

Viktor Orban wins for the fourth time in a row in Hungary's general elections

The Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union (FIDESZ-MPSZ), the party of outgoing Prime Minister Viktor Orban, won a large victory in the general elections held on 3 April in Hungary. The party won 53.0% of the vote and 135 seats (+2 compared to the previous elections of 8 April 2018). United for Hungary (UH), an alliance of 6 opposition parties - the Socialist Party (MSZP), the Democratic Coalition (DK), the Party of Dialogue (PM), Doing Politics Differently-Green Party (LMP), Momentum and the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) - led by Peter Marki-Zay, won 35.04% of the vote and 56 seats (-10). Voters disapproved the latest polls that predicted a close battle between the outgoing Prime Minister and the opposition. Viktor Orban can even pride himself on having retained his two-thirds majority in parliament, which allows him to amend the Constitution. Our Homeland (MHM), the party of Laszlo Toroczkai, which openly presents itself as a homophobic, anti-Gypsy and anti-Semitic party, created in 2018, against the will of Gabor

Vona, at the time leader of the Movement for a Better Hungary, to normalise and refocus its politics, enters the Orszaggyules, the single chamber of parliament, with 6.17% of the vote and 7 elected members. The party campaigned against what it called the "Covid dictatorship".

Turnout was almost equivalent to that recorded in the 2018 elections: 68.7% (+ 1.14 points).

It should be noted that the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) had sent an exceptional mission of 200 observers for this election on 3 April. Before that, only Bulgaria had hosted such a mission for the elections of 12 May 2013. The OSCE described the 2014 and 2018 elections as "free but not fair" and said that the 2018 elections were "characterised by a massive intermingling of state and ruling party resources, which undermined the ability of rivals to compete on an equal footing".

Results of the general elections of 3 April 2022 in Hungary

Turnout: 68.7%

Political Parties	Proportional Voting			Single List Voting	Total
	No. of votes won	Votes cast (%)	Seats	Seats	Seats
Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union (FIDESZ-MPSZ)	2 735 018	53,10	47	88	135
United for Hungary (EM)	1 804 740	35,04	38	18	56
Our Homeland (MHM)	317 897	6,17	7	0	7
Others			0	0	0

Source : <https://vtr.valasztas.hu/ogy2022>

General elections in Hungary

3rd April 2022

"We won because we have a common passion for what is called Hungary (...) We won a victory so large that it can even be seen from the moon, and certainly from Brussels! "We have defended Hungary's sovereignty and freedom," said the man who claims to be Hungary's protector. "The war broke out and the war has changed everything," analysed the head of the outgoing government. The Hungarians have indeed voted for his cautious position in the Ukrainian conflict. Viktor Orban, who is close to Russian President Vladimir Putin, wanted to take a neutral position during the Russian invasion of Ukraine. While Hungary has welcomed refugees, it refuses to send military aid to Kyiv and has banned the transfer of lethal weapons through its territory.

Viktor Orban was undoubtedly helped by opposition leader Peter Marki-Zay, who said on television that he respected the decisions that NATO would take, including if troops were to be sent to Ukraine. "If NATO asked, we would send weapons and soldiers to Ukraine," he awkwardly said. Viktor Orban was at liberty to repeat afterwards: "The left wants to offer people blood instead of oil. Choosing the left means choosing war. We want peace. With us, Hungary will stay out of the conflict", adding "There is no doubt that if the Left wins, the next day the arms shipments will start".

As soon as Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February, Peter Marki-Zay denounced the isolation of Viktor Orban, whom he described as "the last ally of Vladimir Putin within the European Union and NATO". "The choice has never been so simple. It is Europe's choice, not the East's (Russia and China). Voting for Viktor Orban is choosing Vladimir Putin. Voting for me is choosing Europe," the opposition leader repeated.

"The choice between "East and West", which the opposition wanted to highlight as the main issue of the election, is less powerful in public opinion than the choice proposed by FIDESZ between "war and peace", said political scientist Robert Laszlo. "The government succeeded in limiting the issue of the Russian invasion of Ukraine to a very simple

question: should Hungary take part in the war or not? This message was much more effective than that of the opposition, which focused its criticism on Viktor Orban's links with the Kremlin," said Bulcsu Hunyadi, a political scientist at the Political Capital research institute.

The Hungarians have validated Viktor Orban's policy, which combines social redistribution and conservatism, while claiming to ensure the country's stability. On 12 February, the outgoing Prime Minister announced that the price ceiling on fuel and basic foodstuffs, which was due to expire on 21 February, would be extended for three months, i.e. beyond the 3 April elections. At the beginning of the year, the government had already decided to increase the minimum wage by 19.5% (to 200,000 forints, i.e. €360 net), to exempt young workers under the age of 25 from income tax, to pay a bonus equivalent to six months' salary to the military and the police, and to increase the salaries of all employees, a 20% increase in the salaries of nurses and social workers and a €1.7 billion tax rebate for families, the restoration of a thirteenth month's pension payment for pensioners and, above all, the reimbursement of income tax paid in 2021 to all families raising children (within the limit of the tax on the average salary). The outgoing Prime Minister always claimed that his only objective was that every Hungarian should benefit from the transition, for which the population owes him a debt. "Viktor Orban understood this well: as purchasing power is the number one concern of Hungarians, he took care to fill their wallets before the elections. It is difficult for the opposition to beat him on this ground," said political scientist Eszter Soos, adding "For the opposition, it was a very delicate exercise to promise changes without really touching the foundations of this social system. There was a part of their message that said: Viktor Orban has to leave but many things will remain, for example, family allowances and the tax system. The message was ambiguous".

Originally from Szekesfehervar (north-east of Lake Balaton) and aged 58, Viktor Orban graduated in law from Lorand Eötvös University in Budapest (in 1989,

he studied for a few months at Pembroke College at Oxford University on a George Soros scholarship). In 1988, he was a founding member of the Alliance of Young Democrats. Two years later, he was elected as a Member of Parliament (he was re-elected at every parliamentary election) and in 1993, he became Chairman of his party. In 1998, at the age of 35, he became the youngest prime minister in Europe before having to bow to the left-wing opposition that won the elections of 7 and 20 April 2002, a

defeat that Viktor Orban never accepted. He took his revenge eight years later in 2010, the year he regained the leadership of the country. The Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union (FIDESZ-MPSZ) won the elections again in 2014 and in 2018 and Viktor Orban retained his position as Prime Minister. On 3 April 2022, he won his fourth consecutive election and is now set to lead the country for another four years.

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