

Hungary 2022: Election Manipulation and the Regime’s Attempts at Electoral Fraud

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Introduction

Electoral fraud may not happen only on election day. In modern autocracies, just as the tools of repression are far more sophisticated than in classical dictatorships, the ways to manipulate the election do not consist merely in falsifying the results. **The electoral situation is pre-arranged to produce the result the incumbents want:** this is what a **manipulated election** is.

The 2022 election is **not simply “free but not fair.”** This term focuses on the electoral contest, i.e., the campaign and election day, and emphasizes only two aspects: the *freedom* of the opposition to run and its voters to support it, and the *lack of fairness* in terms of the balance of resources between government and opposition. But a manipulated election is **more than that because it involves:**

1. **hollowing out the elections in advance** by depriving the newly elected parliament and government of power competences which, questioning popular sovereignty, are made independent of the election results;
2. **sabotaging the will of the electorate** by the regime’s unilateral rewriting of the electoral system in its own interest;
3. **legal and illegal use of state power in support of the regime** through the de facto involvement of supposedly independent state media, advertising channels, and public institutions such as the prosecutor’s office in Fidesz’s campaign;
4. **systematic creation of the possibility of classic electoral fraud**, in all cases to the advantage of Fidesz.

If falsifying the vote count is electoral fraud, because it unilaterally determines the future direction of governance by ignoring the will of the voters, **then manipulating the election is also fraud** for the same reason. Accordingly, the **adjective “free but not fair” should be replaced by the term “manipulated” or “fraudulent” elections**, whereas the traditionally narrow interpretative framework of electoral fraud should be replaced by discussion in a broader context.

The election is not meaningless or unwinnable for the opposition. Electoral manipulation in Hungary has not yet reached the same level as in Russia: political parties are not banned, their formation is not bureaucratically hindered, candidates with the proper number of recommendations are not thwarted (sometimes with physical violence) in running, polling district delegates do not actively manipulate the ballot. **However, the regime’s systematic effort to rig the elections is clearly evident**, with a wide range of sophisticated tools to achieve this.

1. Hollowing out the elections in advance

1.1. Changing laws that could be adopted with simple majority into laws requiring two-thirds majority

- The object and method of fraud:
 - **Hollowing out the elections in advance by unilaterally changing laws requiring two-thirds majority almost without limit, or making changing laws that could be adopted with simple majority into laws requiring two-thirds majority.**
 - **Preliminary curtailment of parliamentary and government powers:**

- the institution of a two-thirds or qualified majority was originally designed to ensure a stable guarantee of fundamental rights
 - the regime is using it instead to entrench the institutions it has expropriated and to tie the hands of a successor government beyond its own
 - thus, changing simple majority into two-thirds is an act of exclusively possessing and exercising power
 - **exempting certain subjects from popular sovereignty and democratic accountability**
 - **the impact of the will of the electorate is weakened as the government unilaterally makes it more difficult (in effect, impossible) to change the decisions it has taken**
- Acts constituting fraud:
 - **Adopting 317 two-thirds laws.¹**
 - **More than half of these (162) have been adopted since 2018 and around 40% (120) since 2020. In the year before the elections, 63 such laws or amendments have been adopted.**
 - **The main types of topics for two-thirds bills or amendments:**
 - *rules restricting individual freedoms* (e.g. church law, homophobic law)
 - *restrictions on publicity, freedom of the press* (e.g. rules on the body supervising the communications market, the law on the operation and management of political parties)
 - *provisions relating to the functioning of Parliament* (e.g. the act on the legal status, remuneration, and conflict of interest of Members of Parliament, requiring two-thirds majority for the dismissal of certain public officials)
 - *rules on public administration* (e.g. rules on the supervision of energy, utilities, concessions, competition, and nuclear power)
 - *rules on management* (e.g. national property laws, laws relating to foundations; see 1.3. blow)
 - **(For more details, see Appendix F11.)**

1.2. Appointments beyond the mandate of the current government²

- The object and method of fraud:
 - **Hollowing out elections in advance by entrenching public officials appointed by the regime in key positions of power, using a variety of means:**
 - changing appointments that previously required a simple majority to a two-thirds majority;
 - extending the terms of office of positions requiring a two-thirds majority, allowing for cross-appointment by “voluntary” resignation;
 - lifetime/indefinite appointments.
 - **After the elections, regardless of the outcome, a battalion of hard-to-remove public officials will remain in office** who owe their mandate solely to the regime and the Fidesz majority.
 - in the event of a change of government these individuals can use the formal and informal means attached to their position to obstruct the new government.

- Acts constituting fraud:
 - **Entrenching 31 key public positions** (see Figure 1).³
 - **These include:**
 - *the President of the Fiscal Council* (without his consent, Parliament cannot adopt the country's budget)
 - *the President of the Curia* (i.e. Supreme Court; the President has a prominent role in the allocation of cases, the composition of the Chambers and the promotion of judges within the Curia)
 - *Chief Prosecutor* (he has a decisive influence on the prosecution and representation of the prosecution: if the prosecution does not make a case against somebody, the court cannot proceed)

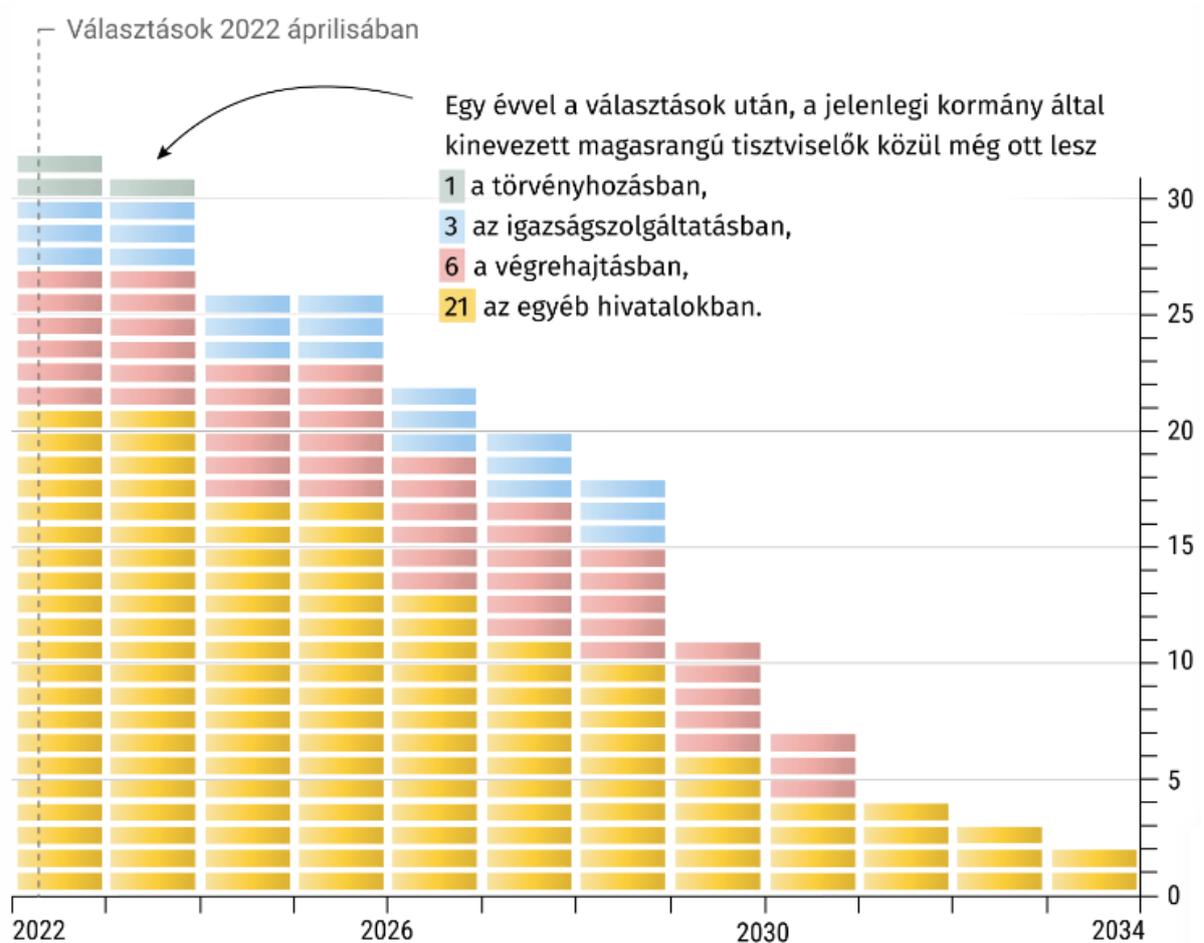


Figure 1: Distribution of entrenched public positions. Green, blue, red, and yellow refer to the legislation, judiciary, executive, and other state offices, respectively. Source: <https://cementezetek.helsinki.hu/>

- *Head of the Hungarian Atomic Energy Authority* (responsible, among other things, for the licensing of the Paks II nuclear power plant to be built under the agreement with Rosatom)
- *the President of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority and the of the Media Council* (it has a major influence on the media market through the conduct of radio frequency tenders and the regulation of the sector);

- *the President of the Supervisory Authority of Regulatory Affairs* (responsible for the management and control of licenses and authorizations for gambling and tobacco, judicial enforcement and liquidation)
- *Constitutional Court* (may annul newly enacted legislation, or legislation already in force)
- *President of Hungary* (may refuse to sign laws already passed, may exercise her powers of appointment in an obstructive manner)
- *the head of the public media* (i.e., CEO of the Media Services and Support Trust Fund, MTVA)
- *the President of the National Election Commission* (NVB; decides on complaints about the electoral procedure, validates submitted referendum questions)
- *the President of the National Election Office* (NVI; responsible for the technical organization of the elections and the purity of the elections)
- **(For more details, see Appendix F12.)**

1.3 Outsourcing of public assets to foundations controlled by loyalists

- The object and method of fraud:
 - **Hollowing out the elections in advance by removing, through two-thirds laws, significant decision-making powers from the powers of government and allocating them to actors appointed by the regime.**
 - **Eliminating the possibility of accountability of the regime:**
 - in elections, voters can no longer decide on matters that are outsourced to the ownership of foundations, churches, or private owners
 - competences are transferred to those appointed by the regime (in most cases those with personal loyalty to Viktor Orbán)
 - these actors can only be replaced by a two-thirds majority, in accordance with a constitutional amendment that was adopted parallel to the outsourcing
 - thus, in contrast to privatization in a democracy, the outsourced competences are not independent of the powers that be, but can continue to be exercised by members of the current regime, regardless of the election results
 - future elected politicians are deprived of their decision-making powers.
- Acts constituting fraud:
 - **Outsourcing public assets to foundations in the year before the election and allocating permanent budget resource to them.⁴**
 - **Outsourcing thousands of billions of forints (ca. several billions of euros) worth of public assets, including:⁵**
 - *outsourcing of 21 universities and hundreds of their properties* (University of Veterinary Medicine, Corvinus University of Budapest, Budapest Business School, University of Debrecen, University of Dunaújváros, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Hungarian University of Dance, University of Miskolc, Moholy-Nagy University of Arts and Sciences, Neumann János University, University of Nyíregyháza, University of Óbuda, University of Pannonia, University of Pécs, Semmelweis University, University of Sopron, Széchenyi István University, University of Szeged, University of Theatre and Film Arts, University of Physical Education, Tokaj-Hegyalja University)

- *outsourcing of previously state-owned shares* (MOL and Richter)
 - *outsourcing of agricultural institutions, areas, land etc.* (e.g. National Ménesbirtok és Tangazdaság Zrt., Mezőhegyes, with 776 properties)
 - *outsourcing of cultural institutions, theatres, castles etc.* (e.g. Petőfi Cultural Agency, MANK Hungarian Creative Arts Nonprofit Ltd., National Talent Nonprofit Ltd.)
- **(For more details, see Appendix F13.)**

2. Sabotaging the will of the electorate

2.1. Unilateral rewriting of the electoral system

- The object and method of fraud:
 - **Pre-emptively sabotaging the will of the electorate by unilaterally rewriting the electoral system in the interests of the government.**
 - **A legalized violation of electoral equality:**
 - an electoral process is democratic if it does not contain institutional bias: if the rules of the contest do not determine who the winner will be
 - **the regime has introduced institutional bias in the form of a new electoral law**, which was passed exclusively by the vote of its own MPs
 - the unilateral rewriting of the electoral system allows **the government to retain power, possibly (as it happened in 2014) even a two-thirds majority, even if support for the government falls and the opposition rises**
 - hence the will of the electorate, and its manifestation in the composition of parliament and government, is sabotaged in advance.
- Acts constituting fraud:
 - **Adoption of a new electoral law with the votes of the government MPs only.** (Act CCIII of 2011)
 - **A majority electoral system with institutional biases that ensure that the majority is likely to be the government side.⁶**
 - **Main changes in the majority direction:**
 - the electoral system changes from two-round to one-round
 - the proportion of the number of seats from party lists to the number of single-member constituencies decreases
 - regional lists are abolished
 - introducing “winner compensation”
 - **The main institutional biases that help the government have the majority:**
 - *manipulated constituency map:*⁷
 - districts that lean towards the government tend to be smaller in population than those with an opposition character (and in such a way that the difference in population between the individual constituencies exceeds the legal limit)
 - cities with more balanced support tended to be joined by agglomerations leaning towards the government (gerrymandering)
 - **in the event of a tie between the governing party and the united opposition, the former would win in 57% of single-member constituencies and the latter**

- in 43% of constituencies**, assuming a repeat of the geographical voting patterns of the last election
- *lack of campaign limits and then exploiting them with public resources:*
 - there is no regulation on campaigning outside the 50-day campaign period, and the use of public resources (see 3.1.) means that **the government is several magnitudes more visible between two elections than the opposition**
 - **NGOs are even less regulated than parties**, so often they – or GONGOs, governmental NGOs – campaign with public funds instead of Fidesz (see 3.2.)
 - **ads on social media are not considered campaign spending**, so the government spends many times as much as the opposition on these platforms (see 3.2.)
 - *anti-democratic regulation of the acquisition of minority mandates:*
 - those who **vote for the minority list** instead of the party list (a possibility introduced in 2011) have **no real choice** as the lists can be compiled only by national minority municipalities, and each can have one single list
 - **11 out of 13 nationalities have no mathematical chance of winning a seat**
 - **the nationality list is subject to the influence of the party with more resources** (an example is Imre Ritter, former Fidesz councilor who, as German minority representative, supported the government in every parliamentary vote)
 - when in 2021 the Roma list was not headed by the person selected by Fidesz, the Constitutional Court and the minority of the National Roma Self-Government prevented the independent Roma list from running in the elections.
 - *discrimination against Hungarians voting from abroad on the basis of Hungarian address:*
 - Hungarians living outside Hungary without a Hungarian address, mainly born and living in Romania and Serbia, can vote by mail; Hungarians residing abroad with a Hungarian address (e.g. those working or studying in Western European countries) cannot, they can only vote at the embassy or consulate → **the participation rate of Hungarians in the West is about six times lower than that of Hungarians abroad who are eligible to vote by postal vote**
 - **virtual population swap on political grounds:** while 95 and 96 percent of the mail voters supported Fidesz in 2014 and 2018, respectively, voters critical of the government are over-represented among Hungarians living in the West
 - *the systematic attraction of fake parties to the electoral contest:*
 - **the parties manage the voters' data on the recommendation sheets, making it possible to copy it by so-called fake parties** (which have no real political activity, and do not conduct a campaign either) **so they can have a national list**
 - parties with national lists **may receive hundreds of millions of forints (ca. several million euros) in subsidies, the spending of which is not monitored**
 - the presence of fake parties favors Fidesz as it **may mislead some voters who are dissatisfied with the government but less politically engaged** → they may waste their votes on fake parties instead of more potent opposition parties
 - stricter regulations were introduced in 2018, but there was still no legal prosecution of fake parties after 2014 and 2018

- fake parties ran in the 2018 election (they received about 1% of the vote, and about 3% in 2014), and **among those running in 2022 we can find candidates who have been shown to have relied on forged signatures many times**
- anomalies in the electoral information system:
 - the website of the National Election Office crashed several times on election day in 2018, making the documents of the National Election Committee temporarily inaccessible, and the publication of official election results stopped for hours⁸
 - T-Systems, owned by the regime’s oligarchs, will be responsible for the security preparation, monitoring, and expansion of the electoral IT system in 2022⁹
 - the audit firm commissioned to review the problems with the IT system reported that they were unable to carry out a substantive review of the website server system due to the administrative denial of proper access, and that they were not asked to review the vote tabulation system in the first place.¹⁰
- **(For more details, see Appendix F21.)**

2.2. Changing the effect of the election ex post: the example of municipal elections¹¹

- The object and method of fraud:
 - **The ex-post sabotage of the will of the electorate by limiting the power of the positions won by the opposition.**
 - e.g. after municipal elections, limiting the rights of municipalities, taking away their competences, expropriating their assets, cutting central budget revenues, taking away/limiting their own revenues.
 - **Retroactive modification of the impact of the election:**
 - voters do not vote for individuals per se, but elect persons/bodies with specific public powers
 - their ex-post restriction is none other than the ex-post questioning and manipulation of the election results.
 - **Although this technique does not arise in the context of the 2022 parliamentary elections, it is worth mentioning because it illustrates the attitude of Fidesz to formal institutions and democratic principles, and their lack of inhibition when it comes to maintaining power in the face of the will of the electorate, even when expressed in a vote.**
- Acts constituting fraud:
 - **The removal of local government powers after the opposition gains significant positions in the 2019 municipal elections.**
 - *removal of building and urban development powers* (building authority matters are transferred to government offices etc.)
 - *taking away local government revenues* (using the pandemic as a pretense, tax revenues were taken away from the municipalities, lands and related revenues belonging to opposition-controlled municipalities were transferred to the Fidesz-controlled county municipalities by designating “special economic zones” etc.)

- *selective compensation of municipalities during the pandemic* (the loss of revenue of pro-government municipalities was compensated, but not that of opposition ones).
- **(For more details, see Appendix F22.)**

3. Legal and illegal use of state power in support of the regime

- The object and method of fraud:
 - **The manipulation of elections by (1) the targeted use of the media and power resources of the state in favor of the regime and against the opposition, and (2) by the discretionary allocation of financial resources to strengthen the regime and weaken the opposition.**
 - **An institutional violation of equality of opportunities:**
 - the separation of the government from the state apparatus and the judiciary is an institutional guarantee that, on the one hand, citizens who need to be persuaded in campaigns can retain their freedom of choice and, on the other hand, that campaigns with conflicting objectives can compete in the political market
 - once the separation is ended, the regime can use the state without constraint, with access to a wide arsenal of public authority no independent actor has
 - **the regime unilaterally reduces the accountability of the government and the chance for critical opinions to be politically represented.**
 - **Not criminally neutral imbalance but the unlawful tilting of the playing field:**
 - according to the law, most organs of the state must be neutral, impartially reporting the news (state media) and not discriminating between citizen and citizen on political grounds (resource allocation, prosecution)
 - the involvement of bodies required by law to be impartial in the Fidesz campaign is tantamount to the violation of the law, which is not recognized precisely because of the colonization of supervisory bodies by Fidesz.¹²

3.1. Unlawful partiality of public communication channels

- Acts constituting fraud:
 - **The transformation of public media, operating on 130 billion forints (ca. 350 million euros) a year, into a propaganda machine.**
 - the public service broadcaster managed by the *Media Services and Support Trust Fund (MTVA)* operates seven television channels, seven radio channels and, because of its free news service, the country's only news service (Hungarian News Agency, MTI)
 - *the systemic political bias* of the public media was criticized in the OSCE election reports in 2014¹³ and 2018,¹⁴ and reiterated in their 2022 mid-term report as well¹⁵
 - **a leaked audio recording proves the practice of the public media of editing news according to the political views of the ruling party¹⁶**

- since 2010, public media news has essentially portrayed the opposition in an exclusively negative light and the government in an exclusively positive light¹⁷
- before the 2018 election, 61% of public media news coverage was about the government, 96% of which was positive in tone, while 82% of the coverage about the opposition was negative¹⁸
- the situation is similar ahead of the 2022 elections: as an analysis shows, public media news is dominated by the government's agenda, with no coverage of issues that could be linked to the opposition's agenda¹⁹
- about the Russia-Ukraine war, the public media spreads the Kremlin narrative,²⁰ in line with a quarter of them blamed the Ukrainians, and after two weeks of intense government propaganda 43% of them opined that Russia's aggression was justified²¹
- **opposition politicians are not invited to the regular political interview shows of public media (e.g. Ma Reggel, Ma Este)**
 - of the parliamentary parties, since 2018, a politician from Democratic Coalition (DK) and Jobbik was invited to the studio of the public media 0 times; Dialogue for Hungary (Párbeszéd) 2 times; Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) 6 times; LMP – Hungary's Green Party 9 times²²
 - the prime ministerial candidate of the united opposition, Péter Márki-Zay, was only invited once, when the public media, as they wrote, "beyond its legal obligation," **gave all parties that had put up a national list 5-5 minutes of time in the weeks before the election to present their party platform**²³
- **The inseparability of government "information campaigns" from the Fidesz campaign.**
 - in 2020-21, the government, disregarding the existing health IT system, insisted on separate registration with an email address for the coronavirus vaccine → **the millions of email addresses provided at the time of vaccination registration are used by the Government Information Center to distribute campaign materials**²⁴
 - In 2022, a **referendum on one of Fidesz's main campaign themes, "child protection,"**²⁵ is scheduled for 3 April, the day of the parliamentary elections²⁶
 - the National Electoral Office merged the referendum and election notices, and included the referendum questions in it²⁷
 - the government's referendum questions contain absurd proposals that have no public support and the legal consequences of accepting or rejecting them are not always clear
 - **the information campaign for the referendum, involving national poster campaign as well as Facebook ad campaign,²⁸ is identical in content to Fidesz's parliamentary slogans**
 - the costs of the campaign are not yet known, but based on similar government campaigns in the past (using slogans like "Hungary is doing better," "Stop Brussels," "Stop Soros" etc.) **the tax revenue spent on**

the government propaganda campaign could be in the tens of billions of forints (ca. dozens of millions of euros)²⁹

- to all those registered to vote by mail (see 2.1.), the Prime Minister regularly sends political campaign letters at public expense, while the same register of voters is inaccessible to the opposition parties (see 4.1.).

3.2. Discretionary allocation of public resources

- Acts constituting fraud:
 - **Public funding of the media empire campaigning for Fidesz.**
 - public advertisements: (1) due to the partly narrow, partly intimidated private advertising market, government advertising is the decisive source of media revenue; (2) its discretionary, politically motivated distribution is a means of distorting the media market;³⁰ (3) **state advertising finances media that are formally private and content-wise constantly aligned with the current narrative of the government;**³¹ (4) the money spent on public advertising far exceeds the public advertising expenditure of previous governments; (5) almost all public advertising is allocated to media campaigning for Fidesz, while opposition media receive little or no public advertising (see Figure 2)

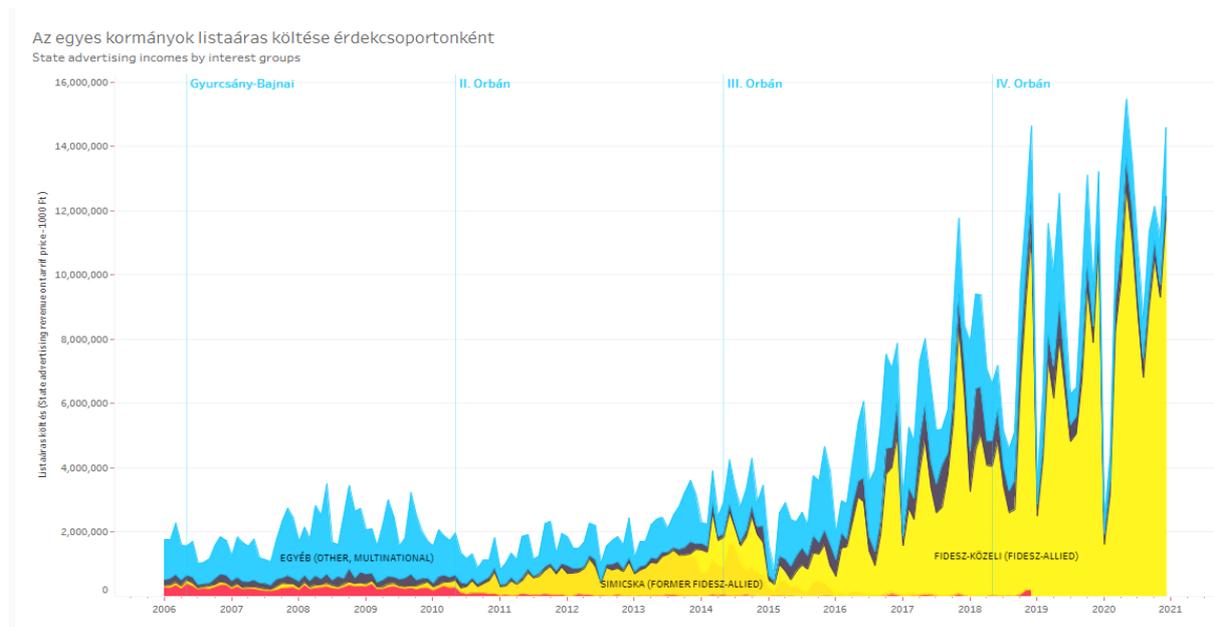


Figure 2: State advertising incomes by interest groups. Source: <https://mertek.atlatszo.hu/allamihirdetesek/>

- Fidesz media dominance: as a result of state interventions, the media campaigning for Fidesz dominated 77.8% of the news media market by 2019³² → this has not changed by 2022
 - in 2019, in terms of turnover, 22.2% of the news media market was independent media
 - 24% was the Central European Press and Media Foundation (KESMA), which was formed in 2018 by the merger of 476 pro-government media into a media holding

- the merger was declared by the government to be a “merger of national strategic importance” and thus exempted from antitrust law³³
- 15.7% was non-KESMA pro-government media (TV2, Demokrata, Magyar Hírlap, etc.) which are also the main beneficiaries of state advertising in addition to the KESMA media
 - 38.1% was the public media, which uses public funds to disseminate Fidesz propaganda (see 3.1.)
 - **between 2017 and 2021, while the independent media lost 40 out of 260 libel suits (16%), the pro-government media lost 377 out of 700 libel suits (54%), mostly for smearing opposition figures (see Figure 3)→ smears are repeated for weeks, and thus have a much greater impact in the campaign than rectification, which is made only once and later (after the campaign in some cases)**

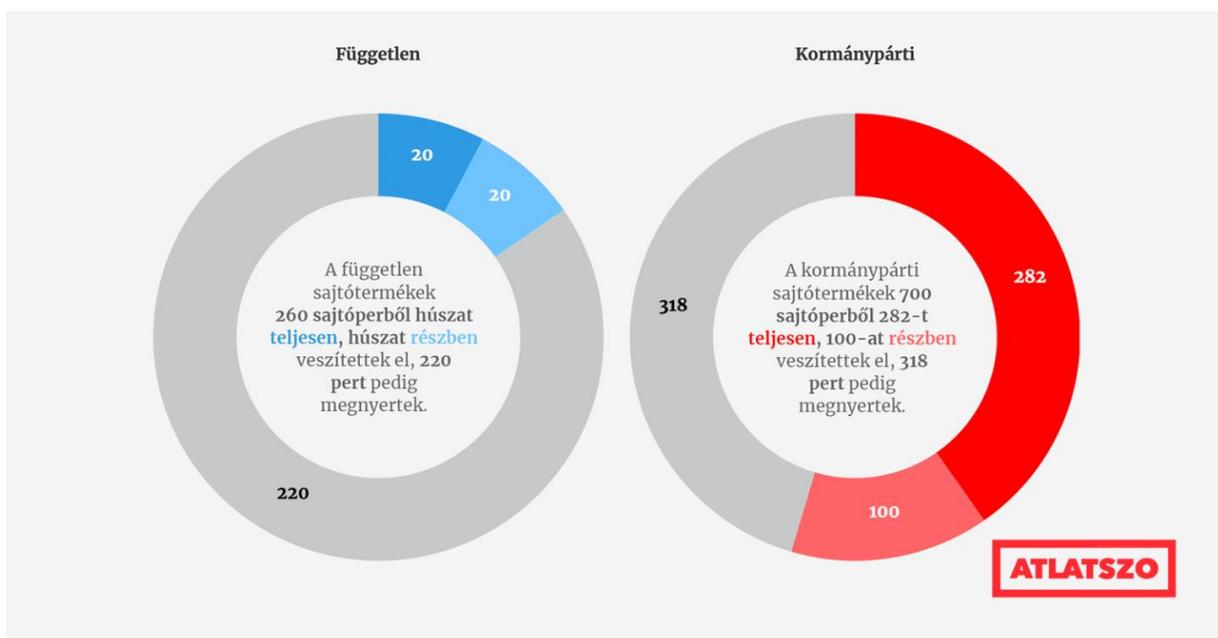
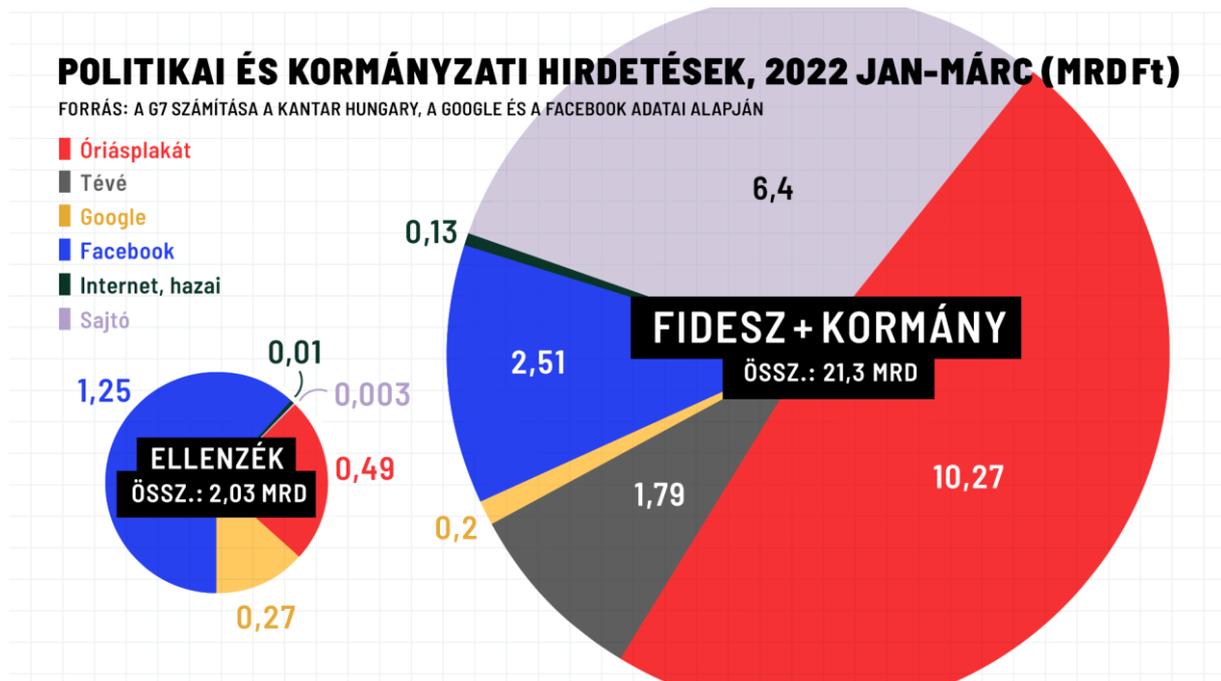


Figure 3: Proportion of libel suits lost by independent (left circle) and pro-government media (right circle). Grey represents the number of won suits, light colors, the partially lost suits, and dark colors, the lost suits. Source: <https://atlatszo.hu/kozuqy/2022/02/23/kozel-400-pert-vesztett-5-ev-alatt-a-fidesz-barat-media-ebbol-103-at-az-origo-bukott/>

- **in the 2022 election campaign**, Fidesz and the media campaigning for it will accuse the opposition of factual falsehoods (that they are pro-war, would demolish healthcare, abolish 13th month pension, support gender reassignment surgeries etc.) → Péter Márki-Zay has already won a libel suit on of these issues,³⁴ but most of the libel and/or defamation lawsuits that can be conducted in this context will necessarily bring results only after the election
- **Facebook campaign:** every party **circumvents the official campaign spending limit with Facebook pages that are not officially affiliated to them but broadcast their messages**³⁵ → in the case of Fidesz, however, this exceeds the scale of the opposition Facebook campaign, and **its media are mostly publicly funded**
- the publicly-funded Megafon Center³⁶ and its associated sites (Aktuális, Budapest beszél, etc.) spent 324 million forints (ca. 0.9 million euros) on Facebook

advertising in the first 30 days of the campaign; more than the total of all the parties and party alliances running in the election

- the publicly-funded Mediaworks³⁷ and its affiliated sites (Mandiner, Magyar Nemzet, etc.) spent 202 million forints (ca. 0.55 million euros) on Facebook advertising, of which the county newspapers, previously bought by the oligarchs of the regime and then donated to KESMA, spent 2-3 million forints (ca. 5-8 thousand euros) each
- spending on advertising cannot be interpreted on a market basis, only on a political basis



(Political and governmental spending on ads, January-March 2022, in billion HUFs. “Ellenzék” is opposition parties, “Fidesz + kormány” is Fidesz and government. Red is billboards, grey is television, yellow is Google, blue is Facebook, black is domestic websites, light purple is printed media. Source: G7.)

- **Public funding for the GONGOs campaigning for Fidesz.**
 - campaigning by NGOs is practically unregulated (see 2.1.) → **GONGOs, or governmental NGOs campaigning for Fidesz, financed by the state**³⁸
 - Ministries set up foundations with resources of tens of billions of forints (ca. dozens of millions of euros; e.g., Batthyány Lajos Foundation, Urban Civic Fund, Village Civic Fund, National Cooperation Fund, Hungarian Village Program, National Cultural Fund)
 - foundations finance events, communication, equipment etc., often without a public tender
 - the winning (pseudo-civilian) organizations buy buses and real estate, organize campaign events featuring Fidesz politicians, run offline newspapers and online portals attacking local opposition politicians / boosting government ones etc.³⁹

- example: the Urban Civic Fund (Városi Civil Alap) illegally distributed 4.8 billion forints (ca. 13 million euros) right before the 2022 elections, setting a shorter deadline for applications than the law allows, so that they could distribute the money before the campaign → the majority of the 118 organizations supported are organizations without social support but with Fidesz ties⁴⁰
- together with the poster campaign of the Civil Coalition Forum (CÖF), a GONGO funded by the state-owned Hungarian Electrical Works (MVM),⁴¹ Fidesz campaigned against the opposition with an eightfold advantage (see Figure 4)



4. Figure: List price value of public advertising with political content, March 2022. Dark, light, and lightest orange refers to Fidesz, the government, and CÖF, respectively. Blue is the united opposition, green and red are other parties. Source: https://politicalcapital.hu/hirek.php?article_read=1&article_id=2981

- **Inordinate, targeted allocation of budgetary resources to constituencies important to the regime.**
 - From 1 January 2022, mainly in February:⁴²
 - ca. 650 billion forints (ca. 1.8 billion euros) – personal income tax refund (to ca. 1.9 million people)⁴³
 - ca. 200 billion forints (ca. 540 million euros) – 13th month pension (to ca. 2.5 million people)⁴⁴
 - ca. 140 billion forints (ca. 380 million euros) – social security exemption for those under 25 (ca. 280,000 people)⁴⁵
 - ca. 200 billion forints (ca. 540 million euros) – six months’ pay for members of the police and defense forces, “arms money” (ca. 70,000 people)⁴⁶
 - ca. 500 billion forints (ca. 1.4 billion euros) – wage increases in the public sector: nurses by 21%, nursery, social and cultural workers by 20%, teachers by 10%⁴⁷
 - ca. 40 billion forints (ca. 109 million euros) – around 120,000 tablets to schools⁴⁸
 - ca. 200 billion forints (ca. 540 million euros) – acceptance of applications for solar modernization of family houses (initially 201 billion forints, spread over 4 years), ca. 45,000 people⁴⁹

- ca. 1.6 thousand billion forints (ca. 4.4 billion euros) of election spending in a single month → extraordinary budget deficit in February 2022, many times higher than the election spending of all previous governments.⁵⁰

3.3. The politically selective practice of the prosecution following campaign objectives

- Acts constituting fraud:
 - **The functioning of the prosecution service as a politically selective law enforcement agency, following campaign objectives.**
 - *Chief Prosecutor Péter Polt was appointed by Fidesz in 2010 for a 9-year term, which was renewed in 2019 (his current mandate runs until 15 December 2028, i.e. for another 6.5 years after this year's elections)*
 - *the custodian of politically selective law enforcement:*
 - since his appointment, the number of prosecutions in political corruption cases has plummeted⁵¹
 - **systematically refused to order investigations into cases involving senior politicians of the regime⁵²**
 - **has ordered a number of investigations against opposition politicians.⁵³**
 - *the practice of campaign-tailored law enforcement:*
 - **criminalization and discrediting of Fidesz opponents before elections**
 - leaking information that vilifies the opponents to Fidesz supporting media carefully in keeping with the campaign schedule, while sometimes qualifying the cases as state secret so the accused is not allowed to even defend themselves in public
 - sometimes public opinion is preconditioned with a pre-trial detention, house arrest, or a photograph of the accused being led through court
 - cases are well-timed, while they can stretch out for years without a sentence
 - cases can affect innocent and guilty alike, but their public presentation follows the seasonal variation of the most varied campaigns
 - *prosecution and law enforcement as part of the campaign staff in 2022:* (1) a month before the election, the prosecutor's office searched the apartment of MSZP mayor Csaba Horváth and the office of the district parking company on corruption charges,⁵⁴ the case is constantly on the agenda of the governing party media, including the public media;⁵⁵ (2) the DK politician Csaba Czeglédy, who was previously convicted in previous election campaigns, was indicted by the prosecution at the end of 2021 in connection with the blog Ördög Ügyvédje (Devil's Advocate), which published sensitive material about Fidesz politicians, and was convicted without trial in March 2022;⁵⁶ (3) In February 2022, 30 armed tax inspectors raided the Dankó Street headquarters of the Oltalom Evangelical Charity led by pastor and opposition public figure Gábor Iványi on suspicion of budget fraud,⁵⁷ the case was embedded in the election campaign and has also been on the agenda of pro-government media.⁵⁸

4. Systematic creation of the possibility of classic electoral fraud

4.1. Anomalies in postal voting

- The object and method of fraud:
 - **The lack of regulation of postal voting opens the door to mass vote manipulation.**
 - **The beneficiary of electoral fraud is almost exclusively Fidesz, which further facilitated it after 2018:**
 - only Hungarians living abroad without a Hungarian address are entitled to vote by mail, Hungarians staying temporarily in the West who are more critical of Fidesz can vote only at the embassy or consulate (see 2.1.)
 - since the system has been in place and tested (2014 and 2018 elections), **95-96% of the postal votes have been in favor of Fidesz**
 - the list mandates which were turned from opposition mandates to Fidesz mandates by mail votes **were necessary to retain a two-thirds majority in parliament in 2014 and 2018**
 - **Fidesz front organizations are exploiting the anomaly of the postal vote by collecting postal votes en masse**
 - **Fidesz changed the electoral law after 2018 so that postal votes which would have been invalidated due to the risk of fraud earlier will be valid in the 2022 elections.**
- Acts constituting fraud:
 - **The letter package is in the voter's possession for a long time.**
 - the secrecy and voluntary nature of voting may be compromised
 - it is impossible to check that the ballot paper was actually filled in by the addressee.
 - **The letter packages are collected by Fidesz front organizations which sometimes also – illegally – deliver them.**
 - *collection of postal votes* (voters can give their postal votes, filled in or not, to anyone; these are collected with great efficiency by organizations loyal to Fidesz beyond the borders of Hungary → **it is impossible to check whether the envelopes are not opened, modified, or sorted, and the possibility of this was strengthened by a law amendment after 2018:** previously postal ballots were invalidated because of damaged or lack of official envelope, now ballot papers can be returned in any envelope)⁵⁹
 - *influencing voters* (in Transylvania, people can vote in the so-called Democracy Centers, where it is impossible to control how voters are influenced)
 - *delivery of postal ballots* (in 2022, activists of the Concordia Minoritatis Hungaricae association will deliver ballot papers to Hungarian citizens in Serbia instead of the Serbian postal service, so **activists of one party will decide who will receive the ballot papers and who will not**)⁶⁰
 - the electoral register in the mainland is available to the political parties with a national list, but **the register of voters from abroad is not available → but de facto they are the Fidesz front organizations which collect postal votes.**
 - **There are dead people in the electoral register whose letter packages can be misused by anyone.**

- the Hungarian State is not automatically informed of the death of citizens living abroad who have never had a Hungarian address
- **the National Election Office sends out the ballot paper to the notification address of the deceased without question before each election and referendum**
- the fate of such parcels is known only to those who misuse them, while the death toll has probably reached into the tens of thousands.
- **(For more details, see Appendix F41.)**

4.2. Vote tourism

- The object and method of fraud:
 - **Establishing a fictitious address or changing the polling district of voters so they can cast their local vote there.**
 - **Fidesz is the primary beneficiary and promoter of voter tourism:**
 - organized delivery of phantom voters from Ukraine, Serbia and Romania and manipulation of voter registers by fictitious address declarations → in previous elections, in such organized cases, voters supported Fidesz⁶¹
 - while originally illegal, the **creation of fictitious addresses** for cross-border voter tourism **was legalized by Fidesz six months before the 2022 elections**, and the regime-controlled Constitutional Court (see 1.2.) upheld the law.⁶²
- Acts constituting fraud:
 - **Organized and paid voter re-registration (changing the polling district).**
 - cross-border vote tourism:
 - the aim is to enable Hungarian citizens abroad to vote not only for party lists (by mail), but also for local district candidates (in person)
 - a fictitious address is set up for them in Hungary
 - only estimates can be made as to how many people have set up fictitious residences for electoral purposes in recent years⁶³
 - it would help the calculation if data on new voters appearing in large numbers in municipalities was available → the Ministry of the Interior has refused to release this data of public interest⁶⁴
 - *example (1):* in Tornospálca, a village in Szabolcs county, before the 2014 and 2018 elections, hundreds of Ukrainian-Hungarians were registered in a single dilapidated house, which, according to one of the fake residents and the man who helped sell the address, was known to the government office and the mayor⁶⁵
 - *example (2):* in Kispalád, a village in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, before the 2019 local elections, according to the register there were about 600 people eligible to vote, but according to the locals there were definitely no more than 380 people living in the village; according to the locals, voter tourists received 40-50 thousand forints (ca. 110-140 euros) each⁶⁶
 - domestic vote tourism:
 - vote optimization: voters are re-registered to swing districts
 - **where the manipulation of the constituency map did not ultimately redistrict a sufficient number of Fidesz voters (see 2.1.), this can be remedied by domestic redistricting**

- the extent of this in 2022 is unpredictable, and only estimates can be made for previous elections.

4.3. Influencing the vote count

- The object and method of fraud:
 - **Manipulation of the vote count through the influence of polling station delegates and pro-government vote counters:**⁶⁷
 - the stigmatization of opposition vote counters;
 - damage to the authenticity of the electoral protocol;
 - suspicious rates of vote-sharing in constituencies where there was no opposition delegate;
 - the disappearance of ballot papers.
 - **Classic election fraud in the interests of Fidesz:**
 - the inaccurate registration of votes or the manipulation of the results constitutes a disregard or falsification of the will of the electorate
 - **the distortion of the results favored Fidesz**, as confirmed by interviews with members of the polling station commissions⁶⁸ and by statistical data **showing anomalies in constituencies where there were no opposition vote counters**
 - the reports of the members of the electoral commission, based on the anomalies and fraud investigated so far, **foreshadow the manipulative means that can be used to influence the 2022 elections.**
- Acts constituting fraud.⁶⁹
 - **Signing of electoral protocol by the polling station delegates before the voting data is entered.**
 - after the 2018 elections, several delegates reported that they had been asked to sign the electoral protocol before the opening of the envelopes containing their votes – i.e., they had sign them blank.
 - according to an opposition delegate, the authorities illegally pressured the counting commission and deliberately interfered in the electoral process
 - *60% of the 108 delegates* who completed an online questionnaire by an international academic political communication network *expressed their lack of confidence in the fairness of the elections*
 - **Subsequent amendment of electoral protocol.**
 - in the 2018 election, an opposition delegate in a Tolna county district, who was visually impaired, had to count votes in the dark and claims that the number of votes cast for opposition parties was changed in the protocol when he could not see it
 - **Anomalies where there was no opposition delegate.**
 - the majority of Hungarian voters vote for the same party candidate individually and on the party list
 - In 2018, vote-splitting occurred at higher rates in (1) rural districts, (2) constituencies where there were no opposition delegates, and (3) places where this behavior could not be justified by a popular incumbent politician

- In 2018, the vote-sharing rate in 5.6% of polling stations was four times the national average, and the probability of vote-sharing doubled in polling stations where opposition delegates did not supervise voting.
- **Disappearance of ballot papers.**
 - the number of voters present in the polling stations designated for domestic absentee voters exceeded the number recorded when the envelopes were counted by 2,918 → this suggests that 1% of the votes have disappeared
 - when asked about this discrepancy, the National Election Office replied that “all the absentee voters and votes cast at embassies were counted.”

4.4. Blackmailing of financially vulnerable voters

- The object and method of fraud:
 - **Exploiting the situation of financially vulnerable voters dependent on the state through blackmail and vote-buying.**
 - **Fidesz has made the public works program an area of total vulnerability, and it is primarily Fidesz that benefits from this:**
 - twice as many people were working in public employment in the month of the 2014 parliamentary elections than a month later, i.e. after the elections → temporariness, unpredictability, and employment for around half the legal minimum wage⁷⁰
 - the hiring and firing of public workers is a non-actionable, discretionary power of mayors
 - **vulnerability to the mayor creates the possibility of blackmailing**, which in the context of voting is a serious violation of electoral freedom
 - **the higher the proportion of public work in a settlement, the more people voted for Fidesz** – this correlation was also shown in the 2014⁷¹ and 2018⁷² elections
 - *in the 2014 elections*, the Fidesz party list won 42.3% of the votes in settlements minimally affected by public works, and 53.1% in settlements very strongly affected by public works
 - *in the 2018 elections*, the Fidesz party list won 55.4% in settlements minimally affected by public works, and 67.1% in settlements very strongly affected by public works
 - **in the 2014 elections, public work could have won Fidesz 5-6 seats**,⁷³ so the party’s two-thirds victory also depended on this
 - investigative journalists saw more signs of intimidation in 2014, and more signs of acquiescence in 2018, when it came to voter fraud.
- Acts constituting fraud:
 - **Organized vote buying and blackmailing.**
 - abuses during the 2014 parliamentary elections
 - one study reported on practices such as vote-buying, linking the provision of social benefits to a vote, coercion through threats to withdraw benefits, and coercion through threats by loan sharks and employers⁷⁴

- an investigative portal documented open voting and interviewed people who dropped out of the public works program because they refused to sell their right to vote⁷⁵
- abuses during the 2018 parliamentary elections
 - in a post-election survey, 160 polling station delegates were interviewed and talked about vote-buying and voter intimidation⁷⁶
 - in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county, voters reported that their votes were bought, and the agents who recruited them received 5-10 thousand forints (ca. 15-30 euros) for each person voting for the government
 - according to an opposition polling station delegate in Nógrád county, Roma voters themselves said they had to vote for Fidesz candidates if they wanted to continue to receive social benefits or participate in public works programs
 - one of the opposition polling station delegates in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county said that although everyone knew about the organized transportation of Ukrainian voters (see 4.2.), people “would not dare to talk about it because the mayor threatened them with losing their public jobs.”
 - the 2022 parliamentary elections
 - *the situation of public sector workers and other vulnerable groups has not changed*, as indicated by the campaign launched by NGOs against vote-buying in the poorest municipalities⁷⁷
 - *in 2020, ballot-paper photography is legally allowed*, although officially only for private purposes,⁷⁸ but technically this makes it easier for voters who have been blackmailed to prove that they have voted as expected → compromising the secrecy of the election and creating the institutional possibility of classic electoral fraud based on it.

Appendix

F11. Changing laws that could be adopted with simple majority into laws requiring two-thirds majority

- A list of the two-thirds laws that have been adopted or amended since 2010 (317 in total) is available here: <https://www.parlament.hu/documents/10181/1205420/Az+Alapt%2525C3%2525B6rv%2525C3%2525A9ny+elfogad%2525C3%2525A1s%2525C3%2525A1t+k%2525C3%2525B6vet%2525C5%252591en+beny%2525C3%2525BAjtott,+illetve+elfogadott+sarkalatos+t%2525C3%2525B6rv%2525C3%2525A9nyek/0af78bee-9b54-49fd-97df-2c9ba024c265>
- Due to the large number of laws that have changed, the following is not an exhaustive list, but only examples grouped by main topics.
- *rules restricting individual freedoms:*
 - On the protection of families, which includes homophobic provisions of “mother is female, father is male” and banning the display or promotion of “gender identity difference, gender reassignment, and homosexuality”;
 - On churches, which includes discriminatory church-establishment rules in opposition to the ECtHR judgment.
- *publicity, restrictions on freedom of the press:*
 - The establishment of an independent authority to monitor the right to the protection of personal data and the right of access to data of public interest;
 - On the functioning and management of political parties;
 - Rules on freedom of the press and the body responsible for supervising media services, press products and the communications market;
 - Rules on political advertising during the campaign period.
- *provisions relating to the functioning of Parliament:*
 - On the participation of nationalities living in Hungary in the work of the National Assembly;
 - On the status and remuneration of Members of Parliament and their conflict of interest;
 - Provisions ensuring the regular sitting of Parliament;
 - On the investigative activities of parliamentary committees and the obligation to appear before them;
 - The Act on the National Assembly makes the dismissal of certain constitutional officials subject to a two-thirds vote.
- *the centralization of public administration:*
 - Establishment of independent regulatory bodies, their tasks and rules of operation;
 - Rules on energy, utilities, concessions, competition and nuclear energy supervision.
- *management rules:*
 - Preservation, protection and responsible management of national property;
 - The scope of exclusive ownership and exclusive economic activity of the State;
 - Limits and conditions for the disposal of national assets of major importance for the national economy;
 - The creation, operation, termination and public function of the public trust (under which the regime took ownership of most of the universities, see 1.3.);
 - Limits and conditions for the acquisition and use of ownership of agricultural land and forests for specific purposes;
 - Rules on integrated agricultural production organization and family farms and other agricultural holdings.

F12. Appointments beyond the mandate of the current government

- *legislation:*
 - **President of the Budget Council**
 - **Parliament cannot adopt the country’s budget without the consent of the**
 - **may veto amendments to the budget already adopted**
 - *Dr. Árpád Kovács*, term of office 10.01.2012 - 10.01.2024.
 - **President of the State Audit Office**
 - **may impose payment obligations on political parties**, as they are officially responsible for monitoring the spending of budget funds on behalf of the legislature
 - *László Domonkos*, term of office 2010.07.05 - 2022.07.05.
- *justice:*
 - **President of the Curia**
 - **the highest forum of the judicial system**
 - **a prominent role in the allocation of cases, the composition of the Chambers and the promotion of judges within the Curia**
 - *Dr. András Varga Zs.*, term of office 2021.01.02 - 2029.01.02.

- **Chief Prosecutor**
 - **has a decisive influence on the prosecution's prosecution and representation: if the prosecution does not prosecute, the court cannot proceed;**
 - **since his appointment by Fidesz, the number of prosecutions in political corruption cases has plummeted, and he is the main guarantor of impunity for the regime's leaders and politically selective prosecution (see 3.3.).**
 - *Dr. Péter Polt*, term of office 14.12.2010 - 15.12.2028.
- **President of the National Office for the Judiciary (OFJ)**
 - **the central management body of the courts**
 - **has a fundamental influence on the organization of the judiciary** through the powers and other means available to him (the President) in the areas of judicial selection, appointment, performance evaluation, promotion
 - *Dr György Barna Senyei*, term of office 10.12.2019 - 10.12.2028.
- Implementation:
 - **President of the National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information (NAIH)**
 - **take official action** against individuals and organizations
 - influence the development of case law on the **disclosure of data of public interest**
 - *Dr. Péterfalvi Attila*, term of office 2012.01.01. - 2030.01.01.
 - **Head of the National Atomic Energy Authority**
 - Independent regulatory body from 1 January 2022
 - **is responsible for, among other things, the authorization of Paks II**
 - *Andrea Beatrix Kádár*, term of office 29.09.2021 - 01.01.2031.
 - **President of the Hungarian Energy and Public Utility Regulatory Office**
 - **has a fundamental influence in the strategic and economically important energy sector**, for example by issuing licences or influencing the market.
 - *Péter János Horváth*, term of office 13.07.2020 - 13.07.2027.
 - **President of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority**
 - **the power to significantly influence the media market** through frequency tenders and regulation of the sector;
 - *Dr. András Koltay*, term of office 14.12.2021 - 14.12.2030.
 - **President of the Media Council;**
 - has authority over the **authorization of media mergers and frequency allocation**
 - **instead of promoting media pluralism, it has hindered it in the interests of the regime**, for example by classifying government campaign ads as social advertising (see 3.1.)
 - *Dr. András Koltay*, term of office 14.12.2021 - 14.12.2030.
 - **the Chairman of the Regulatory Activities Authority**
 - **is a body of great economic weight**, being responsible for the management and control of gambling and tobacco, judicial enforcement and liquidation concessions and licenses
 - *Biró Marcell*, term of office 2021.10.01. - 2031.10.01.
- other agencies capable of obstructing the new government:
 - **Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, Ombudsman**
 - **has the right to request information and access to public institutions**, and carries out investigative work in its role of protecting fundamental rights
 - since 1 January 2021, it also has authority in **discrimination cases** falling under the remit of the abolished Equal Treatment Authority
 - *Dr. Ákos Kozma*, term of office 26.09.2019 - 26.09.2025.
 - **Constitutional Court**
 - **annul newly enacted legislation (ex ante control) and legislation already in force (ex post control)**
 - has further significance through the institution of **constitutional complaints**, and has a role, for example, in the procedure for the removal of the President of Hungary from office
 - *Dr. Béla Pokol* (member), term of office 01.09.2011 - 01.09.2023.
 - *Péter Szalay* (member), term of office 01.09.2011 - 01.09.2023.
 - *dr. Szívós Mária* (member), term of office 01.09.2011 - 01.09.2023.
 - *Dr. Egon Dienes-Ohm* (member), term of office 01.09.2011 - 01.09.2023.
 - *László Salamon* (member), term of office 25.02.2013 - 25.02.2025.
 - *Dr. Imre Juhász* (member), term of office 2013.04.03. - 2025.04.03.
 - *Dr. Tamás Sulyok* (Chairman), term of office 27.09.2014 - 27.09.2026.
 - *dr. Ágnes Czine* (member), term of office 15.11.2014 - 15.11.2026.
 - *Balázs Schanda* (member), term of office 01.12.2016 - 01.12.2028.
 - *dr. Attila Horváth* (member), term of office 01.12.2016 - 01.12.2028.
 - *dr. Hörcherné dr. Harosi Ildikó* (member), term of office 01.12.2016 - 01.12.2028.
 - *dr. Marcel Szabó* (member), term of office 01.12.2016 - 01.12.2028.
 - *dr. Tünde Handó* (member), term of office 2020.01.01. - 2032.01.01.

- *Miklós Juhász* (member), term of office 15.04.2020 - 15.04.2032.
- *Dr. Zoltán Márki* (member), term of office 22.06.2021 - 22.06.2033.
- **President of Hungary**
 - **may refuse to sign laws already passed**
 - **may exercise in an obstructive manner her right to appoint ministers, judges, rectors, professors, the President of the Curia, the Chief Prosecutor and many other officials**
 - *Katalin Novák*, term of office 10.05.2022 - 13.03.2027.
- **Governor of the Hungarian National Bank and the Monetary Council**
 - **has a fundamental influence on economic life** through the setting of the base rate, its supervisory powers and market interventions
 - **is not obliged to pay its own profits into the budget**, but can use them to run foundations and spend them without state control
 - *Dr. György Matolcsy*, term of office 04.03.2013 - 04.03.2025.
- **the head of the public media** (CEO of the Media Services and Support Trust Fund – MTVA)
 - **has considerable cultural influence and information power**
 - **acts as a prime propaganda machine** (see 3.1.)
 - *Dániel Papp*, term of office 01.10.2018 - indefinite
- **President of the National Election Commission (NVB)**
 - **reviews decisions and results of elections**
 - **adjudicates complaints about the electoral process**
 - **the NVB decides on the authentication of questions put to the referendum**
 - *Dr. András Téglási*, term of office 19.02.2021 - 19.02.2030.
- **President of the National Election Office (NVI)**
 - **the NVI is responsible for the technical conduct of the elections** and the fairness of the elections
 - *Dr. Attila Mihály Nagy*, term of office 15.09.2020 - 15.09.2029.

F13. Outsourcing of public assets to foundations controlled by loyalists

- **Future Generation's Land Foundation**
 - **National Stud Farm and Tang Farm Ltd. (Mezőhegyes), with 776 pieces of real estate⁷⁹**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:⁸⁰
 - **Dr. János Lázár (Fidesz Member of Parliament, former Minister of the Prime Minister's Office)**
 - Barnabás Balczó (CEO of MFB Invest Zrt.)
 - Miklós Kerecsi (agro-entrepreneur, currently member of the Board of Directors of Ménesbirtok)
 - Attila Csányi (CEO of Bonafarm Group Zrt., currently member of the FEB of Ménesbirtok)
- **Foundation for the University of Debrecen**
 - **University of Debrecen, with 469 properties⁸¹**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:⁸²
 - **Tibor Szólláth (Fidesz mayor of Hajdúnánás)**
 - Zoltán Szilvássy (Rector of the University of Debrecen, President of the National Chamber of Agriculture of Hajdú-Bihar County)
 - Kálmán Győry (Professor Emeritus, former Rector of the University of Debrecen)
 - György Balla (Professor, Academician)
- **Foundation for the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences**
 - **Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, with 405 properties⁸³**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:
 - **Dr. Sándor Csányi (Chairman and CEO of OTP Bank, President of MLSZ)**
 - **Dr. János Lázár (Fidesz Member of Parliament, former Minister of the Prime Minister's Office)**
 - Dr. István Nagy (Minister of Agriculture)
 - Péter Horn (rector emeritus)
- **Foundation for the University of Szeged**
 - **University of Szeged, with 130 properties⁸⁴**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:⁸⁵
 - **Prof. Dr. László Trócsányi, lawyer (Fidesz MEP, former Minister of Justice)**
 - Éva Hegedüs (Economist, Chairman and CEO of Gránit Bank)
 - Dr. Anikó Nagy (MD, Director General of the Heim Pál National Institute of Paediatrics)
 - Csaba Lantos (Economist-Sociologist, Director of Lantos Asset Management)
- **Universitas Quinqueecclesiensis Foundation**
 - **University of Pécs, with 113 properties⁸⁶**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:⁸⁷
 - **Katalin Szili (former MSZP politician, currently Deputy Prime Minister);**
 - Éva Mikes (Regional Development Commissioner of the Orbán government);
 - István Decci (Chancellor of the University of Pécs, former Fidesz deputy mayor of Pécs);

- Gábor Rappai (economist, professor at the PTE KTK)
- **National Foundation for Health and Medical Education**
 - **Semmelweis University, with 68 properties and Richter Gedeon Chemical Manufacturing Plc. 9 777 658 shares of series "C"⁸⁸**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:⁸⁹
 - **Prof. Dr. Béla Merkely (Rector of Semmelweis University, Professor, Director of the Heart and Vascular Clinic of Városmajor)**
 - Dr. Miklós Szócska (Director of Semmelweis University, former State Secretary for Health)
 - Prof. Dr. Péter Gloviczky (professor)
 - Dr. J. Róbert Bedros (Director General of the Szent Imre Hospital, Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister, Professor)
- **Maecenas Universitatis Corvini Foundation**
 - **Corvinus University of Budapest, MOL Hungarian Oil and Gas Plc. 81,942,946 Series A shares, the Richter Gedeon Chemical Manufacturing Plc. 18 637 486 Series C shares, 17 pieces of real estate⁹⁰**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:⁹¹
 - **Zsolt Hernádi (Chairman of the Board of Trustees, CEO of MOL)**
 - **Dr András Láncki (Fidesz philosopher, former rector of the Corvinus University of Budapest)**
 - Dr László György (State Secretary for Economic Strategy and Regulation, ITM)
 - Dániel Palotai (Managing Director of the MNB between 2013-2020, economist)
 - Dr. János Martonyi (former Foreign Minister of Fidesz, law professor, university professor)
 - János József Váradi (Chairman and CEO of Wizz Air)
- **MOL - New Europe Foundation⁹²**
 - **MOL Hungarian Oil and Gas Plc. 42 977 996 ordinary shares series A⁹³**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:⁹⁴
 - **Szilárd Demeter (Director General of the Petőfi Literary Museum)**
 - Kata Molnár-Bánffy (owner-CEO of Salt Communications, CEO of Képmás Publishing)
 - György Bacsa (Managing Director of MOL Group Strategic Operations and Business Development)
 - Dr. Oszkár Világi (Head of Innovation Business and Board Member of MOL Group)
- **Foundation for Széchenyi István University**
 - **Széchenyi István University, with 61 properties⁹⁵**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:⁹⁶
 - **Péter Szijjártó (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade)**
 - Tamás Sári-Szabó (Perjele of the Benedictine Priory of Saint Mór)
 - Dr. Csaba András Dézsi (Fidesz Mayor of Győr)
 - Dr. József Bokor (Vice President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, President of the Centre for Automotive Research, SZE)
- **Neumann János University Foundation**
 - **Neumann János University, with 55 properties⁹⁷**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:⁹⁸
 - **Attila Norbert Csizmadia (Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Pallas Athéné Domus Meriti Foundation)**
 - **Sándor Lezsák (Vice-President of the National Assembly)**
 - Attila Gaál József (Deputy Mayor of Kecskemét)
 - Dr. Zoltán Nagy (Professor Emeritus at the Neumann János University)
 - Tamás József Bánkuty (Economist at the National Bank of Hungary)
- **Foundation for the University of Sopron**
 - **University of Sopron, with 50 properties⁹⁹**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:¹⁰⁰
 - **Dr. Sándor Csányi (Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Chairman and CEO of OTP Bank Nyrt.)**
 - János Péter Zambó (State Secretary for Forests and Lands)
 - Lajos Péter Csóka (Chairman of the FAO Committee on Forestry)
 - Sándor Ugró (Director of the Kiskunság National Park)
 - Dr. Ádám Balog (Chairman and CEO of MKB Bank)
- **Rudolf Kalman Foundation for Óbuda University**
 - **Óbuda University, with 35 properties¹⁰¹**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:¹⁰²
 - **Mihály Varga (Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance)**
 - Dr. András Cser-Palkovics (Mayor of Székesfehérvár, former Fidesz Member of Parliament)
 - Ottó Sinkó (CEO of Videoton)
 - Dr. Levente Kovács (Rector of Óbuda University)
 - Dr. Győző Drozdy (Deputy CEO of Telenor Hungary)
- **Universitas Miskolcensis Foundation**
 - **University of Miskolc, with 33 properties¹⁰³**

- members of the Board of Trustees:¹⁰⁴
 - **Dr Judit Varga (Chair of the Board of Trustees, Minister of Justice)**
 - Dr. Thiehl Marie-Theres (ELMÜ-ÉMÁSZ President)
 - Dr. Erika Kovács (President of the MNB Conciliation Board)
 - Dr. László Károly Fükő (BOSCH factory manager)
 - Pál Veres (Mayor of Miskolc)
- **Foundation for Hungarian Culture**
 - **Petőfi Cultural Agency, MANK Hungarian Creative Arts Non-profit Ltd. and the National Talent Non-profit Ltd., with 20 properties¹⁰⁵**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:¹⁰⁶
 - **Szilárd Demeter (President of the Board of Trustees, Director General of the Petőfi Literary Museum)**
 - **Márton Békés (Research Director of the House of Terror)**
 - Magdolna Závogyán (Managing Director of the National Institute of Cultural Affairs)
 - Péter Benő Banai (State Secretary for Public Finance, Ministry of Finance)
 - László Kelemen (Director General of the House of Traditions)
- **Foundation for the University of Pannonia**
 - **University of Pannonia, with 26 properties¹⁰⁷**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:¹⁰⁸
 - **Dr. Tibor Navracsics (Chairman of the Board of Trustees, former Minister of Public Administration and Justice of Fidesz, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, later Commissioner for Foreign Affairs)**
 - Mária Erika Garancsi (former member of the Economic Council of the University of Pannonia)
 - Dr. Zoltán Gaál (former rector of the university)
 - Tamás András Pápai (Managing Director of Continental Automotive Hungary Kft.)
 - Dr. Zoltán Birkner (President of the National Research, Development and Innovation Office)
- **Foundation for the University of Physical Education**
 - **University of Physical Education, with 19 properties¹⁰⁹**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:¹¹⁰
 - **Dr. Lajos Mocsai (Chairman of the Board of Trustees, former Rector of the University of Physical Education)**
 - **József Vida (CEO of Magyar Bankholding Zrt., a confidant of Lőrinc Mészáros, one of the main economic beneficiaries of the scheme)**
 - Attila Vári (President of the Hungarian Water Polo Federation)
 - Dr. Ádám Schmidt (advisor to the Prime Minister, lawyer)
 - Dr. Antal Kovács (Communications Director of Paks Nuclear Power Plant Ltd.)
- **Foundation for the University of Dunaújváros**
 - **University of Dunaújváros, with 17 properties¹¹¹**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:¹¹²
 - **Dr. Péter Szilágyi (Head of Cabinet and Ministerial Commissioner for National Policy, State Secretariat for National Policy, Prime Minister's Office)**
 - Dr. Béla Palotás (Professor Emeritus of the University of Dunaújváros)
 - Dr. Orsolya Pacsay-Tomassich (State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, responsible for the Hungarian Diplomatic Academy and the Stipendium Hungaricum Programme)
 - Dr. Zsolt Barna (CEO of MKB Bank Plc.)
- **Foundation for the Budapest University of Economics**
 - **Budapest University of Economics, with 11 properties¹¹³**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:¹¹⁴
 - **Dániel Jellinek (founder of Hungarian Real Estate Financing Kft., billionaire linked to the Prime Minister's son-in-law István Tiborcz)**
 - Bálint Szécsényi (CEO and Member of the Board of Equilor Investment Ltd.)
 - Katalin Nizskácsné Pintér (Managing Director of Gerbaud Gastronomy Ltd.)
 - Dr. Tamás Lőcsei (Head of PwC Hungary)
- **Hauszmann Foundation**
 - **Trustee of the estate of Alajos Hauszmann, with 11 properties¹¹⁵**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:¹¹⁶
 - **Dr. András Koltay (Rector of the National University of Public Service)**
 - Ákos Péter Mernyei (former Deputy State Secretary)
 - Edvard Benes (President of the Friends of Szentendre Association)
 - Tibor Seidl (engineer)
- **Foundation for Theatre and Film Arts**
 - **University of Theatre and Film Arts, with 10 properties¹¹⁷**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:
 - **Attila Vidnyánszky (Director of the National Theatre)**

- Dr. Tamás László Lajos (cameraman-producer)
- Oszkár Világi (CEO of SLOVNAFT)
- Dr. György Bacsa (Managing Director of MOL Strategy)
- Zoltán Rátóti (actor-director)
- **Marek József Foundation**
 - **University of Veterinary Medicine, with 9 properties¹¹⁸**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:
 - **Dr. István Bajkai (Fidesz founder, Fidesz Member of Parliament)**
 - **Dr. Sándor Fazekas (Fidesz Member of Parliament, former Minister of Agriculture)**
 - Dr. Péter Tamás Sótonyi (Rector of the University of Veterinary Medicine)
 - Dr. Gábor Gönczi (President of the Hungarian Veterinary Chamber)
- **Foundation for the University of Nyíregyháza**
 - **University of Nyíregyháza, with 7 properties¹¹⁹**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:¹²⁰
 - **Dr. Ferenc Kovács (Fidesz Mayor of Nyíregyháza)**
 - János Tamás Schanda (Deputy Minister of ITM)
 - László Bárány (owner of Master Good Ltd.)
 - Dr. Barnabás Kovács (Head of the Budapest Centre for Innovation and Training of Széchenyi University)
- **Foundation for the University of Tokaj-Hegyalja**
 - **Tokaj-Hegyalja University, with 4 properties and Grand Tokaj Zrt. 400 694 shares of series A¹²¹**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:¹²²
 - **Dr. István Stumpf (Chairman of the Board of Trustees, former Fidesz Minister in charge of the Prime Minister's Office, former constitutional judge, founder of Századvég)**
 - György Wáberer (Government Commissioner for the Development of the Tokaj-Zemplén Region)
 - Krisztián Sauska (founder of Sauska Winery)
 - Dr. Péte Molnár (Estate Manager of Patrícus Wine House)
 - Dr. Gábor Bolvári-Takács (Rector of the University of Tokaj-Hegyalja)
- **Makovecz Campus Foundation**
 - **Former campus of Pázmány Péter Catholic University in Piliscsaba, 4 properties¹²³**
 - the foundation is established by **Gergely Gulyás, Minister of the Prime Minister's Office, who appoints the chairman and members of its board of trustees¹²⁴**
- **Foundation for the Moholy-Nagy University of Arts**
 - **Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, 1 piece of real estate¹²⁵**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:
 - **József Fülöp (Rector of the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Ministerial Commissioner of the Hungarian Creative Industry)**
 - **Sándor Scheer (CEO of Market Építő Zrt.)**
 - Szabolcs Szemerey (CEO of Kecskemét Dual Education Ltd.)
 - Gábor Kopek (former rector of the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design)
- **Foundation for the Hungarian University of Dance**
 - **Hungarian University of Dance Arts, with 5 properties¹²⁶**
 - members of the Board of Trustees:¹²⁷
 - Ifj. György Gyula Harangozó (Kossuth Prize-winning ballet artist, former director of the Hungarian National Ballet, member of the Consistory of the Hungarian University of Dance)
 - Zoltán Zsuráfszky (Kossuth Prize-winning dance artist, managing director of the Honvéd Ensemble, academician)
 - Yvette Bozsik (Kossuth Prize-winning dance artist, Head of Department at the Hungarian University of Dance)
 - Jolán Török (Gyula Harangozó Award-winning dance artist, Miklós Bánffy Award-winning artistic manager, founding director of the National Dance Theatre)

F21. Unilateral rewriting of the electoral system

- *changes to the majority allocation of seats:*
 - the number of single-member constituencies was reduced from 176 to 106, but their weight increased as the number of seats from party lists was reduced even more (from 210 to 93)
 - regional lists and the second round were abolished
 - “winner compensation” was introduced which, through a complicated calculation, further boosts the mandate share of the winner
- *to secure the government's majority:*
 - manipulated constituency map

- nothing is known about who created the map, when, and according to what criteria → is in itself a reason to suspect that the map has been politically manipulated
- the fact of political manipulation has been confirmed by several independent analyses ¹²⁸
 - districts that lean towards the government side tend to be smaller in population than those with an opposition character
 - in many places, cities with more balanced support tended to be joined by agglomerations with a better tendency to the right (gerrymandering)
- the effect of the constituency map can be seen in a notoriously head-to-head position → 2022 may produce just such a result
- **in the event of a tie between the governing party and the united opposition, the former would win in 57% of single-member constituencies and the latter in 43% of constituencies**, assuming a repeat of the geographical voting patterns of the last election
 - **this one distortion alone shows that the struggle between the two parties is unequal, since it does not strengthen the greatest political force at the moment, but the government**
- unlimited campaigning on the government side
 - on paper:
 - all parties receive equal advertising time in state media: 470 minutes are divided equally between the national list of candidates, while the 13 national lists receive 10-10 minutes on commercial TV and radio
 - all parties can place political advertisements in print and online media free of charge and on equal terms, and can advertise in public spaces according to price lists that apply equally to all
 - in fact:
 - **the regulation applies to the fifty-day campaign period: there is virtually no regulation outside that period**
 - the inequality of resources and the overlapping political campaigns disguised as social advertising (see 3.1.) make **the government side much more visible between elections than the opposition**
 - **NGOs are not even subject to the same regulations as political parties**, so we often see poster campaigns on the streets not of the government or Fidesz, but of the state-funded Civil Union Forum (CÖF), which perfectly coincide with the current political messages of the government
 - **ads on social media are not considered campaign spending**, and the government often spends many times as much on these platforms as the opposition
- anti-democratic regulation of the acquisition of nationality mandates
 - after 2010, the possibility for national minorities to be represented in parliament was created
 - **those who vote for the nationality list instead of the party list have no real choice**
 - the minority list of nationalities is drawn up by the national minority self-governments, no one else has the right to draw up a national list
 - so that the voter is faced with a ballot paper in the polling booth on which he or she can tick a single box on a single list
 - this cannot be called a democratic election, as it is not really a choice.
 - **11 out of 13 nationalities have no mathematical chance of winning a preferential mandate**
 - a preferential seat may be won by a nationality list which obtains at least a quarter of the number of votes that would result in a seat on a party list in the given election.
 - about 100,000 votes result in a party list mandate → so a preferential mandate requires about 25,000 votes
 - only the German and Roma nationalities have that many voters → the other 11 minorities have no mathematical chance of winning the preferential mandate.
 - **easy to abuse**
 - if a political force has more influence, it can get a “cheaper mandate” through the leader of the national list
 - e.g. Imre Ritter, who was formerly a Fidesz mayoral candidate in Budaörs, won a preferential parliamentary seat as leader of the German nationality list in 2018, only to vote with the government for the whole term afterwards.
 - in 2022, too, all the signs point to that this “cheaper” mandate will be won, on paper, by German nationality, in practice, by Fidesz.
- discrimination against Hungarians voting from abroad on the basis of Hungarian address
 - **the possibility to vote by post is given to Hungarians living abroad without a Hungarian address, but not to Hungarian citizens residing abroad with a Hungarian address (e.g. working or studying in Western European countries)**
 - after registration, Hungarians living abroad receive the list ballot paper by post to the address they have requested (they cannot vote for an individual MP as they have no Hungarian address)

- this is a much more convenient and cheaper solution than the option for Hungarians abroad, who can only vote at the embassy or consulate
- the Constitutional Court (see 1.2.) found no grounds for discrimination between Hungarians residing abroad and Hungarians residing abroad
- the real reason is clearly political: **while the share of postal voters who voted for Fidesz was 95% in 2014 and 96% in 2018, among Hungarians who went to the West, voters critical of the government were over-represented** (by a margin nowhere near that much).
- anomalies in the electoral information system
 - in 2018, the National Election Office (NVI) website was repeatedly down or inaccessible on polling day, which resulted in parties and candidates being unable to access polling station records for some time, and data from previous elections becoming inaccessible for a long time
 - it took the NVI 9 days to restore the main election information database, valasztas.hu
 - the preparation, monitoring, and expansion of the IT security system in 2022 will be carried out, among others, by T-Systems, which in recent years has been owned by various oligarchs of the regime.¹²⁹

F22. Changing the effect of the election ex post: the example of municipal elections

- the 2019 local elections brought a heavy defeat for Fidesz
 - Budapest, a good part of the big cities, cities with county rights, and several smaller settlements elected independent or openly opposition mayors or a majority opposition representative body.
 - on the basis of the list votes, Fidesz gained a majority in the county assemblies, which (at that time) did not have any real powers
- **many of the powers of local authorities are taken away following electoral defeats:**
 - building authority and building supervision authority are transferred to government offices
 - relaxing building regulations, changing the rules on urban development and planning
 - municipalities are usually only allowed to give an opinion on the appearance of the municipality, which does not even bind the authorizing building authority
- **the process accelerated in 2020, when the regime, using the pandemic as a pretense:**
 - made it possible, with a government decree, to designate a special economic zone in a municipality, which is therefore deprived of the said zone and all public land and local taxes associated with it
 - took away car tax and tourism tax from municipalities
 - prohibited local authorities from increasing their revenue from rents and taxes
 - the capital and other more developed municipalities have been particularly hit by the non-compliance with local business tax
 - compensated for the reduction in revenue for Fidesz municipalities, but not for opposition ones.

F41. Anomalies in postal voting

- **The letter packages is in the voter's possession for a long time.**
 - the confidentiality and voluntary nature of the election may be compromised
 - it is impossible to check that the ballot paper is actually filled in by the recipient and not by a relative, neighbor, or party activist
 - *the rules were further relaxed after 2018:* the Curia invalidated postal votes after the 2018 election because they were in damaged envelopes or not returned in the official envelope → Fidesz changed the election rules to allow the return of voting documents in any envelope in 2022¹³⁰
- **The letter packages are collected by Fidesz front organizations which sometimes also – illegally – deliver them.**
 - the voter can voluntarily give its postal vote, filled in or not, to anyone to ensure that it is returned to the National Election Office → this is exploited by organizations loyal to Fidesz outside Hungary, and they, according to press reports, collect these postal votes with great efficiency
 - in Transylvania, it is possible to cast your vote in the so-called Democracy Centers, where they are happy to help you fill in the identification form correctly → It is impossible to check how voters are influenced here in the absence of an opposing party.
 - in 2022, the activists of the Concordia Minoritatis Hungaricae association, affiliated to the Hungarian Association of Vojvodina, deliver ballot papers to the Hungarian citizens of Serbia instead of the Serbian postal service → this breaks even the extremely lax rules, not to mention all the electoral principles: **it is the activists of a party who decide who will receive the ballot papers and who will not.**¹³¹
- **There are dead people on the list whose letter packages can be misused by anyone.**
 - the Hungarian State is not automatically informed of the death of citizens living abroad who have never had a Hungarian address
 - **since a registration is active for at least ten years, the National Election Office sends out the ballot paper without question to the notification address of the deceased during this period before each election and referendum**

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- ⁴³ <https://www.portfolio.hu/gazdasag/20220320/szja-visszaterites-meglepo-adatot-arult-el-a-kormany-534297>; <https://www.portfolio.hu/gazdasag/20220127/szja-visszaterites-2022-jon-a-penzeso-mutatjuk-mit-kell-tudni-es-mi-van-azzal-aki-lemaradt-522951>
- ⁴⁴ <https://telex.hu/valasztas-2022/2022/02/17/szja-visszaterites-13-havi-nyugdij-fegyverpenz-nyitrai-zsolt>
- ⁴⁵ <https://nav.gov.hu/ado/szja/25-ev-alatti-fiatalok-kedvezmenye>;
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- ⁴⁸ https://hvg.hu/tudomany/20220212_emmi_kozoktatás_notebook_program_tanarok_diakok
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- ⁵² <https://atlatszo.hu/kozpenz/2016/09/19/gyulnek-a-csontvazak-polt-peter-szekrenyeben-igy-zullott-az-ugyeszseg-a-politika-kiszolgalojava/>; <https://atlatszo.hu/kozpenz/2021/09/16/elszabottal-nyomozások-20-fontos-ugy-ami-megakadt-az-ugyeszsegen/>
- ⁵³ <https://444.hu/2019/11/04/33-erv-hogy-polt-peter-miert-remek-valasztas-a-legfobb-ugyeszi-posztra>
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⁶⁸ <https://www.unhackdemocracy.eu/hu/investigation>

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⁷⁰ https://www.vasarnapihirek.hu/szerintem/lakner_zoltan_szegenysegebe_zart_oroszag

⁷¹ http://www.valasztasirendszer.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC-Atlatszo-TI-KM_ASzegenyekVoksaKozmunkaEsAValasztasTisztasaganakKockazatai_150219.pdf

⁷² <https://24.hu/kozelet/2018/04/18/elsult-a-fidesz-a-csodafegyvere/>;
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