coalition received 38%. Owing to an electoral system that rewards the winning party, Péter Magyar's party secured 138 seats – a constitutional majority – in the 199-member unicameral parliament, while the Fidesz-KDNP coalition won 55 seats. Among the remaining parties, only the far-right party Our Homeland crossed the 5% electoral threshold, securing six seats. Turnout reached a record 79.5% shortly before polling stations closed. After the preliminary results were announced, Orbán congratulated Magyar on his victory. The TISZA leader, for his part, emphasised the historic significance of his party's electoral success, expressed confidence in his ability to deliver the systemic reforms he had promised, and indicated that the country would return to a pro-European policy. He also called on President Tamás Sulyok to task him with forming a government and subsequently to resign from office.

Securing a two-thirds majority in parliament opens the way for TISZA to carry out a comprehensive and lawful overhaul of the institutional system established by Fidesz. Beyond a change in government, this entails a fundamental shift in the model of the state itself, to be achieved by dismantling elements of the illiberal system, notably through amendments to the constitution and the so-called cardinal laws. In foreign policy, TISZA has pledged to 'pivot to the West' and to rebuild the country's relations with the EU and NATO.

Commentary

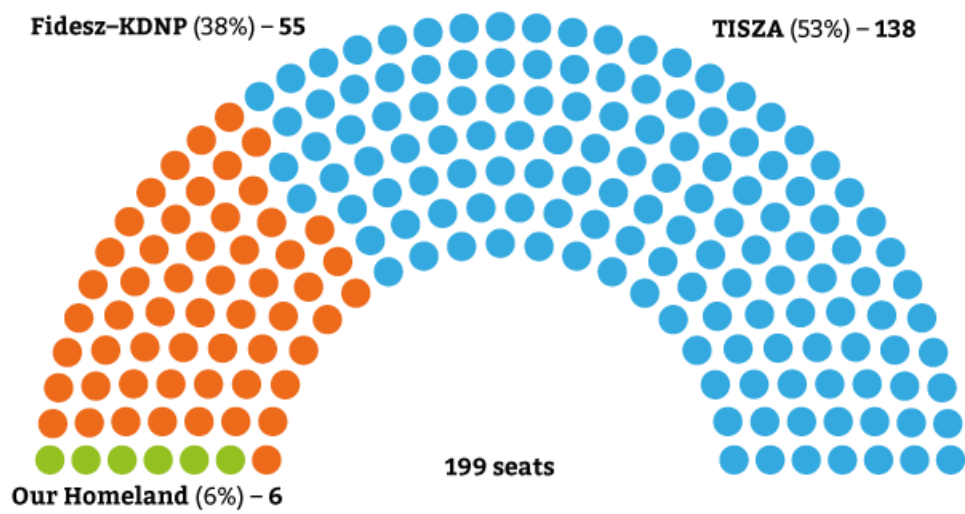
- **The vote was effectively a plebiscite and a clear expression of opposition to Orbán's entrenched system of power.** The scale of TISZA's victory – unprecedented since the country's political transition – has granted the new party a strong public mandate. The record turnout has undermined the long-held assumption that high mobilisation favours Fidesz. Available data indicate that the largest increases in participation occurred in constituencies where Magyar's party was expected to have an advantage. This suggests that TISZA has effectively mobilised new voter groups, including previously inactive voters and those disillusioned with the existing opposition.
- **TISZA's victory opens the way for a profound restructuring of the model of the state, extending beyond a conventional change of government.** Magyar's statements indicate that the new majority will seek to dismantle key elements of the system created by Fidesz, both at the institutional and symbolic levels. Priorities are expected to include

restoring rule-of-law standards, increasing transparency in public life, and ensuring accountability for abuses by the previous administration, alongside the implementation of a broad fiscal and social agenda. At the same time, the scope and nature of the proposed reforms – covering constitutional change, de-oligarchisation, restoring media pluralism, and opening pre-1989 security service archives – mean that the first months of the new government will be a period of intense political confrontation and a test of TISZA's ability to deliver lasting systemic change. The party's ambitious agenda will face additional challenges, including strained public finances and the limited political experience of Magyar's support base.

- **Fidesz's crushing defeat marks the party's most serious crisis since it lost power after Orbán's first term in 2002.** TISZA's decisive victory limits the scope for challenging the election result or obstructing the transfer of power during the 30-day period before the new parliament convenes. The loss of its majority and institutional backing will reduce the Orbán camp's ability to shape the political agenda, although it will retain significant resources, including extensive local structures, a loyal voter base, and influence in parts of the media and certain sectors of the economy. The scale of the defeat suggests that a swift return of Fidesz to power is unlikely, although a recovery in support cannot be ruled out should the TISZA government encounter difficulties in implementing its programme.
- **The change of government signals a normalisation of Hungary's relations with EU institutions.** The new government, whose priority will be to unlock approximately €18 billion in frozen EU funds from the Cohesion Fund and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, has declared its intention to restore rule-of-law standards and tackle corruption. Hungary is likely to abandon its previous confrontational strategy, including the practice of blocking key decisions relating to support for Ukraine. Magyar has pledged to reduce Hungary's dependence on Russia in the field of energy policy and to restore the country's constructive role within the EU and NATO. One priority will be to rebuild cooperation within the Visegrád Group; the new prime minister is expected to travel to Warsaw for his first foreign visit, followed by visits to Vienna and Brussels.

TISZA opposition party has secured a two-thirds constitutional majority

Distribution of seats in the Hungarian parliament following the 12 April 2026 elections



Source: Nemzeti Választási Iroda, vtr.valasztas.hu/ogy2026.