



International Foundation
for Electoral Systems

Election FAQs: Hungary

Parliamentary Elections

April 3, 2022

Europe & Eurasia

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

2011 Crystal Drive | Floor 10 | Arlington, VA 22202 | USA | www.IFES.org

March 28, 2022

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Election Snapshot..... 1

When is Election Day? 1

Why are these elections important? 1

What is the electoral system? 2

Who is eligible to run as a candidate?..... 2

Who can vote in these elections?..... 2

How many registered voters are there? 3

What are the campaign expenditure and donation limits? 3

What is the election management body? What are its powers? 4

How is the election management body protecting the elections and voters from COVID-19?..... 5

What provisions are in place that support the equal rights of women and of persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups?..... 5

When will official results be announced?..... 6

Resources..... 7

Disclosure 7

Election Snapshot

- Election Day: April 3, 2022
- Registered voters: 8,211,065
- Polling stations: 10,285
- Physical distancing: None; COVID-19 restrictions have largely been lifted
- Seats: 199
- Candidate lists: 7
- Candidates: 664
- Campaign expenditure and donation limits: No limits on private spending

When is Election Day?

The Republic of Hungary will hold parliamentary elections and a national referendum on Sunday, April 3, 2022, in designated voting locations across the country and abroad. Voting will take place from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.¹ at a reported 10,285 polling stations throughout Hungary.² The election law recommends 600 voters per polling station and restricts voters' lists to no more than 1,500 voters per station. Settlements in Hungary with a single polling district will each be staffed by at least five members of polling station commissions, while settlements with more than one district require at least three members per station.³ Each party or independent candidate can delegate two poll workers per precinct. Local governments also choose three people per precinct. The deadline for applying to become a poll worker is March 25.⁴

Why are these elections important?

The parliamentary elections pose the greatest challenge to the dominance of the ruling party, Fidesz, since Prime Minister Viktor Orban took power in 2010. Six opposition parties representing different elements of the political spectrum created the *United for Hungary* alliance in an effort to oust Orban from power. Prime Minister Orban's party has enjoyed a supermajority in the National Assembly since 2018, and between 2010 and 2015.⁵

Hungary is holding a referendum alongside the parliamentary elections on new laws regarding LGBTQ topics in educational programs in schools. The four questions for the referendum are:

- Do you support the teaching of sexual orientation to minors in public education institutions without parental consent?
- Do you support the promotion of sex reassignment therapy for underage children?
- Do you support the unrestricted exposure of underage children to sexually explicit media content that may affect their development?

¹ Republic of Hungary National Election Office. *Questions & Answers*. Accessed [here](#).

² Republic of Hungary National Election Office. *Election of Members of Parliament 2022*. Accessed [here](#).

³ Republic of Hungary. *Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure*. Section 14, 77. Accessed [here](#).

⁴ Correspondence with *Unhack Democracy*.

⁵ Eamonn Butler. *Hungary Election: Viktor Orban Tightens His Grip With a Super-Majority*. The Conversation. April 9, 2018. Accessed [here](#). BBC. *Hungarian PM Orban Loses Two-Thirds 'Super-Majority'*. February 22, 2015. Accessed [here](#).

- Do you support the showing of sex-change media content to minors?⁶

What is the electoral system?

The Republic of Hungary employs a parliamentary system of government. The National Assembly is the most powerful legislative body in the country, with 199 members elected to four-year terms under a mixed system. Of the 199 total members, 106 are elected through one-round contests in single-member constituencies and 93 through nationwide proportional votes for parties that pass a five percent threshold. The threshold rises to 15 percent for joint lists of more than two parties, such as the opposition alliance United for Hungary.⁷ All members are elected simultaneously.

Who is eligible to run as a candidate?

Every adult citizen is eligible to run as a candidate and hold office as a member of the National Assembly, local government representative, mayor or member of the European Parliament. An adult is defined as a person who has reached the age of 18 or who was married before age 18.⁸ Each individual who seeks to run must collect at least 500 signatures of eligible voters in order to register as a candidate in the 2022 parliamentary elections.⁹ There are 664 total registered candidates for the upcoming elections.¹⁰

Lists of candidates for nationwide voting can be drawn up by a registered party or by a national ethnic community.¹¹ There are currently 43 parties and 12 nationality groups whose registration the National Election Commission has confirmed.¹² Of these, seven are national party lists. Parties can also establish joint lists. In the upcoming election, opposition parties Democracy Coalition, Jobbik, Momentum, Hungarian Socialist Party, Hungary's Green Party, Dialogue for Hungary (Parbeszed) and Everybody's Hungary Movement (Mindenki Magyarországa Mozgalom) are running under the United for Hungary joint list;¹³ Fidesz and the Christian Democratic People's Party are running on a separate joint list.¹⁴

Who can vote in these elections?

Every adult citizen of Hungary who is at least 18 years old or was married before age 18 has the right to vote in these elections. However, those disenfranchised by a court for criminal offenses or for "limited mental capacity" do not have the right to vote.¹⁵ Courts may also decide to deny suffrage to those placed under a conservatorship.¹⁶

⁶ Julia Tar. *Constitutional Court Decided: There Will be Referendum on Child Protection*. Hungary Today. January 1, 2022. Accessed [here](#).

⁷ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). *Hungary Parliamentary Elections: ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report*. February 4, 2022. Accessed [here](#).

⁸ Republic of Hungary National Election Office. *Questions & Answers*. Accessed [here](#).

⁹ United for Hungary official website. *Collection of Recommendations Location Finder*. Accessed [here](#).

¹⁰ Republic of Hungary National Election Office. *Nominating Organizations*. Accessed [here](#).

¹¹ Republic of Hungary National Election Office. *Nomination of a Candidate in the Election of Members of Parliament*. Accessed [here](#).

¹² Republic of Hungary National Election Office. *Nominating Organizations*. Accessed [here](#).

¹³ United for Hungary main page. Accessed [here](#).

¹⁴ Republic of Hungary National Election Office. *National Lists*. Accessed [here](#).

¹⁵ Republic of Hungary. *The Fundamental Law of Hungary, Article XXIII*. Accessed [here](#).

¹⁶ Republic of Hungary. *Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure, Section 13/A*. Accessed [here](#).

How many registered voters are there?

As of March 11, 8,221,065 people were eligible to vote in the upcoming election and referendum. Of this number, 74,550 were registered to vote as per the national minority list.¹⁷ Each eligible citizen living in Hungary is registered to a designated polling station corresponding to his or her place of residence. Voters should have received notification of where they are registered to vote between Jan. 25 and Feb. 11. Voters who did not receive a notification can make a request in person or online from the local election office. Citizens who reside in Hungary but wish to vote at a location other than the polling place assigned to their place of residence or abroad must re-register by 4:00 p.m. on March 25, 2022.¹⁸

Hungarian citizens who do not reside in Hungary may also cast ballots via out-of-country voting. The National Election Office must have received applications to vote outside the country by March 9, 25 days before the election. Once registered, citizens may cast their votes by postal mail.¹⁹

What are the campaign expenditure and donation limits?

Hungary's election laws provide state funds for election campaign activities at both the individual and party levels. The Hungarian State Treasury provides 1.18 million Hungarian forint (HUF) (around 3,300 USD) for each individual candidate registered by the National Election Office (amount adjusted by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office each year since 2013 according to consumer price index).²⁰ Parties compiling their national candidate lists are also entitled to state funds in proportion to their nominations of candidates competing in single-mandate constituencies. Funding equals a percentage of the total number of possible mandates that can be won in the election, multiplied by 5 million HUF (14,000 USD), as follows:

- 15 percent of the amount if they nominate candidates in at least 27 constituencies;
- 30 percent if they nominate candidates in at least 54 constituencies;
- 45 percent if they nominate candidates in at least 80 constituencies; or
- 60 percent if they nominate candidates in all single mandate constituencies.²¹

A party that sets up a joint party list shall be considered as a single party under these funding rules.

State funds “may only be used during the election campaign period to cover real costs related to campaign activities as defined in the Act on Electoral Procedure.”²² However, candidates who fail to win at least two percent of valid votes in their single-mandate constituencies must return the

¹⁷ Republic of Hungary National Election Office. *Number of Voters*. Accessed [here](#).

¹⁸ Republic of Hungary National Election Office. *Questions & Answers*. Accessed [here](#).

¹⁹ Republic of Hungary National Election Office. *Registration for Voters Having No Residence in Hungary*. Accessed [here](#).

²⁰ Republic of Hungary. *Act LXXXVII of 2013 on the Transparency of Campaign Costs Related to the Election of Members of the Parliament, Section 1*. Accessed [here](#).
Correspondence with *Unhack Democracy*.

²¹ Republic of Hungary. *Act LXXXVII of 2013 on the Transparency of Campaign Costs Related to the Election of the Members of the Parliament, Sections 3 and 5*. Accessed [here](#).

²² Republic of Hungary. *Act LXXXVII of 2013 on the Transparency of Campaign Costs Related to the Election of the Members of the Parliament, Section 1*. Accessed [here](#).

state funds to the Treasury.²³ The State Audit Office of Hungary conducts audits at the Treasury and of candidates and parties to ensure proper use of state funds.

There is no legislation that regulates or limits individual donations, individual reporting, proportionate sanctions or third-party campaigning.²⁴

What is the election management body? What are its powers?

The two categories of election management bodies are election commissions and election offices. The election commissions are divided into five tiers: the National Election Commission (NEC), regional election commissions, parliamentary single-member constituency election commissions, local election commissions and polling station commissions.²⁵

There are also five tiers of election offices: The National Election Office (NEO), regional election office, parliamentary single-member constituency election office, local election office and diplomatic mission election office.²⁶ There are approximately 1,200 local election offices in Hungary.²⁷

The NEC consists of at least seven members, who are elected by the National Assembly with a two-thirds majority vote. This means that the ruling Fidesz party has been able to elect NEC members unilaterally with its supermajority since 2018, and between 2010 and 2015.²⁸

Hungary's prime minister proposes the NEO president, who is appointed by the president of the Republic of Hungary.²⁹

The NEC's responsibilities include:

- Issuing guidelines to electoral bodies;
- Making decisions on appeals, objections and alleged breaches of law in elections; and
- Deciding on the registration of nominating organizations.³⁰

The NEO is responsible for central tasks related to the preparation and conduct of the elections.³¹

According to the Hungarian electoral legal framework, political parties that form a parliamentary group in the National Assembly each delegate an additional member of the NEC. Nominating organizations that drew up the national list may each delegate an additional NEC member after

²³ Ibid., Section 8. Accessed [here](#).

²⁴ OSCE. *Hungary Parliamentary Elections: ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report*. February 4, 2022. Accessed [here](#).

²⁵ Republic of Hungary. *Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure, Section 12*. Accessed [here](#).

²⁶ Republic of Hungary. *Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure, Section 52*. Accessed [here](#).

²⁷ OSCE. *Hungary Parliamentary Elections: ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report*. February 4, 2022. Accessed [here](#).

²⁸ Republic of Hungary. *Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure, Section 14*. Accessed [here](#).

²⁹ Ibid., Section 55. Accessed [here](#).

³⁰ Official website of the National Election Commission. *Duties and Powers of the National Election Commission*. Accessed [here](#).

³¹ Official Website of the National Election Commission. *National Election Office: Core Activities, Tasks, Competencies*. Accessed [here](#).

the date for the general parliamentary elections is set and after the date for European Parliament elections is confirmed.³²

How is the election management body protecting the elections and voters from COVID-19?

Voters who cannot go to a polling station due to health issues may request a ballot box for mobile voting. Voters must file requests for ballot boxes either in person at their local election office by 4:00 p.m. on April 1 or online by noon on April 3.

The Hungarian government lifted most COVID-19 restrictions on March 7. People are no longer required to wear masks in closed spaces, and all restrictions related to events, public transportation and stores are no longer in effect. Restrictions on entering Hungary have also been lifted. Health and social workers, as well as national defense employees, are still required to be vaccinated; however other areas of administration no longer require vaccination.³³

The National Election Commission and National Election Office have not provided any further specific guidance on COVID-19 provisions for the elections.

What provisions are in place that support the equal rights of women and of persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups?

The election law requires the following assistance to be available upon request for voters with disabilities:

- Sending voter registration notifications in braille if requested by Jan. 25;
- Providing easy-to-read voter information;
- Providing braille ballot papers if requested by March 25;
- Using braille voting templates at polling stations for voting by mobile ballot box;
- Accepting applications to vote at accessible polling stations through March 30;
- Providing polling stations that are accessible by voters with limited mobility;³⁴ and
- Permitting voters to receive voting assistance from a person of their choice or, alternatively, from two members of the ballot counting committee.³⁵

Persons experiencing homelessness who have a registered address (such as a homeless shelter) may vote at a designated polling station in the municipality. Those who have no municipal address must apply for registration at a local election office or at the National Election Office.

A voter who belongs to a national minority community can ask to be added to the electoral list as a national minority voter and can vote as part of his or her minority community.³⁶ The following recognized national minorities have a preferential threshold for inclusion in the National Assembly:

³² Republic of Hungary. *Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure, Section 27*. Accessed [here](#).

³³ Government of Hungary Information Center. *KTK: The Obligation to Wear a Mask will be Abolished from Monday*. March 4, 2022. Accessed [here](#).

³⁴ Republic of Hungary. *Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure, Section 88*. Accessed [here](#).

³⁵ Republic of Hungary National Election Office. *Questions & Answers*. Accessed [here](#).

³⁶ Ibid.

Armenian, Bulgarian, Croatian, German, Greek, Polish, Romanian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian and Ukrainian. However, those who choose to register for minority elections may not vote in the national proportional-list elections.³⁷

The Fundamental Law of Hungary guarantees the equal rights of men and women. There are no specific provisions concerning representation or rights of women in elections or government.³⁸ Currently, 26 of the total 199 members of the National Assembly are women (13 percent). Only two parties in the National Assembly, Hungarian Socialist Party and Politics Can Be Different have any official gender quotas for their party lists.³⁹

When will official results be announced?

Single-member constituency election commissions and regional election commissions must establish their results by April 9, 2022, six days after Election Day, and must immediately send the results to the National Election Office. The National Election Commission (NEC) must establish the national list election results by April 22, 19 days after Election Day. After finalizing the election results, the NEC will publish them in the official newspaper *Magyar Közlöny*.⁴⁰

³⁷ OSCE. *Hungary Parliamentary Elections: ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report*. February 4, 2022.

³⁸ Republic of Hungary. *The Fundamental Law of Hungary*. Article XV. Accessed [here](#).

³⁹ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). *Gender Quotas Database: Hungary*. Accessed [here](#).

⁴⁰ Republic of Hungary. *Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure, Sections 294, 296 and 298*. Accessed [here](#).

Resources

- [Hungary National Election Office FAQ](#)
- [The Fundamental Law of Hungary \(Constitution\)](#)
- [Act XXXVI of 2013 on Election Procedure](#)
- [Act LXXXVII of 2013 on the Transparency of Campaign Costs Related to the Election of Members of the Parliament](#)
- [OSCE/ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Report: 2022 Hungary Parliamentary Elections](#)
- [Republic of Hungary National Election Office Website](#)

Disclosure

These FAQs reflect decisions made by the electoral management bodies as of March 28, 2022, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any International Foundation for Electoral Systems policy or technical recommendations.