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Competition for right-wing voters in Hungary

The leader of the opposition party, Respect and Freedom (Tisztelet és Szabadság, TISZA), is trying to expand TISZA's electorate appeal to far-right voters; Péter Magyar is formulating a demand for a ban on the entry of workers from outside the EU, starting from June 1, 2026, if he wins this April's parliamentary elections. Furthermore, he is pretending to be a defender of the Hungarian diaspora in Slovakia's interest that has been threatened by a law criminalising the questioning of legal solutions adopted after World War II. On this basis, Germans and Hungarians living in Czechoslovakia had been under real estate confiscations, displaced and deprived of their citizenship (so-called Beneš decrees). Traditionally, the Fidesz-KDNP ruling coalition also appeals to the right-wing social base, among other methods, through its active support for the Hungarian diaspora and the inclusion of cash payment protection into Basic Law in 2025, which was claimed by the far-right, oppositional Our Homeland Movement (Mi Hazánk Mozgalom).

Foreign workers and Beneš decrees. TISZA leader, Péter Magyar, is trying to expand support for his party by referring to issues close to right-wing voters. In a New Year's Eve speech on one of the social networks, Magyar announced that in the event of a seizure of power, he would introduce a ban on the entry of non-EU workers into Hungary from June 1, 2026. In turn, back in December 2025, he criticised the adoption of a law in Slovakia criminalising the questioning of the so-called Beneš decrees. This is another example of Péter Magyar positioning himself as a defender of the Hungarian diaspora in neighbouring countries¹. The policy of protecting the Hungarian minority has been the domain of Fidesz-KDNP since 2004, but due to close political relations with the current Prime Minister of Slovakia, Robert Fico, the coalition did not openly criticise the Slovak law². The issues of foreign workers and Hungarians abroad are an important element of the political agenda for the far-right Our Homeland Movement.

Poll results. December research by 21 Kutatóközpont indicates 31% support for TISZA and 27% for Fidesz-KDNP³. However, according to the Idea Intézet survey, TISZA can count on 35%, and Fidesz-KDNP – 28%⁴. Meanwhile, Republikon Intézet gives Fidesz-KDNP 27%, and 33% to the TISZA party⁵. The December Publicus Intézet study

¹ In May 2025, P. Magyar and a group of his supporters went on foot from Budapest to the Romanian city of Oradea (Hungarian Nagyvárad), where he unsuccessfully tried to meet with the leaders of the traditionally favourable Fidesz-KDNP organisation representing the Hungarian national minority in Romania.

² In 2004, the opposition Fidesz, in an invalid referendum due to low turnout, supported the concept of dual citizenship for Hungarians living abroad. In 2010, the parliamentary Fidesz-KDNP supermajority passed an appropriate law on this matter. For 16 years, Viktor Orbán and his government have been very active in supporting the Hungarian diaspora in neighbouring countries, including through grants for cultural and sports activities. However, in May 2025, the Prime Minister publicly supported the right-wing candidate for the presidency of Romania, George Simion, in Tihany, contrary to the position of the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (Romániai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség, RMDSZ), and in December 2025, Timisoara (Hungarian Temesvár), contrary to custom, called Oradea the "Romanian metropolis". In mid-December, the Minister of Construction and Transport, János Lázár, criticised the TISZA party for designating an activist with a Slovak surname as a candidate in the elections. Péter Magyar demanded the minister's resignation, but after the media storm about this statement, János Lázár apologised to the candidate and congratulated her on obtaining Hungarian citizenship.

³ <https://24.hu/belfold/2025/12/02/21-kutatokozpont-tisza-part-fidesz-kulonbseg-2025-november/> [14.12.2025].

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/ideaintezet/posts/pfbid02zWdY6anq3AErEHZYCTaC4K87zoS7ErDmsnnpAShDaeQaLbPNBYTyWK6C1nns6imgl> [15.12.2025].

⁵ https://republikon.hu/media/169587/pa%CC%81rtpreferencia_RI_202512.pdf [18.12.2025].

indicates 33% for TISZA and 28% for Fidesz-KDNP, respectively⁶. The January research by Nézőpont Intézet, associated with the government coalition, shows that support for Fidesz-KDNP among the total number of voters is 47%, and for TISZA – 40%⁷. On the other hand, research carried out by Idea Intézet at the turn of 2025/2026 indicates that TISZA can count on 35% of the votes, and Fidesz-KDNP – 27%⁸. According to the Medián survey conducted in January, TISZA enjoys the support of 40%, and the government coalition – 33%⁹. A survey carried out on January 15-20, 2026, by Republikon Intézet shows that support for TISZA among the general public is 33%, and for Fidesz-KDNP – 28%¹⁰.

The difference in support for the two main Hungarian political parties is between four and eight percentage points, depending on the survey methodology and reflects the periodic increase in ISZA or Fidesz-KDNP's media visibility. It also means the continuation of the constant trend of TISZA's superiority in the research that has been conducted by the independent research centres.

Polarisation of electoral competition. The continuing trend of the opposition TISZA's poll advantage over the Fidesz-KDNP coalition is the result of that party's assumption of the current opposition voters. The interpretation of the survey data shows that the TISZA voter base is currently almost 500 thousand people larger than the Fidesz-KDNP electorate, which has about 2.3 million supporters. In 2022, 3 million votes provided the government coalition with a 2/3 parliamentary majority. To repeat this election result, the government coalition is trying to position itself as a secure choice, contrary to the TISZA party¹¹. Viktor Orbán's anti-war rhetoric and suggestions about Péter Magyar's party's support for the supposedly pro-war policy of the European Union stand as crucial elements of Fidesz-KDNP's political communication. The narrative of safe choice also includes ensuring social security through, e.g., tax exemptions or additional pension benefits. TISZA also promises to improve living conditions, including an increase in pensions.

Commentary. Since the beginning of Péter Magyar's leadership, TISZA – in addition to the voters of the coalition of six factions from the parliamentary elections in 2022 – has been appealing to right-wing voters. He has done this using the Hungarian flag and national symbols en masse and emphasising a few of the political agenda ideas common to Fidesz-KDNP, such as the restrictive migration policy or maintaining the border wall.

In order to mobilise the current social base, convincing voters who are undecided whether to participate in the vote, as well as those who do not yet know who to vote for, can contribute significantly to the result of the parliamentary elections scheduled for April 12, 2026. To be successful in the election, each of the two main Hungarian political parties must expand its existing electoral base. Fidesz-KDNP – young and educated voters from smaller cities, and TISZA – those with lower education, living in the countryside and small towns. Due to the shape of electoral constituencies in Hungary, votes from smaller towns have greater significance than votes from large cities.

Strong political polarisation is an effective Fidesz-KDNP tactic, which has guaranteed electoral success for the government coalition since 2010. This was favoured by the programmatic inconsistency of the then opposition and the lack of a charismatic leader, until the appearance of Péter Magyar on the political scene in February 2024.

⁶ <https://publicus.hu/blog/partok-tamogatottsaga-2025-december/> [30.12.2025].

⁷ <https://nezopont.hu/hu/tevekenysegeink/kozvelemeeny-kutatasok/egyre-valoszinubb-a-fidesz-gyozelem> [12.01.2026].

⁸ <https://telex.hu/belfold/2026/01/14/idea-tisza-elony-tiz-szazalek-fidesszel-szemben> [14.01.2026].

⁹ <https://hang.hu/belfold/median-januar-tisza-erosodott-184424> [14.01.2026].

¹⁰ https://republikon.hu/media/170412/Havi-elemzes_2601_jav.pdf [22.01.2026].

¹¹ Slogan wyborczy Fidesz-KDNP to „Bezpieczny wybór” (*Biztons választás*).