

# The Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) led by outgoing Prime Minister Viktor Orban set to win the general elections in Hungary

On 18th January last Hungarian President Janos Ader announced that the next general elections would take place on 6th April, the first convenient date available to the authorities for the organisation of the election. The Alliance of Young Democrats–Civic Union (FIDESZ-MPP) in office wanted the electoral campaign to be as short as possible. The latter, which officially started on 15th February, will last fifty days in comparison with 90 in 2010.

The elections will take place according to a new voting method, since the government led by Viktor Orban (FIDESZ) modified the old electoral law on 26th November 2012. This measure was taken to simplify a system that was one of the most complicated in the world and brings the number of MPs down to a level that is comparable with most other countries similar in size to Hungary. On 6th April the Hungarians will be appointing 199 MPs (in comparison with the present 386) according to a mixed voting method: 106 will be elected on a single list within constituencies (these have also been re-drafted) and 93 by a proportional vote. Voters will have two voting slips, one to vote for a party, the other in support of a candidate. According to the new method the votes which fail to win seats for a party as well as the votes taken by the party which wins the seat and are beyond the electoral threshold will be redistributed according to the d'Hondt method. The vote transfer system is to the advantage of the party which comes out ahead, unlike the previous system. The second round of voting has been abolished likewise the minimal electoral rate of 50% turnout for the election to be declared valid.

With this voting system FIDESZ would have won the elections in 2002 and 2006 – two defeats which the party has never really come to terms with. Political analysts have criticised the new method. According to Robert Laszlo of the think tank Political Capital, with this system FIDESZ can now win the 2/3 majority in parliament with only half of the proportional votes. However the left-wing opposition will need 6% more

votes than Viktor Orban's party to win the simple majority in the Orszaggyules, the only chamber in Parliament. Gabor Toka, professor at the University of Central Europe believes that with the same number of votes the left would win 8% seats less than FIDESZ.

All of the polls forecast a victory for FIDESZ on 6th April. In spite of a great deal of criticism the party remains popular. It seems all the stronger since it will be facing a fragmented opposition, which although rallying together recently, remains divided over its ideological direction. The only real issue is will Prime Minister Viktor Orban's party retain its 2/3 majority in Parliament?

## Four years of Orban in office

### A political overview

Many European political analysts qualify the regime established by V. Orban as "authoritarian" and "regressive". The Prime Minister always said that he wanted to undertake an "electoral revolution" in his country.

Since the start of the 2000's and notably since his defeat in the general elections on 7th and 20th April 2002 Viktor Orban has transformed FIDESZ from its original liberal structure, comprising young executives and entrepreneurs, into a party that stands as a defender of those who have been forgotten by society. Amongst the first measures he adopted after his

return to power in the wake of the elections on 11th and 25th April 2010 was the commemoration of 4th June, the anniversary of the signature of the Trianon Treaty (when Hungary lost 67% of its territory and 57% of its population), he also introduced national unity day and facilitated the procedure for the acquisition of the Hungarian nationality by minorities in neighbouring countries.

Around 550,000 people of Hungarian origin living most often in Hungary's neighbouring countries have acquired the nationality over the last term in office thanks to the law approved in 2011. Having Hungarian forbearers and (basic) knowledge of Hungarian are the two conditions necessary to apply for Hungarian nationality.

"The turbulence of the 20th century has dispersed Hungarians across the entire world. We believe that they are all members of our national where ever they live," maintains Viktor Orban, who organised a ceremony in Parliament to celebrate the 500,000th person (a Franciscan monk living in Romania) to take advantage of the new procedure. These new Hungarians are also new voters; but they will only be allowed to vote in the proportional part of the election.

The desire to break from the Communist legacy is another cornerstone of Viktor Orban's work. Qualified a populist, the Prime Minister owes much of his success to the weakness of the opposition, which is unable to offer a political alternative. "Yes, I am a populist if populist means telling people – I am there to improve life or like Abraham Lincoln – wanting to govern by the people for the people," says Orban.

Gaspar Miklos Tamas, a philosopher stresses that the Hungarian Prime Minister is not a totalitarian leader but that he is aware of the historical proximity between right and far right in Hungary. "The bourgeoisie which supports him has no prejudice against the far right," he explains. "Historically there is a great deal of permeability between the Hungarian right and the far-right," Gabor Filippov, a researcher for the think tank Magyar progressziv.

The FIDESZ has pushed through a new Constitution which has overturned the foundations of the State. Viktor Orban has justified its adoption maintaining that Hungary was the only country in Central and Eastern Europe to have adopted a new Constitution after the fall of the Communist regime in 1989. It dated back to 1949 and had been amended on several occasions since the end of the 1980's. Around

30 cardinal laws and 300 ordinary laws were adopted by parliament.

Isten, add meg a magyart (God Bless the Hungarian), the first verse of the national anthem (Himnusz) is now included in the Constitution in which a religious reference is a novelty. The word 'republic' has been removed and the country is now simply called Hungary.

The Constitution makes the forint the national tender – one way for Viktor Orban to move away from Budapest's ulterior adoption of the euro. In effect any modification to the Constitution must be approved by a majority rallying at least 2/3 of the MPs. The golden rule (a limit of 50% of the country's public deficit) was included in the Constitution. A cardinal law – the so-called financial stability law sets the income tax rate (16%) and retirement pensions. This text requires the agreement of 2/3 of the MPs to be modified.

The new Constitution was adopted by parliament on 18th April 2011 and entered into force on January 1st 2012. The European Union and the Council of Europe protested against several of its clauses. As a result the fundamental law has been modified five times since its adoption, the most recent being on 16th September 2013.

With this modification the Constitution and the change in the electoral law FIDESZ has given itself the means to stay in power. Any future majority which does not have 2/3 of the seats in Parliament will have extremely limited power.

The measures taken by Viktor Orban's government have accentuated the polarisation of political life. Hence during the last commemoration of 23rd October 1956 (1956-os forradalom), the day which heralded the country's revolt against the Communist authorities (which ended on 10th November 1956) and which is national day, the opposition demonstrated in the South of Budapest on the banks of Danube in front of the technical university buildings where the revolt against the Soviet forces started 58 years ago. The government organised a March for Peace which ended in Hero Square in central Budapest, where Viktor Orban became famous in 1989 as he delivered a speech against the communist regime.

### Economic Results

During his term in office Viktor Orban has campaigned to revive the role of the State which in his opinion has to take

control of the economy, away from the bankers and the market. Accusing the socialists of having over-privatised the economy between 2002-2010 he introduced exceptional taxes on multinational companies and businesses in economic sectors which have a great deal of foreign investment (energy, telecommunications, finances and mass consumption), taxes that have halved the profits of these companies; he has raised the State's share in the capital of several companies whose management he has more often than not granted to his entourage. "We Hungarians are our own bosses and we do not want others to say how we should take care of our business," repeats Viktor Orban, who stands as the arch-opponent of capitalist excesses, a discourse that is greatly appreciated by a majority of the population.

The Prime Minister has renegotiated the rates of reimbursement of the country's loans with the banks. Hungary is affected by two problems: the first is a high rate of State debt and a high business and private (currency) debt (50% and 60% respectively). Viktor Orban has nationalised the private pension funds that the socialists introduced. "We have revamped the retirement system, taken money from the stock exchange and we are reducing energy tariffs for private parties and we are taxing the banks," indicates Viktor Orban.

Just as the agreement signed between the previous government and the IMF was criticised by Viktor Orban in his electoral campaign in 2010, the Prime Minister did in fact have to do a u-turn in November 2011 when he was forced to ask for assistance from the IMF and the EU again because Budapest was unable to refinance its debt on the financial markets.

Finally the head of government has managed to gain the support of his fellow countrymen by increasing teachers' and healthcare workers' salaries, by reducing taxes on the most vulnerable families with children and by reducing public transport costs and especially by reducing energy prices, a sector that represents 30% of household spending. In January 2013 they were reduced by 10% and again by 10% in November. The government announced a further reduction in gas (- 6.50%) and electricity prices (- 5.70%) for September 1st. Urban heating prices will be reduced by 3.3% in October.

Hungary emerged from recession at the beginning of 2013. Its exports started rising again, notably thanks to the car industry. After a 1.7% contraction in 2012, growth is due to

rise to 0.3% in 2013 and 1.7% this year. Inflation is at its lowest level since 1974 (0.4%). In 2012, it was the highest rate in the European Union (5.70%). Hungary is one of the eight Member States whose budgetary deficit is below 3% of the GDP as demanded by the growth and stability Pact.

"Thanks to a favourable European economy the government can promote economic growth even if most of the population is still not feeling the benefits," indicated Robert Laszlo.

VAT at 27% is the highest in the EU; investments (-25% for foreign investments) likewise production are declining. The government has introduced measures to stimulate domestic consumption.

Finally the debt totals 79% of the GDP and unemployment totals 98.3% i.e. the lowest rate recorded in five years and around 2 points below the April 2010 figure (11.1%). The head of government who is against "a nanny state" has abolished many social benefits and reduced unemployment compensation (benefits totalling 30% of the minimum salary are now paid for three months only against a previous 9).

"We should win the last battle – that of economic independence," declared Viktor Orban who has said that he will increase bank taxes (which are already the highest in Europe) and financial transaction taxes, likewise taxes imposed on energy suppliers if the budgetary deficit rises over the 3% allowed by the growth and stability pact.

If he stays in power after the general election on 6th April next the Prime Minister – re-elected at the leader of FIDESZ by a unanimous vote (1240 votes out of 1241) – will probably continue his interventionist economic policy.

### **A fragmented left and yet forced to unite**

"The 2014 elections will be very easy for FIDESZ and extremely difficult for the opposition," declared Csaba Toth of Republikon. In the face of a strong, united right the left-wing comprising four parties are indeed fragmented. The Socialist Party (MSZP), the legatee of the Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) of Communist Hungary, led by Attila Mesterhazy, has 48 MPs. Együtt (Together) 2014 (E-2014), led by former Prime Minister (2009-2010) Gordon Bajnai, was created by three organisations from civil society – Patriotism and Progress, (Haza es haladas); Milla (A million for the freedom of the Press in Hungary), and Szolildaritas, a union movement. Dialogue for Hungary (PM), an ecologist party

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led by Benedek Javor and Tímea Szabó founded in February 2013 (8 MPs) has also joined Együtt 2014. The movement took the name Together-Dialogue for Hungary 2014 (E-PM 2014). Finally the Democratic Coalition (DK), a centre left party which was created after scission from the Socialist Party in 2011 is led by former Prime Minister (2004-2009) Ferenc Gyurcsány, and has 10 seats in parliament.

The left would like to rally votes beyond its own camp and notably attract voters from the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZPS), a liberal party that was dissolved after the previous elections in 2010. Their former leader (2008-2009) and former Education Minister (1994-1995) Gábor Fodor, who is the leader of the Liberal Party, would then feature 4th on the left's list. Another former chairman of the Liberal Alliance (1997-1998) and former Interior Minister, Gábor Kunce, will be running for the Democratic Coalition.

The change made to the electoral law which strengthens the majority aspect of the vote to the detriment of proportional representation, means that the opposition had no other choice but to stand together before the electorate. The socialists and members of Együtt 2014 signed an agreement in view of the election last August. The Democratic Coalition which remained on the side-lines of this agreement finally joined the alliance on 14th January. The socialists will be putting forward candidates in 71 constituencies, Együtt 2014 in 21 and the Democratic Coalition in 13.

The united opposition forces under the name Alliance for Unity (Összefogás) are being led by the Socialist leader Attila Mesterházy, the left's candidate for the post of Prime Minister.

Political expert Gábor Török, believes that the left's union against Viktor Orbán is the start of a new phase in which "opponents will finally focus their attacks on the government rather than fighting each other." In his opinion the opposition absolutely has to focus on fighting corruption and the defence of democracy by pointing to the infringements made by Viktor Orbán's government against the institutions.

"Voters now know for whom to vote if they want to change government (...) the country has really changed in four years ... for the worse. On 6th April we shall have to choose between the past – the restoration of the Miklós Horthy period (who governed Hungary between 1920 and 1944 and allied to Nazi Germany) or a modern, European, free, fair republic," indicated Attila Mesterházy. He qualifies the policy undertaken by FIDESZ as "democratically unacceptable, economically irresponsible and socially damaging." "The

only chance for the opposition to win is to turn the general elections into a referendum on the Prime Minister, and not just on the government and the measures taken by FIDESZ," maintains Gordon Bajnai.

The opposition is counting on the population's exasperation over unemployment and the unpredictability of the policy undertaken by Viktor Orbán –which in its opinion is impeding growth and scaring off potential investors. For the left Hungary must recover the rule of law, improve its relations with the EU and end the government, which offers businesses to its friends. It has chosen "United for Freedom" as its battle cry.

The opposition is offering a "New Deal" i.e. a reduction in taxes to stimulate investments. Gordon Bajnai does not support a flat income tax rate at 16%, which, in his opinion favours the people with the highest revenues and pauperises the middle class. He maintains that his party, if it enters office, will adopt a fairer fiscal regime. "Our system would grant 8000 to 10,000 forints (28 to 34€) more to people who get the minimum wage," he indicated. Ferenc Gyurcsány stressed that the left would bring income tax up to 30% on salaries over 500,000 forints (i.e. 1600 €) monthly.

Gordon Bajnai is proposing that the State guarantees a job to all young people under 30 who have been unemployed for more than six months and that it grants new subsidies to entrepreneurs under 35 who promise to stay in Hungary. The left has made the return of emigrés one of the central points in its programme.

Around 500,000 Hungarians i.e. 5% of the population live abroad of whom 300,000 are in the UK, 100,000 in Germany and 50,000 in Austria. According to a survey by the pollster Tarki half of the people under 30 year olds and one third of those aged between 31 and 40 would also like to leave the country. Whilst unlike its neighbours Hungary did not experience waves of emigration, the economic crisis of 2008 has led thousands of Hungarians to leave their country. In 2011 the government created a programme entitled "Return Home" to facilitate the return of Hungarian families. "Viktor Orbán has overturned the system of checks and balances that are designed to protect the people from the excesses of power. The Prime Minister defends his friends against the people highlights Socialist leader Attila Mesterházy. The elections will be free but they will not be fair," maintains Gordon Bajnai.

The left wing is hoping to attract the abstentionists and the

undecided, but although the latter are decreasing in number as we draw close to the election date, it does not seem to be to the opposition's advantage. The left is struggling to convince, notably the youngest or those disappointed by FIDESZ.

It is not easy to attract the electorate with candidates from a previous government, notably Ferenc Gyurcsany, an experienced politician and appreciated by some voters on the left but extremely unpopular with a major share of the Hungarian electorate for whom he is a symbol of failure. His presence amongst the lead candidates on the left for 6th April is deemed by some as a sign of the left's failure to renew its ranks. FIDESZ members are not mistaken when they call the coalition formed by the leftwing the "Ferenc Gyurcsany Coalition."

Ecologist and liberal, Alternative Politics (Lehet Más a Politika, LMP), led by Andras Schiffer and Bernadett Szel, has chosen to go it alone on 6th April. "The left coalition should be called "Together 2006" because in it we find all of those who governed the country between 2002 and 2010," says Andras Schiffer ironically – maintaining that "Alternative Politics is the only hope for those who wanted a change in government in 2010 and still want it." This party is campaigning on the fight to counter corruption and the enrichment of politicians. It was revealed that Gabor Simon, the Vice-President of the Socialist Party had placed 240 million forints on a bank account in Austria. Simon who says that this money came from the sale of businesses and property, has been suspended from the party since.

Alternative politics is fighting for transparency of political life and is asking for more archives from the Communist time in Hungary to be opened. However a victim of many defections over the last few months, the party might not now achieve the 5% voting threshold required to be represented in Parliament.

### What about the far right?

The Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) made a real break-through in the April 2010 election winning 16.67% of the vote and 43 seats in Parliament. The far right which is deemed to be fascist and openly anti-Semitic and anti-Roma (Hungary has 600,000 Roma – i.e. 7% of the population) – an accusation which is denied by the party – Jobbik is on the quest for respectability and is trying to reposition itself. The

party is popular amongst young people, notably high school children. During the 2010 election 23% of the people under 30 years old voted for it. It has chosen to position itself as the defender of the weakest (children, the elderly and women). Against a flat rate tax and any further privatisation, the party advocates the idea of a 5% tax rate on basic products and is promising to reduce taxes on families with more than two children.

Nationalistic it is demanding the return of Greater Hungary – ie the re-establishment of the country within its pre-1920 Trianon Treaty borders. Its leader Gabor Vona, says he supports a census by the government of Hungarian citizens of Jewish religion or origin – notably amongst MPs, who according to MP Marton Gyöngyösi, are "a danger to national security". The Jewish community of Hungary comprises around 120,000 people. Jobbik would like to group criminals together in a "crime zone" in which the latter would be placed under permanent police surveillance. It is asking for a referendum on Budapest's membership of the EU, qualified as a "colonial empire". In Jobbik's opinion Hungary lost a great deal by entering the Union: its agriculture and its industry have declined and jobs have been destroyed; however it is not requesting official withdrawal from the EU. Set in the tradition of the Hungarian far right Jobbik admires Vladimir Putin's Russia.

### The Political System

In virtue of the electoral law of 26th November 2012 the Parliament will comprise 199 MPs elected for four years in a mixed election in 106 constituencies (the number of which has been reduced by 70). 106 MPs will be elected from a single list and 93 proportionally.

To be able to sit in Parliament a party has to win a minimum of 5% of the votes cast. The minimum number of signatures to be collated from the electorate by a party which wants to stand in general elections has been increased to 1000. Within the single list constituencies candidates can be put forward either by political parties or by the citizens.

The government also modified the rules governing electoral advertising. Parties can broadcast on private TV channels if the latter agree to give them free air time but if they choose to do it they must grant the same time to all of the lists standing. Clearly commercial channels are not interested in this measure and have already said they will grant no time to

any of the parties. Likewise no TV debate between candidates for the post of Prime Minister will be organised.

7 seven political parties are represented in parliament at present:

- the Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union (FIDESZ-MPP), created on March 1988 and led by outgoing Prime Minister Viktor Orban, has 226 MPs ;
- the Socialist Party (MSZP) founded in 1989 chaired by Attila Mesterhazy, has 48 seats;
- the Movement for a Better Hungaryie (Jobbik

Magyarorszagert Mozgalom, Jobbik), created in October 2003, led by Gabor Vona, has 43 MPs;

- the People's Christian Democratic Party (KDNP), led by Zsolt Semjen, with 37 seats;
- the Democratic Coalition (DK), of former Prime Minister (2004-2009) Ferenc Gyurcsany, has 10 seats;
- Dialogue for Hungary (PM), created in February 2013, led by Benedek Javor and Timea Szabo, has 8 seats;
- Alternative Politics (LMP), founded in 2009, led by Andras Schiffer and Bernadett Szel, has 7 seats.

**Reminder of the general election results on 11th April 2010 in Hungary**

Turnout: 64.37%

Political Parties	No of votes won	% of votes won	No. of seats won
<b>Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union (FIDESZ-MPP)</b>	5 433 184	52.73	206
<b>Socialist Party (MSZP)</b>	2 076 706	19.30	28
<b>A Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik)</b>	1 690 586	16.67	26
<b>Alternative politics (LMP)</b>	641 069	7.47	5
<b>Others</b>	393 427	4	0

Source :(<http://www.valasztas.hu/dyn/pv10/outroot/vdin1/en/l50.htm>)

According to the latest poll by Nezőpont, 2/3 of the electorate say they are going to take part in the election. Most say they support FIDESZ which is due to win 37% of the vote whilst the left is due to win 18% – a result that would be down by 6 points in comparison with the previous poll notably due to the scandal caused by the revelation of investments made

by the former Vice-President of the Socialist Party, Gabor Simon. The left-wing opposition is not deemed to be very credible by most Hungarians. Jobbik is due to come third with 12% of the vote and Alternative Politics may not even reach the 5% threshold (3%). Just one month before the election many voters are still undecided about how to vote.

# Unsurprisingly outgoing Prime Minister Viktor Orban wins the general election in Hungary

As expected the Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union (FIDESZ-MPP) won the general elections on 6th April 2014 in Hungary. It won 44.54% of the vote (result of the proportional vote alone), ahead of the Alliance for a Change in Government, formed by four left wing parties which took 25.99% of the vote. The Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarorszagert Mozgalom), a far right party led by Gabor Vona won 20.54% of the vote. Finally Politics can be Different (LMP), an ecologist liberal party led by Andras Schiffer and Bernadett Szel will be represented in the *Orszaggyules*, the only chamber in parliament, since it won 5.26% of the vote.

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## Results

The general election on 6th April was the first to take place under the new electoral law approved on 26th November 2012 by Viktor Orban's government. The system of transferring votes in the new voting method favours the party that won. "With this new electoral system FIDESZ can now win the 2/3 majority of MPs in parliament simply with half of the votes cast in the proportional system," stressed Robert Laszlo of the *think tank* Political Capital.

Similarly, for the first time ever, around 250,000 people of Hungarian descent, who most often live in Hungary's neighbouring countries and who acquired nationality during the last legislature, thanks to a bill approved in 2011, (in all 550,000 people have become Hungarian over the last

nine years), were allowed vote (in the proportional vote). The authorities in office also encouraged "small" parties to take part in the election: hence 18 parties were running in comparison with only 6 in 2010.

Turnout was slightly below that recorded in the previous election on 11th April 2010: it totalled 60.2% ie -4.17 points less.

The only issue at stake in this election was not knowing who would win, but the extent of his victory. Would FIDESZ retain its 2/3 majority in Parliament? That was the question. Viktor Orban seems to have won his wager since he won 133 seats according to the most recent results.

## Results of the general elections on 6th April 2014 in Hungary (proportional election)

Turnout: 60.2%

Political Parties	No of votes won	% of votes won	No. of seats won
Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union (FIDESZ-MPP)	2 135 961	44.54	133
Alliance for a Change of Government (Socialist Party (MSZP), Együtt (Together)-Dialogue for Hungary 2014 (E-PM 2014), Democratic Coalition (DK))	1 246 465	25.99	38
Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarorszagert Mozgalom, Jobbik)	985 029	20.54	23
Politics Can be Different (LMP)	252 373	5.26	5
Others	195 131	3.67	0

Source : [http://www.valasztas.hu/en/ogyv2014/416/416\\_0\\_index.html](http://www.valasztas.hu/en/ogyv2014/416/416_0_index.html)

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"We can quite safely say we have won," declared the outgoing Prime Minister who rejoiced saying that Hungary was the "most united country in the world". "Let us show them that we are strong and united. Let us show them that we are not trying to please anyone but that we are masters of our future," stressed Viktor Orban during the electoral campaign. "We have transformed and renovated Hungary, we have turned an old clapped out banger into a racing car," he said. His motto was "Hungary is doing better."

The outgoing Prime Minister campaigned with the support of his economic results. In 2009 Hungary was about to default and the government had to call on the IMF and the EU which advocated radical measures: structural reform, privatisation, spending cuts. The rise to power of FIDESZ led to a radical change. Viktor Orban's economic policy mixes liberal measures (rise of VAT from 24% to 27%) – the highest in the EU – reductions in social aid and unemployment benefits and a state led policy (taxing of banks and multinationals, the nationalisation of pension funds, revival of domestic demand, reduction of energy tariffs – which represent 30% of Hungarian household spending) and also a great deal of political clientelism.

Four years on unemployment lies at 8.6% ie the lowest rate in five years; public deficit is below 3% as demanded by the EU's Stability and Growth Pact and debt is declining (it dropped from 82% to 80% of the GDP but is still the highest in Central Europe). The ratings agency Standard & Poors revised the sovereign debt prospects upwards because of "more balanced risks". Investments are still low (16% of the GDP) and the average available income per capita is still amongst the lowest in the OECD countries.

50 year-old Orban, who comes from Szekesfehervar, a town on the north-eastern shores of Lake Balaton, is a graduate in law. On 30th March 1988 he was one of the founder members of the Alliance of Young Democrats. In 1990 he was elected MP; in 1993 he took over the party's chair. In 1998 aged 35, he became the young Prime Minister in Europe before losing to the left opposition in the general elections four years later on 7th and 20th April 2002. This was a defeat that Viktor Orban never really accepted. He took his revenge in 2010 when he became head of government once more – a post he would retain for the next four years.

"Viktor Orban is a leader who has managed to inspire personal attachment. For the core of his electorate he is not

just a political, but also a spiritual, charismatic and ideological leader. Alongside this the adoption of a text planning for a 6.5% reduction in gas bills, 5.7% less on electricity bills and 3.3% less on heating bills found wide echo amongst the voters," indicated Peter Kreko, Director of the think tank Political Capital. "Criticism of him has strengthened the image amongst his supporters of a leader who is at the service of freedom, who is prepared to fight unrelentingly for national sovereignty in the face of Western, multinational and banking interference. With each external attack he has been able to develop his discourse to the full regarding the need to fight to protect independence against foreign interference," he added.

Hungarians have given their Prime Minister 'four more years' as he had requested, so that he can "forge Hungary's future" "He is a politician with a certain charisma who knows how to talk to the crowds, attract people and he has the gift of fascinating others. He is appreciated in a country that misses its former influence, its pre-First World War influence – which was dominated by major powers on several occasions – hence its stance as a victim – its rebellious attitude, notably vis-à-vis the European Union," declared Antonela Capelle-Pogacean, researcher at CERI Sciences Po.

Although FIDESZ does not satisfy all of the Hungarians the opposition is now almost non-existent. Whilst the change to the electoral law has strengthened the majority aspect of the vote to the detriment of proportional representation, the left wing is extremely divided. The Alliance for a Change in Government, which wanted the election to be a referendum on the Prime Minister and whose programme mainly comprised getting rid of Viktor Orban, came together rather late in the day and with great difficulty because of the divergence between its various members. The socialist leader and left wing candidate for Prime Minister Attila Mesterhazy, promised during the electoral campaign to increase the minimum salary and reduce prices of essential commodities if he won the election. This did not convince his fellow countrymen and was not enough to attract the abstentionists and those who did not know who to vote for. Nor did it convince those who have been disappointed by FIDESZ. "We are not denying it – defeat was terrible and it is a great disappointment for those who wanted to change government," declared the former Prime Minister (2009-2010) Gordon Bajnai.

Many of those unhappy with the Orban system and notably the youngest turned to the Movement for a Better Hungary. The far right movement deemed to be fascist, openly anti-Semitic and anti-Roma (Hungary has a population of 600,000 Roma, ie 7% of the population) decided to reposition over the last few months and become more respectable. *"They decided about a year ago to reshape their image far from extremism so that they could survive and progress,"* indicated Kristof Domina, Chairman of the Institute Athena, an observatory of extremist movements in Europe. The work seems to have paid off for the Movement for a Better Hungary which rose beyond the 20% mark in votes on 6th April.

During the previous term in office Viktor Orban placed those loyal to him at the head of the public institutions that could potentially counter his authority (Constitutional Court, Auditors Court, General Prosecutor, Media Authority, Central Bank, Competition Office etc ...). *"During the term in office we saw a legislative frenzy with the approval of 859 bills – which enabled Viktor Orban to centralise all of the State structures, strengthen government's roles and to redefine the balance of power,"* indicated Antonela Capelle-Pogacean. With this electoral victory on 6th April the outgoing Prime Minister now holds all the levers of power. *"Viktor Orban holds the greatest number of powers since the communist period,"* stressed Gabor Filippov, a political analyst for the Magyar Progressziv Intezet Institute.

For the first time since the collapse of communism in 1989 a right wing party is in a position and will hold power for a second consecutive mandate.

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