

**INTERIM REPORT**  
**26 February – 25 March 2026**

**27 March 2026**

**I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- Parliamentary elections will be held in Hungary on 12 April. Voters will elect 199 members of parliament under a mixed proportional and majoritarian electoral system, including a national minority component. The elections are unfolding in a highly polarized environment amid concerns over energy security as a matter of both economic and political sovereignty, corruption, and the quality of public services. Heated debates on Hungary's foreign policy orientation, including relations with the European Union (EU) and Ukraine, feature prominently as election day approaches. The emergence of a new opposition political party has altered the pre-election political landscape.
- The electoral legal framework has been amended repeatedly since the last parliamentary elections, mainly introducing extensive technical and procedural changes recommended by the National Election Office (NEO). Many ODIHR Election Observation Mission (EOM) interlocutors raised concerns that the amendments, in particular those related to boundary delimitation, were passed without a genuinely inclusive consultation process. Previous ODIHR recommendations, including priority ones, such as the banning of the misuse of public office and resources in the campaign, remain largely unaddressed. Under the ongoing state of danger, the government has extraordinary powers to issue decrees, including to restrict or suspend certain fundamental rights and freedoms.
- Parliamentary elections are administered by a parallel structure of election commissions and offices. Thus far, the election administration has complied with legal deadlines. Preparations for the elections, including trainings and voter education activities, are proceeding according to schedule. Meetings of the National Election Commission (NEC) are public. Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors have expressed confidence in the technical capacity of the election administration. However, several have raised concerns that the method of appointing NEC members may lead to a political predominance of one party, potentially affecting the body's impartiality and independence in its decision-making. Voters with different types of disabilities may request a range of assistance measures.
- The central voter register is maintained by the NEO and as of 21 March includes over 8.1 million eligible voters. Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed confidence in the accuracy of the voter register, but some stakeholders raised concerns about the register for postal voting, citing a lack of safeguards. Almost half a million citizens, most residing in neighbouring countries, will be able to vote by post. Citizens with an individualized court decision due to the commission of criminal offence or limited capacity, because of intellectual or psychosocial disability, are not allowed to vote.
- The NEC registered 5 national proportional lists and 12 national minority lists, while Constituency Election Commissions (CoECs) registered 663 candidates competing in the 106 single-member constituencies. Some 23.4 per cent of list candidates and 24 per cent of majoritarian candidates are women. The law contains no provisions for gender quotas, despite a previous ODIHR recommendation. All but one appeal challenging decisions on candidate registration, mostly related to allegations of the fraudulent use of voters' private data and the submission of forged signatures, were unsuccessful.
- The election campaign, which officially started on 21 February, has thus far been vibrant and intense both online and offline, with the contest characterized by frequent negative campaigning and personalized attacks. The campaign has been dominated by an escalation in confrontational rhetoric on Ukraine and the EU, concerns over national and energy security as well as foreign influence in the

campaign, and underpinned by increasingly fear-mongering messaging. Many ODIHR EOM interlocutors have raised concerns about a lack of separation between state messages, activities, and resources, and the ruling party's campaign. Major campaign themes are also reflected in positive government communications, which have coincided with the pre-campaign and campaign period.

- Social networks are a primary forum for the campaign, but the national legislation is silent on online campaigning. In the wake of Meta's and Google's political advertising ban in the EU, contestants rely predominantly on organic content, although there are credible reports that Facebook accounts associated with the ruling party have repeatedly managed to circumvent the ban. With multiple AI-generated videos circulating on social media, many ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed concerns over the use of domestically generated AI content and disinformation, as well as foreign interference. A number of institutions, acting independently of one another, have assumed oversight of online activity. The National Media and Infocommunications Authority was appointed as the Digital Services Coordinator and in this capacity receives complaints concerning platforms and may issue decrees. As of 16 March, in accordance with the EU's Code of Conduct on Disinformation, local organizations are cooperating in a Rapid Response System to report problematic social media content to the platforms hosting it.
- Women are under-represented in Hungarian politics and the campaign. They hold 15.6 per cent of seats in the outgoing parliament (31 out of 199 seats) and no ministerial posts in the current government. To date, with few exceptions, women politicians have not featured prominently in the campaign, which is centered on party leaders and major political contestants. While social or family issues are addressed, gender equality or women's rights are not widely discussed.
- Parties and candidates may fund their election campaigns from public and private sources. The 2025 legal amendments lifted the campaign spending ceiling allowing for unlimited campaign spending and extended the prohibition on foreign funding of parties to third-party support. Third-party campaigning is otherwise not explicitly regulated. There are no limits on donations and contestants are not required to submit campaign finance reports before election day. There are no sanctions for the non-submission of post-election reports or inaccurate reporting, and the conclusions of the campaign finance oversight body are not subject to appeal. Several ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns about loopholes in the legislation and the independence of the oversight body.
- Hungary's media environment is affected by long-standing systemic weaknesses, with international organizations having raised concerns related to ownership transparency, media concentration, the independence of public service media and the media regulator, and the allocation of state advertising. Numerous ODIHR EOM interlocutors, including in the regions, reported uneven access to information, pressure on independent outlets, and local media environments often dominated by pro-government narratives. Independent and critical media operate alongside a much larger pro-government media sector, contributing to an uneven distribution of reach, visibility and resources. During the campaign, broadcasters are subject to balanced-coverage requirements. Public service media must air political ads on equal terms and free of charge, private broadcasters may choose whether to offer airtime for political ads, and only one has informed the NEC of its intention to do so.
- All citizens and legal entities can lodge complaints and appeals against decisions, actions, or inactions that violate election legislation if they are directly affected. The law prescribes timely deadlines for submission and consideration of election matters. Despite previous ODIHR recommendations, public hearings are not guaranteed at any level, but NEC deliberations are public, and its decisions to date have been published in a timely manner, as were relevant Supreme Court (Curia) decisions. As of 24 March, the NEC has considered over 100 cases, of which half were denied admissibility on various formal grounds. The NEC confirmed campaign or media related violations in 12 cases but did not issue dissuasive fines. On 13 March, the Constitutional Court annulled a Curia judgement that obliged online public service media to provide equal coverage to contestants.

- Despite prior ODIHR recommendations, the legal framework continues to lack provisions for domestic non-partisan election observation. Registered nominating organizations contesting with national lists may delegate observers to polling stations. International observers, who are accredited by the NEO, have the right to observe all stages of the electoral process.

## II. INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation from the Hungarian authorities to observe the 12 April 2026 parliamentary elections and based on the recommendations of a Needs Assessment Mission conducted from 15 to 19 December 2025, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) in Hungary on 26 February.<sup>1</sup> The mission, led by Eoghan Murphy, consists of a 15-member core team based in Budapest and 18 long-term observers (LTOs) deployed since 7 March to eight locations around the country. Mission members are drawn from 26 OSCE participating States, and 55 per cent of mission members are women.

## III. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Hungary is a parliamentary republic, with legislative powers vested in a unicameral parliament. Executive power is exercised by the government, currently led by prime minister Viktor Orbán of the Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz), serving his fifth term. The governing coalition of Fidesz and the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) has held a parliamentary majority since 2010 and a two-thirds majority for most of that period.<sup>2</sup>

In line with the legal framework, the parliamentary elections were called by the President of Hungary on 13 January. They are unfolding in a highly polarized political environment amid concerns over rising prices, energy security as a matter of both economic and political sovereignty, corruption, and the quality of public services. Debates on Hungary's foreign policy orientation, including its relations with the European Union (EU) and Ukraine, have featured prominently in the public discourse in the recent period.<sup>3</sup> The emergence of a newly established opposition party, the Respect and Freedom Party (TISZA), has altered the political landscape, with several parties opting not to field national lists to consolidate opposition support.<sup>4</sup>

A declared state of danger has been in force since 2022, following the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine.<sup>5</sup> Legislative developments said to be aimed at curbing foreign influence in public life have also affected the broader political environment. The establishment of the Sovereignty Protection Office (SPO) to investigate foreign-funded groups influencing Hungarian political life, followed by a much wider 2025 draft bill on transparency in public life, aiming *inter alia* to expand the SPO's powers, has drawn international

---

<sup>1</sup> See previous [ODIHR election reports on Hungary](#).

<sup>2</sup> In the 2022 parliamentary elections, Fidesz-KDNP won a two-third majority of 135 out of 199 seats. The remaining seats were distributed between the joint opposition coalition United for Hungary – including the Democratic Coalition (DK), Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary, Dialogue (*Párbeszéd*), the Momentum Movement (MM), the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP), and LMP – Hungary's Green Party) with 57 mandates, and Our Homeland (*Mi Hazánk*) with 6 seats. Of 13 national minority lists submitted, only the German minority won a preferential mandate.

<sup>3</sup> Relations between Hungary and the EU have been marked by disputes over the [suspension](#) of EU funds linked to rule-of-law requirements. In 2022, the Council of the EU suspended part of Hungary's funding under the Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation. In 2023, the European Commission [authorized](#) the release of approximately EUR 10.2 billion in cohesion funds under the Common Provisions Regulation, concluding that conditions relating to judicial independence under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights had been met. The European Parliament [challenged](#) this decision before the EU Court of Justice. In [2025](#) and early [2026](#), Hungary withheld agreement within the Council of the EU on elements of EU financial aid to Ukraine and the renewal of sanctions against the Russian Federation.

<sup>4</sup> This includes MSzP, MM, and *Párbeszéd*.

<sup>5</sup> Previously, a state of danger had been declared in March 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

and domestic criticism highlighting concerns over its potential negative effect on civic space and independent media, as well as on freedom of association and expression.<sup>6</sup>

#### IV. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Parliamentary elections are primarily regulated by the 2011 Fundamental Law (Constitution), the 2011 Act on the Elections of the Members of Parliament (Elections Act), the 2013 Act on Election Procedure, and the 2013 Act on the Transparency of Campaign Finance Costs (Campaign Finance Act).<sup>7</sup> Regulations issued by the Minister of Justice supplement the legal framework.<sup>8</sup> The National Election Commission (NEC) issues non-binding guidelines to ensure consistent interpretation and application of the law.<sup>9</sup> Under the ongoing state of danger, the government has extraordinary powers to issue decrees, including to restrict or suspend certain fundamental rights and freedoms beyond the extent permissible in ordinary circumstances, which remain in force for the duration of the declared state of danger, unless parliament revokes them.<sup>10</sup> Some ODIHR EOM interlocutors have raised concerns regarding their potential misuse during the electoral process.<sup>11</sup>

In April 2025, constitutional reform introduced the precedence of “child protection” over all other fundamental rights, other than the right to life, which led to legislative amendments impacting the right to peaceful assembly.<sup>12</sup> The Election Procedure Act has been amended six times since the last parliamentary elections, and many ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns that the amendments passed without a genuinely inclusive consultation process. The amendments introduced extensive technical and procedural changes recommended by the National Election Office (NEO), especially related to the operations of the election administration and certain election-day procedures, and included substantive changes to the functioning of the NEC.<sup>13</sup> Previous ODIHR recommendations remain largely unaddressed, including on suffrage rights, the misuse of administrative resources and preventing the blurring of state and party

---

<sup>6</sup> In 2024, the European Commission [referred](#) Hungary to the European Court of Justice, arguing the SPO founding act violated EU law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights. In 2024, the Constitutional Court [rejected](#) a complaint submitted by the Transparency International Hungary as unfounded, stating that the law does not empower the SPO to issue binding decisions that have legal consequences, and the challenged provisions cannot be linked to freedom of expression. An appeal of that case to the European Court of Human Rights is pending.

<sup>7</sup> Other relevant legislation includes the 1989 Act on the Functioning and Management of Parties (Political Parties Act), as well as laws governing public assemblies, the rights of national minorities, the media, citizenship and civil registration, criminal offences, and court proceedings.

<sup>8</sup> In December 2025 and January 2026, the Justice Minister issued two decrees regulating the financing, administration, and timelines of the elections.

<sup>9</sup> Fifteen NEC Guidelines adopted between 2014 and 2025 applicable to parliamentary elections are currently in effect.

<sup>10</sup> Previously, parliament had to approve state of danger decrees within 15 days of their adoption, and prior to a May 2022 constitutional amendment, they required repeated parliamentary approval to be extended. As of 1 January 2026, the adoption of such decrees requires two-thirds parliamentary approval; previously issued decrees remain in force.

<sup>11</sup> Since the declaration of the state of danger, the government has issued many decrees unrelated to the war in Ukraine. For instance, in August 2025, a decree allowing the tax authority and State Treasury to use private data of citizens eligible for state benefits, including postal addresses, for the purpose of providing government information. Several decrees have been issued during the electoral period to date, including a 3 February decree that effectively banned several pending cases against the Government related to the taxation of municipalities. Following a public statement of the Budapest Metropolitan Court that it will continue to hear the cases, on 16 March, it referred the question of the constitutionality of the decree to the Constitutional Court.

<sup>12</sup> This constitutional change led to amendments to the Act on the Right of Assembly that effectively restrict the rights to peaceful assembly and to freedom of expression for the LGBTI community. As a result, the Pride events planned in Budapest and Pécs in the second half of 2025 were banned. Criminal proceedings against the Budapest mayor and the Pécs event organizers for holding the events are suspended pending resolution of the respective courts' referral to the Constitutional Court in March 2026 on the constitutionality of the ban. Since the last parliamentary elections, the Constitution has been amended six times.

<sup>13</sup> Among other changes to the Act on Election Procedure related to election day, voters are no longer required to present their residency card in order to vote, the mandatory in-country use of ballot envelopes was repealed, and automatic recounts were introduced in case of certain small margins of victory.

functions, protecting media freedom, providing campaign finance transparency, and guarantees for domestic non-partisan election observation.

The 199 members of parliament are elected under a mixed system: 106 are elected in single-member constituencies by simple majority, and 93 are elected from closed candidate lists in a nationwide proportional contest through a partially compensatory system, with varying thresholds.<sup>14</sup> Each of the 13 national minority self-governments can submit a candidate list that self-declared voters of the respective minority vote for, with a preferential threshold.<sup>15</sup> In November 2022, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that this system of national minority voting violates the right to free elections and that the restrictions are discriminatory.<sup>16</sup> To date, the Hungarian authorities have not adopted any changes to the system to address the findings of the court.

In December 2024, parliament redrew the boundaries of more than one-third of the single-member constituencies. Although the delimitation was needed to address long-standing excessive deviations in the number of voters per constituency due to population movements, some ODIHR EOM interlocutors criticized the boundary changes as favouring the ruling party and highlighted the fact that the redrawing was not conducted by an independent body in an inclusive and transparent manner.<sup>17</sup> Based on the current voter distribution, 20 of the 106 single-member constituencies have more than a 10 per cent deviation, with the largest deviation being 22 per cent.<sup>18</sup>

## V. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Parliamentary elections are administered by a parallel structure of election commissions and offices. Commissions are comprised of the NEC, 20 Regional Election Commissions (RECs), 106 Constituency Election Commissions (CoECs), 1,250 Local Election Commissions (LECs), and 10,047 Polling Station Commissions (PSCs). In parallel, a system of election offices headed by the NEO is responsible for the practical administration and management of the elections and provides professional and administrative support to the commissions in their decision-making processes.

The NEC is the highest body within the election administration. By law, it is a permanent and independent institution responsible for overseeing the overall conduct of elections. The NEC is composed of seven members elected by parliament for a nine-year term, as well as delegated members nominated by parties

---

<sup>14</sup> The thresholds are 5 per cent for parties standing individually, 10 per cent for two-party coalitions, and 15 per cent for coalitions of three or more parties. Parties that reach the threshold have their surplus votes from single-member constituencies added to their total votes before the proportional seats are allocated using the *d'Hondt* formula.

<sup>15</sup> The 13 national minority self-governments (Armenians, Bulgarians, Croats, Germans, Greeks, Poles, Roma, Romanians, Rusyns, Serbs, Slovaks, Slovenes, and Ukrainians) can submit candidate lists if they collect signatures from at least 1 per cent of the voters included in the national minority register or 1,500 signatures, whichever is smaller. To win a mandate, a minority list must obtain one fourth of the electoral quota required for a mandate from a proportional list. Citizens who vote as minority voters may not vote for the regular national proportional lists. Minorities whose lists do not win a mandate are entitled to a non-voting representative in parliament.

<sup>16</sup> [Bakirdzi and E.C. v. Hungary](#). The Court's decision is based on grounds that minority voters are forced to choose between voting for a minority list – with an unachievable high threshold for representation for most minority communities – or a party list. Currently, only 2 of the 13 registered national minorities – the German and Roma communities – have a sufficient number of voters to elect an MP. ODIHR EOM interlocutors noted that some voters registered as national minorities may opt to relinquish this status in order to vote for national party lists.

<sup>17</sup> The boundaries of single-member constituencies are entrenched in cardinal law in the Elections Act and can only be changed by a two-thirds majority vote in parliament. See [Opinion on Act LXXIX of 2024 Amending Certain Laws Relating to Elections](#) of the Council of Europe's European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission), which criticizes both the procedure and substance of the redrawing of constituency boundaries, citing concerns of gerrymandering expressed by the opposition as well as demographic experts.

<sup>18</sup> Seven constituencies have more than a 15 per cent deviation, including 4 with more than a 20 per cent deviation. Section I.2.2.iv of the Venice Commission's [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) recommends that the permissible departure from the norm should not be more than 10 per cent, and should certainly not exceed 15 per cent except in special circumstances.

and coalitions with a parliamentary faction, currently eight.<sup>19</sup> Organizations without a parliamentary group that register national proportional lists, and national minority lists may also delegate a member for the electoral period; however, following recent amendments, these delegates no longer have voting rights.<sup>20</sup> Only 2 of the 15 permanent elected and delegated NEC members are women.<sup>21</sup> Meetings of the NEC are public, but only those conducted via videoconference are broadcast online.<sup>22</sup> Both the agenda and adopted decisions are made available on the NEO website in a timely manner.

Lower-level commissions consist of three members elected by the respective county or local assembly, while eligible contestants may delegate additional members, including up to two per PSC. Lower-level offices, which operate within a hierarchical structure run by the NEO, are headed by municipal clerks who serve as secretariats to the corresponding commissions. Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors have expressed confidence in the technical capacity of the election administration. However, several have raised concerns that the method of appointing NEC members may lead to a political predominance of one party, potentially affecting the body's impartiality and independence in its decision-making.

Thus far, the election administration has complied with legal deadlines and preparations at all levels are proceeding according to schedule. Since the calling of the elections, the NEC has adopted 190 decisions concerning the registration of nominating organizations and national minority lists, the content and layout of ballot papers, as well as complaints and appeals against decisions of lower-level election commissions.

The NEO has developed training materials for the heads of lower-level election offices, as well as for PSCs, which are available online. At local levels, training sessions for PSC members are either taking place or scheduled. In addition, webpages provide information and videos on the elections, with dedicated sections on the registration of national minorities and voting procedures for voters with visually impairments and reduced mobility.

Voters with disabilities may request a range of assistance measures, including election notices and voting templates in *Braille*, access to easy-to-read materials, and assignment to polling stations accessible to voters with reduced mobility, who may also apply up to 12 April to cast their ballot by mobile ballot box.

## VI. VOTER REGISTRATION

All citizens aged 18 years, as well as married citizens from the age of 16, have the right to vote, except those disenfranchised by an individualized court decision due to the commission of a criminal offence or limited capacity, because of intellectual or psychosocial disability.<sup>23</sup> Suffrage restrictions based on mental disability are contrary to OSCE commitments and other international standards.<sup>24</sup> The central voter register is maintained by the NEO and is based on data from the civil registry as well as other administrative registries.<sup>25</sup> As of 21 March, the central voter register contains a total of 8,121,336 eligible citizens.

---

<sup>19</sup> In July 2022, in line with an ODIHR recommendation, the Act on Election Procedure was amended to extend the mandate of delegated members from parties with a parliamentary group for the entire duration of the legislative term or until the parliamentary faction ceases to exist. The parliamentary factions with delegated members are: Fidesz, KDNP, DK, MSZP, MM, *Párbeszéd*, Jobbik, and Our Homeland Movement (*Mi Hazánk Mozgalom*).

<sup>20</sup> A July 2022 amendment to the Act of Election Procedure repealed the voting rights of delegated members from parties without a parliamentary group and from national minority lists. Delegated members of the eligible entities – TISZA and the Two-Tailed Dog Party (MKKP) – and national minorities started attending NEC sessions on 10 March.

<sup>21</sup> There is no gender-disaggregated data on the composition of election commissions and election office staff.

<sup>22</sup> The ODIHR EOM has thus far attended ten NEC meetings, three of which were held via videoconference.

<sup>23</sup> According to the NEO as of 11 March, 74,862 citizens are disenfranchised: 47,940 due to a court decision declaring mental incapacity, and 26,922 as a result of a final and binding court decision related to a criminal offence.

<sup>24</sup> Paragraph 7.3 of the 1990 [OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) states that the participating States will “guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens”. See Articles 12 and 29 of the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#). See also Paragraph 48 of [General Comment No. 1](#) to Article 12 of the CRPD, which states that “a person’s decision-making ability cannot be a justification for any exclusion of persons with disabilities from exercising [...] the right to vote [and] the right to stand for election”.

<sup>25</sup> This includes the National Court Office and the Criminal Registry for those deprived of suffrage rights.

Registration is passive for voters with a registered domicile in Hungary, and active for voters without one, who must update their data every 10 years or vote within the ten-year period to remain in the register and be eligible to vote by post. The postal voter register contains the records of 496,473 voters (6.1 per cent of the electorate). This group consists mainly of Hungarian citizens living in neighboring countries but also includes 3,719 in-country voters without a registered domicile.<sup>26</sup> Postal voters may only vote in the national list contest.<sup>27</sup>

Voters abroad with a domicile in Hungary may vote for both the national list and the single-member district contests at 151 polling stations in Hungarian diplomatic representations, provided they apply by 2 April.<sup>28</sup> In-country voters who will not be able to vote in their designated polling station may request absentee voting up to 10 days before election day.<sup>29</sup> Voters may request changes to their voter register data at election offices until two days before election day. Updated voter registration data, including information on postal, out-of-country, and absentee voters is continuously published on the NEO website.

Most ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed confidence in the accuracy of the voter register. However, some raised concerns about the accuracy of the postal voter register, citing a lack of continuous updates or, at least, updates in electoral periods, and a lack of safeguards when compared with in-person voting.

## VII. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Citizens with voting rights are eligible to stand as candidates. Candidates may be nominated by political organizations or may run as independents. Political organizations or national minority self-governments intending to field single-member constituency candidates or a national list must register with the NEC as a nominating organization.<sup>30</sup> To register a national list, a party or coalition must nominate candidates in at least 71 single-member constituencies across 14 counties and the capital. A candidate may contest in only one constituency but may simultaneously appear on the nominating organization's national list. The law contains no provisions for gender quotas, despite a previous ODIHR recommendation.

Candidate registration began on 3 February. National lists could be registered until 7 March. Candidates for the 106 single-member constituencies had to submit at least 500 support signatures from eligible voters registered in the constituency to the respective CoEO by 6 March, using NEO provided support signature sheets (recommendation sheets); the CoEOs verified them within four days of submission.

The NEC registered five national lists, with a total of 875 candidates,<sup>31</sup> including 205 women (23.4 per cent).<sup>32</sup> Two national lists were rejected.<sup>33</sup> Three of the five organizations with national lists fielded candidates in all 106 single-member constituencies: Fidesz, Our Homeland Movement (*Mi Hazánk*

---

<sup>26</sup> According to the NEO [website](#), most postal voters belong to Hungarian minorities residing in Romania (311,128), followed by Serbia (86,039) and Germany (15,259).

<sup>27</sup> Their completed ballot packages may be sent by post to the NEO or delivered in person, by the voter or a proxy, to Hungarian diplomatic representations or to CoEOs in the country.

<sup>28</sup> According to the NEO, as of 21 March, 59,078 voters applied for vote at a Hungarian diplomatic representation.

<sup>29</sup> According to the NEO, as of 21 March, 125,190 voters had requested an absentee ballot.

<sup>30</sup> The NEC registered 42 nominating organizations, including 30 political parties and coalitions and 12 national minority lists. It [rejected](#) the registration of six organizations for lack of proper legal representation, one of which unsuccessfully appealed the NEC decision to the Curia.

<sup>31</sup> The five organizations that registered a national list are: DK, Fidesz – KDNP, *Mi Hazánk*, TISZA, and MKKP.

<sup>32</sup> At the national list level, TISZA fielded 33.5 per cent women candidates (62 out of 185); DK 24.1 per cent (26 out of 108); MKKP 22.2 per cent (14 out of 63); Fidesz – KDNP coalition 21.1 per cent (59 out of 279); and *Mi Hazánk* 18.3 per cent (44 out of 240). Each of these lists includes two women in the top five positions.

<sup>33</sup> The NEC [refused](#) the registration of the Tea Party list on the grounds that some of its candidates did not have suffrage rights. The Tea Party unsuccessfully appealed the decision to the Curia. The list of the coalition of the Solidarity Party and Workers' Party was [approved](#) by the NEC on 7 March. However, the coalition was unable to submit candidates in at least 71 constituencies, and therefore, the registration of the national list was reversed.

*Mozgalom*), and TISZA.<sup>34</sup> A total of 663 candidates, including 160 women (24.1 per cent),<sup>35</sup> nominated by 14 organizations or running independently, are contesting the 106 single-member constituency elections.<sup>36</sup> Some 60 appeals challenged CoEC decisions on candidate registration, the vast majority requesting de-registration in connection with allegations of breaches and fraudulent use of voters' private data or other malfeasance in the support signature sheets.<sup>37</sup> One candidate was deregistered based on fraudulent signature collection sheets.

As in previous elections, the NEO launched an online portal allowing voters to verify whether their data had been used to support any candidate. Several ODIHR EOM interlocutors expressed concerns about the misuse of personal data and the submission of forged signatures. The portal received around 82,000 queries during the registration period, including reports of alleged malpractices involving 51 candidates from 12 organizations in 45 constituencies.<sup>38</sup> However, as the signature verification process stops once 500 valid signatures have been confirmed, any remaining signatures were not entered into the portal, and therefore voters could not verify if their data may have been misused in the additional signature sheets.

## VIII. CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

While the official campaign started on 21 February, political parties have been continuously campaigning since mid-2025.<sup>39</sup> The scale of campaign activities has been significant, with contestants campaigning across the country, including with regional leadership tours, large-scale rallies, and town hall meetings.<sup>40</sup> On 15 March, Fidesz and TISZA, the two main contestants, staged massive, peaceful marches in Budapest, with over 100,000 people in attendance at each. The contest has been characterized by frequent negative campaigning and personalized attacks.

Campaigning by public officials and misuse of public office and administrative resources for campaign purposes are not explicitly prohibited by law. Many ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns about a lack of separation between state messaging activities and public resources and the ruling party's campaign.<sup>41</sup> Cases of misuse of public office and resources in the campaign were noted.<sup>42</sup> Campaign billboards and street advertising columns by Fidesz often display personalized attacks against political challengers, negatively

<sup>34</sup> DK and MKKP fielded candidates in 105 and 79 single-member constituencies, respectively.

<sup>35</sup> TISZA fielded 33 per cent women candidates in single-member constituencies (35 out of 106); the MKKP, 30.4 per cent (24 out of 79); DK, 27.5 per cent (29 out of 105); *Mi Hazánk*, 17 per cent (18 out of 106); and the Fidesz-KDNP coalition, 14.2 per cent (15 out of 106).

<sup>36</sup> Forty-two independent candidates are running in 35 constituencies.

<sup>37</sup> Based on decisions published on the respective county administration websites. More than half of these cases were against candidates nominated by the Two-Tailed Dog Party; the party publicly claimed that this was a coordinated effort to obstruct its campaign and reported it to the police. The RECs notified the NEO of the individual breaches of voters' data, which referred 45 such cases to law enforcement. Some ten other complainants objected that the CoECs refused to allow them to view the signature sheets.

<sup>38</sup> As of 12 March. See [NEO website](#).

<sup>39</sup> For example, in mid-2025, TISZA launched a '[Road to Victory](#)' tour visiting municipalities across the country, while Fidesz and its associated Digital Democracy Development Foundation launched online and in-person initiatives for political messaging, including '[Digital Civic Circles](#)' (DPK) and the 'Fight Club'.

<sup>40</sup> ODIHR EOM LTOs have thus far observed 25 campaign events staged by 4 parties across 14 counties.

<sup>41</sup> In February 2026, the government [publicized](#) the payment of the 13<sup>th</sup> and newly introduced 14<sup>th</sup> monthly pension, and the State Treasury [announced](#) on 25 February that businesses can apply from 1 March for government compensation related to the minimum-wage increase. A variety of government programs – from the COVID-19 vaccine during the pandemic, to free digital watches for elderly citizens to monitor their health, and a subsidized mortgage program introduced on 1 September 2025 – have required participants to register their email addresses. Participants have since received emails with government communications that many ODIHR EOM interlocutors claim have been construed as campaign messages. On 13 March, the website of the [cabinet](#) published the program for the ruling party's rally in Budapest on 15 March. The same website also features a link to the [National Petition](#), a nonbinding survey on the war in Ukraine featuring language that echoes ruling party messaging.

<sup>42</sup> For [example](#), in early March, 43 mayors in single-member constituency 130 in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county issued a "Mayor's Letter" calling on voters to vote for Fidesz and its candidate. The letter was reportedly mailed by the individual mayors to voters, with a cover letter that in some cases was printed on the mayors' official stationery.

associating European and Ukrainian leaders with the main opposition candidate. The campaign discourse has been dominated by an escalation in confrontational rhetoric on Ukraine and the EU, concerns over national and energy security as well as foreign influence in the campaign, and underpinned by increasingly negative and fear-mongering messaging.<sup>43</sup> Outside of these main themes, political messaging is focused on security, energy prices, the cost of living, anti-corruption, and social and family benefits. These themes are also reflected in positive government communications, which have coincided with the pre-campaign and campaign period.<sup>44</sup>

Social networks are a primary forum for the campaign, and the internet is used by 93.8 per cent of Hungarians between the ages of 16 and 74;<sup>45</sup> 54 per cent uses social media as a source of news.<sup>46</sup> Facebook is by far the country's most popular platform, with just over four million visitors in February 2026 in a country of some nine million.<sup>47</sup> In the wake of Facebook's and Google's political advertising bans,<sup>48</sup> contestants rely predominantly on organic content, although there are credible reports that Facebook accounts associated with the ruling party have repeatedly managed to circumvent the ban.<sup>49</sup> Campaign regulations are silent on online campaigning, but EU law, including the Digital Services Act, applies.<sup>50</sup> With multiple AI-generated videos by political actors circulating on social media before and during the official campaign period, many ODIHR EOM interlocutors have expressed concerns over the use of domestically generated AI content and disinformation, and foreign interference.<sup>51</sup> The ODIHR EOM is monitoring the campaign online.<sup>52</sup>

A number of state bodies, acting independently of one another, have assumed oversight of online activity. The National Media and Infocommunications Authority (NMHH) was appointed as the Digital Services Coordinator as of 1 January 2023. In this capacity, the NMHH can receive complaints concerning social

---

<sup>43</sup> Both the government and Fidesz have framed the elections in terms of war and security. The [Minister of Foreign Affairs](#) stated that “only the current government can ... help avoid Hungary being dragged into a war”. ‘Anti-war rallies’ were organized by Fidesz-associated DPKs in 2025 and early 2026, including a [rally in Békéscsaba](#) attended by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the first day of the official campaign period. The SPO on 13 March published a [statement](#) characterizing news reports of planned Russian interference in the elections as foreign-backed disinformation. On 27 February, the SPO [stated](#) that “two political pressure organizations, largely financed by the European Commission, are attempting to influence the parliamentary elections through a disinformation narrative”.

<sup>44</sup> For example, billboards by state-owned energy company MVM emphasize “[Energy. Security](#)”, touting low electricity costs. Two months before election day, the Hungarian National Bank launched a campaign with the slogan “[Security and Stability](#)”, stating that “Hungary has never had such large foreign exchange and gold reserves”. See UN International Telecommunication Union, [DataHub](#).

<sup>45</sup> Reuters Institute, [Digital News Report 2025](#).

<sup>46</sup> [National Media and Infocommunications Authority, February 2026](#).

<sup>47</sup> Meta, [implemented](#) its ban across Europe as of 6 October 2025; Google [announced](#) it would stop serving political advertising in Europe on 14 November 2024. Both companies cited the TTPA, which went into effect on 10 October 2025, stating it established overly burdensome regulations with which it would be prohibitively difficult to comply.

<sup>48</sup> The fact-checking organization [Lakmusz reported](#) that from 1 to 25 January, 14 of Fidesz's 106 single-member constituency candidates had run 181 ads on Facebook, of which 19 were subsequently classified as political advertisement by the platform and taken down.

<sup>49</sup> On 6 February, the Ombudsperson lodged a [motion](#) with the Constitutional Court to rule that the EU Regulation on the Transparency and Targeting of Political Advertising (TTPA) is not applicable in Hungary as it conflicts with certain constitutional provisions and creates legal uncertainty during election campaigns; Fidesz submitted an *amicus curiae* brief in that case. The case is pending. A local civil society organization also submitted an *amicus curiae* brief, arguing that the TTPA and Hungarian legislation regulate different aspects, do not conflict, and that EU law has priority.

<sup>50</sup> Multiple AI-generated videos were circulated on social media by political actors shortly before the start of the official campaign period. The official Facebook account of Fidesz published such a video featuring a young girl asking after her father, who is then executed in Hollywood-fashion, presumably in Ukraine, as the video mentions the election date. Another video published by the Prime Minister's official Facebook account, features an AI-generated video of the TISZA leader Péter Magyar taking a late-night call, in Hungarian, from an AI-generated European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. Both videos were marked as AI-generated in the respective posts.

<sup>51</sup> On 9 March, the ODIHR EOM commenced monitoring 99 accounts of selected candidates, political parties, public figures, and institutions on Facebook and Instagram.

media platforms and may issue decrees.<sup>53</sup> Complaints concerning election-related activity on social media can also be lodged with the NEC, which has received 14 such cases, all related to a single video.<sup>54</sup> The SPO informed the ODIHR EOM that it has also initiated two investigations into online campaign activities.<sup>55</sup> In accordance with the EU's Code of Conduct on Disinformation,<sup>56</sup> as of 16 March, local organizations have co-operated in a Rapid Response System, focusing on identifying fake profiles and political advertisements that violate Hungary's own rules, which they will then report to the relevant platforms, which retain final decision-making authority.

In the absence of legislative gender quotas and internal party measures promoting women's representation, women are underrepresented in Hungarian politics and the campaign. Women hold 15.6 per cent of seats in the outgoing parliament (31 out of 199 seats) and no ministerial posts in the current government. While constituting about a quarter of candidates, women do not feature prominently in the campaign, which is centered on party leaders and major political contestants, with the exception of DK and *Mi Hazánk*.<sup>57</sup> Women are well-represented as participants at campaign events observed by ODIHR EOM LTOs, at 30 to 50 per cent. While social or family issues are addressed, gender equality and women's rights do not feature prominently in the campaign, despite commitments to equal opportunities in opposition party programmes, including TISZA, Democratic Coalition (DK), and the Two-Tailed Dog Party (MKKP).

National minorities have not been visible in campaign activities observed by the ODIHR EOM thus far, but several interlocutors raised concerns about derogatory rhetoric targeting Roma communities, including public remarks by political figures and activities of 'Crime Hunters' linked to *Mi Hazánk*.<sup>58</sup> The main contestants have nominated a limited number of minority candidates, mainly Roma, in potentially winnable positions, including DK, Fidesz and TISZA. When addressed, minority issues are largely framed through issues affecting Roma communities, with party approaches ranging from socio-economic support to a focus on public order and Roma integration. In some areas, particularly those with higher Roma populations, ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns about socio-economic vulnerabilities that could expose voters to undue influence, including pressure through public employment schemes and alleged vote buying.

## IX. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

The Campaign Finance Act was amended in June 2025 to remove the campaign spending limit, thus allowing for unlimited campaign spending. The 2023 amendments to the Act on Election Procedure prohibit candidates and nominating organizations from using foreign support and require a declaration to this effect as a precondition for registration.<sup>59</sup> December 2025 amendments to the Political Party Act extended the prohibition on foreign funding of parties to third-party support.<sup>60</sup> According to the State Audit Office (SAO),

---

<sup>53</sup> These are the Very Large Online Platforms as defined under the DSA.

<sup>54</sup> This video is the AI-generated video posted by Fidesz's official Facebook account described in footnote 51. The NEC ruled 13 of these complaints inadmissible and rejected one, considering the video protected political speech.

<sup>55</sup> The SPO, which explores and investigates foreign-funded support activities that might influence election outcomes, issued queries to TISZA concerning a mobile app used by the party allegedly supported by Ukrainian companies connected to that country's security services, and to Meta concerning allegations that its algorithm is biased toward TISZA. Neither TISZA nor Meta has responded to the SPO's inquiries to date.

<sup>56</sup> The [Code](#) was first promulgated in 2018 and was recognized as a code of conduct under the DSA as of 1 July 2025.

<sup>57</sup> For example, DK billboards feature extensively the party's chairperson and prime minister candidate, Klára Dobrev; and *Mi Hazánk*'s vice-chair Dóra Dúró appears on numerous posters and in online fora, largely due to the fact that party leader László Toroczkai's profile is [banned](#) from Meta's platforms.

<sup>58</sup> In January 2026, Minister of Construction and Transport János Lázár suggested that Roma could be employed in low-skilled public service jobs, including cleaning train facilities; the remarks were widely criticized as derogatory. The 'Crime Hunters' (Bűnvadászok) are a vigilante group that has confronted individuals it accuses of criminal behaviour, often targeting Roma; their Facebook page was suspended by Meta on 11 March.

<sup>59</sup> These amendments were introduced by the Act on the Protection of National Sovereignty in December 2023.

<sup>60</sup> Amendments to the Criminal Code adopted in 2023 criminalized the use of prohibited foreign support by the nominating lists or candidates in relation to elections.

which is mandated to oversee campaign finances, these amendments effectively allow domestic non-monetary support by legal and non-legal entities, which were previously considered prohibited.<sup>61</sup>

Public subsidies are available to parties that received more than 1 per cent of the national list votes in the last parliamentary elections, as well as to parliamentary groups, and may be used for campaign purposes.<sup>62</sup> Public funding for parliamentary groups has been substantially increased following several amendments between 2022 and 2024.<sup>63</sup> Single-member candidates and party lists receive public funding, with list funding based on the number of candidates nominated in single-member constituencies.<sup>64</sup> Donations are restricted to Hungarian citizens, and there are no limits on the amount that may be donated for campaigns or regular party activities. Third-party campaigning is not explicitly regulated, apart from the prohibition on certain foreign third-party support.

Contestants are not required to maintain a dedicated bank account or to submit interim campaign finance reports. Only donations exceeding HUF 500,000 a year (some EUR 1,280) are identified in parties' annual finance reports. The audit conducted by SAO only applies to financial statements submitted by candidates and list nominators that obtained parliamentary mandates, which must be published in the National Gazette within 60 days of election day.<sup>65</sup> There are no sanctions for non-submission of reports or inaccurate reporting.<sup>66</sup> SAO conclusions are not subject to appeal.<sup>67</sup> Several ODIHR EOM interlocutors raised concerns about loopholes in the legislation, including in oversight mechanisms, and the independence of the SAO.

## X. MEDIA

Hungary's media environment continues to be affected by long-standing systemic weaknesses.<sup>68</sup> The European Commission opened infringement proceedings against Hungary in December 2025 under the European Media Freedom Act and parts of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive over concerns related to transparency of media ownership, media concentration, the independence of public service media and the media regulator, and the allocation of state advertising, among others.<sup>69</sup> Earlier in 2025, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) also underlined the need to resolve these issues.<sup>70</sup> Numerous ODIHR EOM interlocutors, including in the regions, reported uneven access to information, and

---

<sup>61</sup> In 2024, the SAO found that opposition coalition parties had received illegal support from legal entities in the form of non-monetary contributions. However, the SAO informed the ODIHR EOM that the amendments adopted in 2025 introduced a new framework under which only non-monetary support in favour of a party's objectives originating from foreign sources is prohibited.

<sup>62</sup> Public funding for political parties amounts to approximately HUF 2.5 billion annually (EUR 1 = HUF 395.75), of which Fidesz receives HUF 1.01 billion, followed by DK (HUF 268.6 million), *Mi Hazánk* (HUF 183.1 million), KDNP (HUF 160.5 million), and MKKP (HUF 54.7 million). Party-affiliated foundations receive annual public funding comparable to the amounts received by the respective parties.

<sup>63</sup> Funding for parliamentary groups in 2024 amounted to HUF 6.8 billion, of which Fidesz received HUF 4.63 billion.

<sup>64</sup> Each candidate competing in a single-member constituency is entitled to some HUF 1.7 million and may assign that entitlement to the nominating party's list. Registered lists may receive between HUF 686 million and 1,03 billion, depending on the number of candidates they field in single-member constituencies. Minority list nominators are together entitled to some HUF 514 million.

<sup>65</sup> The SAO may also audit other parties and candidates, upon a substantiated request by other candidates or nominating entities.

<sup>66</sup> In cases of prohibited donations, the equivalent amount must be paid into the state budget within 15 days of the SAO's request. In addition, the party's state subsidy is reduced by the amount of the prohibited donation.

<sup>67</sup> The application of sanctions and enforcement resulting from the SAO findings is subject to appeal. In 2024, following SAO findings that parties had received illegal support and the subsequent deduction of funds by the State Treasury, all six parties from the then opposition coalition filed lawsuits. The Curia referred the matter to the Constitutional Court, to assess whether the absence of direct judicial review of SAO findings is compatible with the right to an effective remedy. In February 2026, the Constitutional Court held that the lack of a direct legal remedy does not violate this right and is therefore not unconstitutional, as enforcement measures taken by the State Treasury are subject to judicial review.

<sup>68</sup> See for instance the European Commission, [2025 Rule of Law Report – Hungary](#); Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF) – Media Pluralism Monitor/[Hungary country profile](#).

<sup>69</sup> European Commission, [infringement](#) INFR(2025)2194, 11 December 2025.

<sup>70</sup> See press release on the OSCE RFoM's [visit](#) to Hungary, 4 June 2025.

local media environments often dominated by pro-government narratives, reflecting a broader pattern of pronounced political and media polarization.<sup>71</sup> Separately, government-aligned interlocutors also alleged to the ODIHR EOM instances of aggressive conduct involving opposition figures and journalists.

Television and online news portals remain the major sources of information in Hungary, with online news playing a particularly important role.<sup>72</sup> Commercial broadcasters *RTL* and *TV2* are the dominant television groups, while online news consumption is led by major platforms and portals such as *Index*, *Telex* and *24.hu*.<sup>73</sup> Public service media,<sup>74</sup> while less prominent overall, remain particularly relevant for older age groups and people living in smaller settlements.<sup>75</sup> Independent and critical outlets operate alongside a much larger pro-government media sector, including KESMA (a conglomerate of hundreds of pro-government outlets), contributing to an uneven distribution of reach, visibility and resources.<sup>76</sup>

The legal framework is based primarily on the Constitution, the 2010 media laws, and the Act on Election Procedure. During the campaign, broadcasters are subject to balanced-coverage requirements under the media regulatory framework. Based on the Act on Election Procedure, political advertisement on broadcast media must be aired on equal terms and free of charge, while political ads in press, including online press, may be published only against payment and subject to prior registration of the outlet's price list with the SAO. Public service media are required to air political ads, while private broadcasters may choose whether to do so. Contestants are allocated 600 minutes of free airtime in public service media, of which 470 minutes are reserved for party lists, and 130 minutes for national minority lists.<sup>77</sup> The only private broadcaster having sent official notification to the NEC regarding its intention to broadcast political ads is the RTL Television.

Media-law issues are in the remit of the NMHH, Hungary's media regulator and its Media Council, while election-law matters are handled by the election authorities. The Media Council's 2026 supervisory plan provides for campaign-period monitoring, but no public NMHH or Media Council communication or decision on media content related to this election campaign is available on their website thus far.

On 9 March the ODIHR EOM commenced quantitative and qualitative monitoring of six television outlets and, on 15 March of six online media outlets.<sup>78</sup>

## XI. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION

All citizens and legal entities can lodge complaints and appeals against decisions, actions, or inactions that violate election legislation. The law prescribes timely submission and consideration of complaints and appeals.<sup>79</sup> Despite previous ODIHR recommendations, public hearings are not guaranteed at any level.<sup>80</sup> Complaints on violations in single-member constituency elections, including against local media, are under the jurisdiction of CoECs, while complaints on nationwide election issues are considered by the NEC. Most CoEC decisions can be appealed to the NEC.<sup>81</sup> All NEC decisions, including on complaints and appeals, are

---

<sup>71</sup> These concerns were further highlighted by a recent incident on 10 March, when two journalists of *Telex*, one of the more critical media outlets, were reportedly forcibly removed from a public campaign event attended by Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén in Csákerény (Fejér county).

<sup>72</sup> NMHH, [Media Market Report 2025](#).

<sup>73</sup> See NMHH, Media Market Report 2025, [TV](#) news consumption and [Online](#) news-consumption.

<sup>74</sup> MTVA (Media Service Support and Asset Management Fund); DMSZ (Duna Media Service Nonprofit Private Limited Company).

<sup>75</sup> Republikon Institute, [Media consumption in Hungary \(2021\)](#).

<sup>76</sup> On market asymmetry, see [CMPF](#) and [Euromedia](#) Ownership Monitor.

<sup>77</sup> The exact number of minutes, depending on the number of registered nominating organizations, is determined by the NEC following the finalization of the candidate registration process.

<sup>78</sup> The sample includes public service media channels *Duna* and *MI*, private television channels *ATV*, *Hír TV*, *RTL Klub*, and *TV2*, and online media *Blikk*, *hvg.hu*, *Index*, *Origo*, *Telex*, and *24.hu*.

<sup>79</sup> During the election period, three days for submission and three days for consideration. A 2024 amendment shortened the deadline for the Constitutional Court from six to five calendar days.

<sup>80</sup> In the view of the Curia this is justified by the short statutory deadlines for deciding on election cases.

<sup>81</sup> Appeals against CoEC decisions on candidate registration are filed with RECs.

subject to judicial review by the Supreme Court (Curia).<sup>82</sup> Further, the constitutionality of Curia decisions can be challenged to the Constitutional Court. Despite recent legislative amendments aimed at strengthening judicial independence, some ODIHR EOM interlocutors have expressed concerns with the new court case management system in the wider context of concerns about the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, including the Constitutional Court.<sup>83</sup>

NEC deliberations on complaints and appeals are held in public sessions. To date, decisions have been published on the NEO website in a timely manner, as have relevant Curia decisions. As of 24 March, the NEC has considered over 100 cases, of which half were denied admissibility on various formal grounds.<sup>84</sup> Most cases concerned alleged violations of campaign rules; these included more than 25 cases on the misuse of public positions and administrative resources for campaign purposes, none of which were upheld.<sup>85</sup> Among the cases considered on the merits, the NEC confirmed campaign or media related violations in 12 cases but did not issue dissuasive fines, including three cases in which it overturned fines imposed by the CoECs on ruling party candidates, despite upholding the violations.<sup>86</sup> The NEC overturned four CoEC decisions that had found unlawful campaign activity against the opposition's campaign or committed by the ruling party.<sup>87</sup>

As of 24 March, the Curia reviewed 38 cases; the court overturned two NEC decisions, finding that the respondents had violated the principles of equality of opportunity, fairness, and/or good faith established in the Act on Election Procedure.<sup>88</sup> In one case which was subsequently annulled by the Constitutional Court, the Curia ruled that the social media page of a public service media provider breached the principle of equal opportunity by disproportionately covering the ruling party in one day of postings and ordered it to not engage in similar conduct in the future.<sup>89</sup> On 23 March, the Curia issued a new decision in the case, again

---

<sup>82</sup> REC decisions on appeals regarding candidate registration are also subject to judicial review by the Curia. A June 2025 amendment expanded the Curia panels adjudicating election-related cases from three to five judges. Voter registration cases can be submitted to the competent Regional Court.

<sup>83</sup> A June 2023 amendment introduced an automatic case allocation system with some discretionary powers to transfer cases between panels of judges, which some ODIHR EOM interlocutors assert lacks transparency, oversight, and clear safeguards. The 2025 European Commission [Rule of Law report](#) states that the Curia's case allocation system is "being implemented well". A European Parliament action concerning the adequacy of judicial reforms is pending before the European Court of Justice. Many pending cases against Hungary in the European Court of Human Rights concern barriers to access the courts, allegations of politically influenced judicial structures, and lack of effective remedies.

<sup>84</sup> All complaints to the NEC concerning campaign activities before the start of the official campaign period were denied admissibility for that reason. The most common cited inadmissibility ground has been a lack of legal standing, which is limited by law to those "affected by the case". In its decisions, the NEC refers to Curia jurisprudence that interprets this as a direct violation of the complainants' rights, which for the most part does not apply to voters even when appealing CoEC decisions that dismiss their complaints.

<sup>85</sup> As of 24 March, in 13 cases alleging misuse of public position or administrative resources in the campaign, the NEC referred to Article 142 of the Act on Election Procedure, which provides, in part, that the activities of local governments and other state organs in performing their functions provided for by the law shall not be considered election campaigning.

<sup>86</sup> No fines were issued for most confirmed violations, including campaigning in an educational institution by ruling party candidates (three cases); obstruction of opposition campaign activity by law enforcement (one case) and by a ruling party candidate (one case); publication of false information about an opposition party by public local media; and unequal and biased and/or unequal coverage by a public media provider (in two cases). A series of violations on disproportionate coverage of the ruling party by the national public media's online and broadcast services garnered the highest fine of less than HUF 2 million.

<sup>87</sup> One case concerned a ruling party campaign leaflet that included false claims about TISZA's campaign platform, two cases involved the same independent candidate who misappropriated TISZA's campaign identity, and one case involved a Fidesz candidate/local council member who campaigned in an educational institution.

<sup>88</sup> The Curia reviewed 18 applications against REC decisions related to candidate registration and 17 cases against NEC decisions. Thirteen cases were deemed inadmissible.

<sup>89</sup> On 13 March, the Constitutional Court annulled the Curia's decision, ruling that it violated the constitutional guarantee of fair trial as it did not clearly establish that a social media page is considered a media service provider under the law. On 24 March, the Constitutional Court annulled another Curia decision on the same matter.

finding that online platform of the public service media are subject to the principle of equality of opportunity, using new reasoning, and a violation in the case.<sup>90</sup>

## **XII. ELECTION OBSERVATION**

Despite prior ODIHR recommendations, the legal framework continues to lack provisions for domestic non-partisan election observation.<sup>91</sup> Several civil society organizations informed the ODIHR EOM that unlike in previous elections, they are not involved in the recruitment and training of party-delegated PSC members, as the political parties they approached decided to manage these processes themselves.

In addition to nominating PSC members, organizations that have registered national proportional lists may delegate, no later than 2 April, observers to work alongside the election offices and commissions during tabulation and verification of postal ballots and recounts.

International observers, who are accredited by the NEO, have the right to observe all stages of the electoral process. As of 23 March, 7 international organizations and 14 foreign election management bodies and other state institutions had registered a total of 121 observers.

## **XIII. ODIHR EOM ACTIVITIES**

The ODIHR EOM opened in Budapest on 26 February. The mission has met and established regular contacts with the NEC, the NEO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the SAO, SPO, State Treasury and other governmental and state institutions involved in the electoral process, political parties, candidates, civil society, the media, and the resident diplomatic community. ODIHR EOM LTOs have been meeting stakeholders at the county and local levels since their deployment on 7 March.

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe have announced their intention to deploy observer delegations for the 12 April election day.

***The English version of this report is the only official document.  
An unofficial translation in Hungarian is available.***

---

<sup>90</sup> Under Article 123 of the Code of Administrative Litigation and Articles 427 and 428 of the Civil Procedure Code, the Curia is required, on a priority basis, to issue a new decision when its judgements are overturned by the Constitutional Court. The case is required to be heard by the same panel of judges as the original case.

<sup>91</sup> Paragraph 8 of the 1990 [OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) states that OSCE “participating states consider that the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States in which elections are taking place”.