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ENEMO

FINAL REPORT

June 2022

**International Election Observation
Mission to Hungary
Parliamentary Elections
and Referendum 2022**

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Referendum 2022



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The English version of this report is the only official document of ENEMO IEOM.

International Election Observation Mission to Hungary Parliamentary Elections and Referendum 2022



ENEMO Bul. Josipa Broza 23A
81 000 Podgorica, Montenegro
Email: info@enemo.eu

www.enemo.eu

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ENEMO – the European Network of
Election Monitoring Organizations

Editors:

Dritan Taulla
Elene Nizharadze

Authors:

Dritan Taulla
Elene Nizharadze
Elidon Lamani
Dmytro Tuzhanskyi
Milica Zrnovic



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 1 February 2022, the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) deployed an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) to Hungary to observe the Parliamentary Elections and Referendum of 3 April 2022. Parliamentary elections were held in Hungary on 3 April to elect 199 members of the Parliament for a four-year term. Six opposition parties contested the election as an alliance. The incumbent ruling alliance, composed of the Hungarian Civic Alliance (Fidesz) and Christian Democratic Peoples' Party (KDNP), won a supermajority of two thirds for the fourth consecutive term. A national referendum initiated by the Government, dedicated to LGBTQ+ issues was held on the same day.

The Preliminary Statement of ENEMO, issued on 4 April 2022, stated that "Technical aspects of the elections, including election day proper, were generally well managed, though numerous issues in the pre-election day period, including shortcomings and gaps in the legal framework, tilted the playing field in favor of the ruling coalition. Allegations of improper voter influence, including voter intimidation and vote buying also marred the election campaign. The legal framework necessitates an overhaul, as to address observed issues and improve conditions for holding democratic elections."

The legal framework contains adequate regulations concerning different aspects of elections; however, some of the crucial aspects are not precisely and sufficiently regulated. This damages the transparency of elections, and fails to ensure effective prevention of violations, and a level playing field. Legislative shortcomings are primarily related to campaign financing and misuse of state resources. Also, regulations on referendums are insufficient and contain loopholes that caused certain ambiguities having adverse effect on the conduct of democratic referendums. Besides that, regulations concerning freedom of media and expression, civil society organizations, judiciary, and access to information have deteriorated over the years, thus also having a negative impact generally on the election environment.

There are seven single-member constituencies with a deviation of more than 20 percent in the average number of voters. This violates the equality of vote principle and is at odds with international best practice and domestic legal regulations. The increased number of single-member constituencies in which political parties have to nominate candidates for competing through a national list creates unjustified barriers for political parties to run in proportional elections and can negatively affect competitiveness of elections.

The Parliamentary Elections of 3 April 2022 were managed by a three-level election administration: the National Election Commission (NEC), 106 Constituency Election Commissions (CoECs) and 10,243 Polling Station Commissions (PSCs), in cooperation with a parallel structure of Election Offices, including the National Election Office (NEO), 97 Constituency Election Offices (CoEOs) and 1,264 Local Election Offices (LEOs). Regional Election Commissions (REC) and the respective Regional Election Offices (REO) were involved as well, while having limited tasks. In general, the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) met the legal requirements and deadlines and managed the technical preparations efficiently. They were open to international observers and media, and acted transparently. However, the NEO did not fully control the process of voting by post, as in Serbia and Romania, the delivery of ballot packages has not always been conducted in accordance with the law.

The total number of citizens eligible to vote and included in the voter registry was 8,215,466, of whom 456,129 lacked an address in Hungary and were entitled to vote by post. Overall, there is trust in the accuracy of the voters' lists. The NEO published weekly data regarding voter registration in an open format, which contributed to increasing transparency. However, there are loopholes in the Act of Election Procedure regarding postal voting, while the lack of automatic removal of data of deceased people from abroad from the postal voter registry still remains a concern. Differentiated suffrage rights based on marital status, as well as deprivation from the right to vote on the basis of a mental disability are at odds with international standards. The principle of equal suffrage has been challenged, as voters abroad underwent differentiated voting procedures, related to possession of an in-country address.

In an overall inclusive process and within the legal deadline, the National Election Commission registered six national lists and 12 national minorities lists. The Constituency Election Commissions registered 663 candidates in single member constituencies (SMC), including 34 running as independents. Some 106 SMC candidates were not registered, mainly due to lack of sufficient signatures. In general, the right to stand for election has been respected. However, the signature collection process was marred by allegations of forged signatures on behalf of some parties or candidates.

High concentration of media ownership and economic and political interests of the owners are widely perceived to be influencing media reporting and limiting media pluralism. Equal and impartial media treatment was not sufficiently ensured for all contestants, and neither were the principles of fairness, balance, and impartiality in the media coverage of election campaigns. Unbalanced and one-sided reporting was in particular visible at the regional and local level. Media articles about elections, contestants and their programs, in some cases, lacked analytical and investigative reporting which, altogether, may have limited voters' access to quality information. Negative rhetoric and campaigning towards candidates were present during the electoral period.

Social media played an important role in these elections. Online campaigning was characterized by large amounts of money spent on political ads, engagement of third parties in campaigning, as well as presence of fake profiles aimed at confusing and deceiving users and attacking political opponents.

Women are underrepresented in politics and the legislative body of Hungary. There was a low number of women candidates registered for Parliamentary elections. Women were not widely visible and engaged in the campaign. There are no legal mechanisms for promoting women participation in politics. As a result of this, there are only 28 women in the National Assembly elected on April 3.

Election Day was, overall, calm and peaceful. The management of the polling and conduct of polling station commissions and local election offices was assessed positively in the majority of the cases observed, with some procedural deviations that are assessed not to have negatively affected the legitimacy of the overall process. Instances of organized transportation of voters and active campaigning in proximity of polling stations were observed, as well as a high number of cases of violation of secrecy of the vote. The NEO provided information on the voter turnout and election results online, which contributed to an increased transparency of the process.

Complaints and appeals can be filed only by those affected by the violation, which restricts the right of legal standing. In general, adjudication of complaints, both by election management bodies and courts revealed that legal regulations and the established practice, especially in cases related to misuse of administrative resources, are mostly ineffective and do not contribute to preventing violations. Gaps in the legislation regarding the competent authority for adjudicating

complaints resulted in rejecting complaints alleging violation of campaign finance regulations. Many complaints were rejected on formal grounds, which does not ensure the right to effective legal redress and is at odds with international good practice. Courts have not ensured public hearings while examining complaints.

Domestic civil society organizations are not allowed to observe elections, which does not ensure a large-scale, non-partisan observation and limits voters' access to impartial information and assessments of the electoral process. Civil society organizations critical towards the Government are often targets of hostile rhetoric that aims to discredit their work. These practices are shrinking the space for the work of civil society organizations.

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On 1 February 2022, the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) deployed an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) to Hungary to observe the Parliamentary Elections and Referendum of 3 April 2022.

ENEMO accredited and deployed in February nine Core Team experts, based in Budapest. The Mission was headed by Dritan Taulla. Additionally, ten long-term observers (LTOs) were deployed, in five teams, throughout the country at the beginning of March. The IEOM was reinforced by 200 short-term observers (STOs), who observed election day proceedings, starting from the opening procedures to the counting and tabulation of results, on Election Day.

This was ENEMO's first election observation mission to Hungary. The aim of the IEOM was to improve the transparency of the electoral process, assess its integrity and compatibility with international standards for democratic elections and the Hungarian legislation, as well as provide - and advocate for - recommendations for potential areas of improvement.

The mission monitored and assessed the overall political and electoral environment, conduct of election management bodies, candidate and voter registration, campaigning, gender equity, voting and tabulation processes, electoral dispute resolution, and other aspects of the electoral process for the 3 April elections. Additionally, the process for the Referendum held on the same date as the Parliamentary Elections were observed and assessed.

In the process of monitoring, in order to receive exhaustive information ENEMO's mission conducted 355 meetings with relevant interlocutors, including election management bodies, political parties and candidates, domestic civil society organizations and media, in addition to observing campaign activities (meetings or rallies) of election contestants.

The IEOM issued an [Interim Report](#) on 21 March and a [Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions](#) on 4 April.

This Final Report is based on ENEMO's findings from the pre-election period, Election Day and post-election developments. It contains 39 recommendations aiming at improving various shortcomings identified by ENEMO during the monitoring process. Recommendations are addressed to different stakeholders involved in elections.

ENEMO would like to express its gratitude to all the interlocutors of the IEOM, including election administration, civil society, international community, media and political entities, for their cooperation in the course of the monitoring mission.

ENEMO's International Election Observation Mission would also like to thank the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), for financially supporting the mission.

I. BACKGROUND AND POST- ELECTION DEVELOPMENTS

Parliamentary elections were held in Hungary on 3 April to elect 199 members of the Parliament for a four-year term. Six opposition parties contested the election as an alliance³, challenging the ruling alliance composed of Fidesz and KDNP, which contested for a fourth term. The opposition parties held primaries in the fall of 2021 to determine the prime-ministerial candidate⁴.

Since taking power in 2010, the ruling alliance, composed of Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance) and KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party) have held the majority in the National Assembly. Holding a two thirds majority, Fidesz and KDNP passed a series of legislative amendments over the years, including amendments to the Fundamental Law (Constitution of Hungary) and the laws regulating elections. Fidesz also controls most municipalities.

In full swing of the election campaign, on 10 March 2022, the Parliament elected Katalin Novák as the new, and the first woman president of Hungary, with 137 votes. She was sworn in on 14 May. Prior to being elected as President, Katalin Novák was vice-president of the ruling party Fidesz.

A number of international and domestic stakeholders, including election contestants, have emphasized the stakes of the 3 April elections, considering it a crucial milestone for the democratic stability of Hungary. The very high interest of the international community was manifested by the unusually high number of international observers accredited and deployed.

The elections were held against the backdrop of a highly polarized political environment and amid concerns about worsening conditions for genuine democratic elections. They also took place during the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, which dominated the campaign in public messaging, and was used as a campaigning device by both parties, further deepening polarization. Hungary has joined the sanctions proposed by the EU but has strongly opposed any sanctions in the energy sector or allowing military equipment being transported through its territory.

A national referendum initiated by the Government, dedicated to LGBTQ+ issues was held on the same day. Based on preliminary results, less than 50 percent of eligible voters submitted valid responses, thus the referendum might be deemed invalid.

In line with the legal provisions, the final results for single-member constituencies were announced on 9 April and the final results for the national lists on 14 April. The final turnout was reported at 69.59 percent. Out of six party lists, three won parliamentary seats. Fidesz-KDNP won 135 seats, thus obtaining a two-thirds majority in parliament for the fourth consecutive term. The united opposition obtained 57 seats, and Our Homeland six. For the second time, one mandate went to a candidate from a national minority list.⁵ The opposition parties acknowledged the result of the election, while also highlighting that the election was not democratic and free.

The newly elected members of the Parliament⁶ swore in on 2 May and on 16 May the new Government, headed by Viktor Orbán, took office. The government was voted by 133 of the 199 MPs, with 27 voting against.

³The Democratic Coalition (DK), Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik), Momentum Movement (M), Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), Hungary's Green Party (LMP) and Dialogue for Hungary (P).

⁴Primaries were held during September and October 2021.

⁵German.

⁶In the new Parliament Fidesz has 117 seats, KDNP 18, Democratic Coalition 15, Jobbik 10, Momentum 10, MSZP 10, Our Homeland 6, Párbeszéd 6, LMP 5, the National Self-Government of Hungarian Germans (MNOÖ) one, and one MP seats as an independent.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Legal framework

Hungary is a party to a number of international and regional human rights acts also concerning elections.⁷ The most important domestic legal acts are the Fundamental Law (Constitution), the Act XXXVI of 2013 on Election Procedures, Act CCIII of 2011 on the Election of the Members of the National Assembly and Act LXXXVII of 2013 on the Transparency of Campaign Costs related to the Election of the Members of the National Assembly. There are also several other legal acts that regulate various aspects of elections⁸ Those are supplemented by legally non-binding guidelines of the National Election Commission.⁹

The most recent wide-scale amendments to several legal acts related to the elections were adopted in December 2020.¹⁰ The package of amendments was initiated by the Government during the state of emergency in November 2020, and adopted by the Parliament a few weeks later.¹¹ As interlocutors informed ENEMO, the process was conducted without wider public consultations and involvement of all relevant stakeholders. ENEMO considers that an expedited adoption of amendments without an inclusive process damages the public trust towards the electoral process and does not contribute to a substantial improvement of electoral legislation.¹²

The most important amendments concerned the electoral system, in particular, the number of single-member constituencies in which political parties should nominate candidates for contesting in nationwide proportional elections increased, as well as conditions for receiving public funding were changed, requiring nomination of candidates similarly in an increased number of single-member constituencies. These amendments could be considered as deteriorating compared to previously existing regulations. Besides, the deadline for applying for absentee voting was reduced; an additional deadline for adjudicating certain complaints was introduced, as well as a regulation for determining final election results by the Supreme Court; etc. Many other amendments, technical in nature, were introduced.¹³

Though some of the changes were positive, amendments did not address most crucial legislative shortcomings related to the campaign financing; delimitation of constituency boundaries; misuse of state resources and blurring of the line between the state and the party; citizen observation and other problems.

⁷Those include the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); etc.

⁸Act CLXXXV of 2010 on Media Services and on the Mass Media; Act CLXXIX of 2011 on the Rights of Nationalities; Act C of 2012 on the Criminal Code; Act on the Operation and Financial Management of Political Parties; Act CIV of 2010 on the Freedom of the Press and the Fundamental Rules of Media Content.

⁹NEC started reviewing guidelines in October 2021 and in December adopted [Guideline 2/2021](#) amending the guidelines 2/2014, 7/2014, 11/2014, 12/2014, 1/2015, 2/2015, 3/2015, 4/2015 and 4/2018. The Guideline was adopted with the participation of members appointed by opposition political parties.

¹⁰Act on Electoral Procedures, Act on the Election of Members of the National Assembly, Act on the Transparency of Campaign Costs related to the Election of the Members of National Assembly, Act on Initiating Referendums, the European Citizens' Initiative and Referendum Procedure, Act on the Election of Municipal Representatives and Mayors, Act on the Rights of National Minorities, Act on the National Assembly.

¹¹Amendments were submitted to the Parliament on 10 November and accepted by it on 15 December 2020.

¹²[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2007\)7](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on good administration, Article 8- Principle of Participation: "Unless action needs to be taken urgently, public authorities shall provide private persons with the opportunity through appropriate means to participate in the preparation and implementation of administrative decisions which affect their rights or interests."

¹³Some of those amendments determined that election commission meetings can be held online; regulations on the use of public spaces do not apply to campaign activities; members of the election commission or election office should not be observers; general rules apply in case of a repeat election; additional data to be provided by the person collecting signatures for ensuring integrity of the signatures' collection process; etc.

In 2021 the concept of place of residence was changed, allowing registration at an address without actually residing there.¹⁴ Previous requirement of living at the registered place of residence was annulled. This amendment entered into force on 1 January 2022.¹⁵ According to some of ENEMO's interlocutors, the amendment raised concerns that it might have been used to influence the number of voters in specific single-member constituencies. ENEMO considers that the adoption of controversial changes shortly before the elections does not ensure trust to the electoral process.

Overall, the legal framework is comprised of adequate legal acts regulating the conduct of elections, yet some regulations do not ensure effective prevention of violations, nor a level playing field and sufficient transparency. Additionally, it should be noted that over the years, regulations on freedom of media and expression, civil society organizations, and access to information have undergone adverse changes,¹⁶ thus also having a negative impact on the election environment.

For the first time, on the same day as the Parliamentary elections, a national referendum was held.¹⁷ The legal framework regulating referendum contains insufficient regulations and loopholes that caused certain ambiguities having adverse influence on the process.¹⁸ Legal regulations determine that initiators of the referendum, in the present case the government, and parliamentary political parties can campaign in public broadcasters, but involvement of other interested parties, supporters or opponents of the respective referendum, in the campaign is not regulated. Additionally, there are no regulations on financing referendum campaign, nor limits on expenditures. It is not also prohibited to use public funds for the referendum campaign which creates risk for damaging the neutrality of public authorities. Those shortcomings are at odds with best practice and do not guarantee the principle of equality of opportunity.¹⁹

Inclusive and transparent electoral reform should be conducted with the involvement of all the relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, in a reasonable time ahead of next elections. The reform should address crucial gaps and insufficient regulations primarily concerning campaign financing, misuse of state resources and blurred lines between the state and the party, media, citizen observation and other issues. Also, the legal framework on referendums should be revised to improve existing gaps and to ensure legal certainty and equality of opportunities principles.

Electoral System

The National Assembly of Hungary consists of 199 members elected for a four-year term through a mixed electoral system²⁰. 106 members are elected through a majoritarian electoral system in single-member constituencies and 93 through a nationwide proportional list, with a compensatory mechanism.²¹ In a single-member constituency, in order to be declared elected,

¹⁴Act LXVI of 1992 on the Register of Personal Data and Residential Addresses of Citizens.

¹⁵Members of the National Assembly filed a complaint to the Constitutional Court challenging the constitutionality of the amendment. They claimed that as the register of addresses no longer provides a proof of the actual residence that is important in a mixed electoral system, the introduced changes violated the rule of law and restricted the right to vote. The Court dismissed the complaint stating that the amendment had legislative reasons as the registered addresses do not reflect reality.

¹⁶[2021 Rule of Law Report](#), Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Hungary, European Commission, SWD(2021) 714 final, 20 July 2021; [Hungary, Events of 2020](#), Human Rights Watch.

¹⁷Prohibition of holding of national referendums and elections on the same day was annulled in 2021.

¹⁸Referendums are regulated by the Constitution and the Act CCXXXVIII of 2013 on Initiating Referendums, the European Citizens' Initiative and Referendum Procedure.

¹⁹[Code of Good Practice on Referendums](#), Venice Commission, Paragraphs I.2.2. –Equality of Opportunity and I.3.1 –Freedom of voters to form an opinion.

²⁰Mixed Member Proportional.

²¹Votes that do not produce a mandate (i.e., votes of losing candidates and surplus votes of the winning candidate) are added to the votes of the respective party, if the party has already crossed the legal threshold.

a candidate should receive the most valid votes²². The legal threshold for the proportional segment of the system varies. Specifically, for political parties contesting alone it is five percent; for joint lists of two political parties, 10 percent; and for joint lists of more than two parties -15 percent. ENEMO considers that even in the case of political party blocks the established thresholds are high.²³

According to the amendments adopted in 2020, for contesting in proportional elections a political party should nominate candidates in at least 71 single-member constituencies within at least 14 counties and in Budapest.²⁴ ENEMO considers that the increase in the number of candidates to be nominated in the single-member constituencies creates barriers for political parties to run in proportional elections and does not contribute to competitiveness of elections.²⁵

Certain aspects of the electoral system establishing excessively restrictive requirements should be revised to ensure multiparty democracy, in particular, requirement for nominating 71 candidates in single-member constituencies in order to run in proportional elections should be either annulled or the number of candidates to be nominated should be reduced.

Each of the 13 national minority self-governments has a right to nominate a national minority list. Persons recorded in the electoral registry as national minority voters, have the right to vote for a single-member constituency candidate and their particular national minority list, without voting for the national proportional list.

There is a preferential threshold for minority lists. In order to gain a seat, one fourth of votes required for a regular mandate should be secured by the minority list. A national minority that fails to gain a mandate is entitled to have a spokesperson in the Parliament, but without the right to vote.

According to the Act on the Election of Members of the National Assembly, if the deviation in the number of voters in the single-member constituency is more than 20 percent from the national average, the boundaries of the constituency should be amended. Boundaries are established by the cardinal law requiring the two-thirds majority of the National Assembly for amendment.²⁶

For these elections, seven constituencies had a deviation of more than 20 percent, the highest one being more than 33 percent. This is at odds with international best practice and the domestic legal framework, and it violates the equality of vote principle,²⁷ which is one of the important requirements for ensuring a fair electoral system. Besides, there were 10 single-member constituencies with a deviation of more than 15 percent.

In order to ensure equality of vote principle boundaries of the single-member constituencies should be revised in accordance with the law and international best practice. There should be an independent body composed of relevant experts responsible for reviewing delimitation of single-member constituencies through an inclusive and transparent process.

²²First past the post.

²³[Resolution 1547 \(2007\)](#) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe suggests a threshold no higher than 3 percent during parliamentary elections for well-established democracies (para. 58).

²⁴Before the amendment it was required to nominate candidates in 27 constituencies (in total there are 106 constituencies), within 9 counties (out of 19) and Budapest.

²⁵The introduction of the amendment was justified with the need to prevent previous practice of some political parties misusing public funding received for campaigning. While the prevention of misuse of public funds is an important argument, ENEMO deems that this purpose can be achieved by introducing or improving other regulations; establishing a requirement that restricts political entities' participation in elections should not be regarded as an acceptable solution.

²⁶Delineation of single-member constituencies has not changed since 2014.

²⁷[Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#), Venice Commission, Paragraph 2.2 (iv): "The permissible departure from the norm should not be more than 10%, and should certainly not exceed 15% except in special circumstances (protection of a concentrated minority, sparsely populated administrative entity)". [1990 Copenhagen Document](#), paragraph 7.3 states that participating states "guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens".

A number of ENEMO interlocutors highlighted the disparity between the percentage of the popular vote received and the share of seats in the parliament. While Fidesz-KDNP received 54.13 percent of the popular vote for the national lists, the party obtained 67.83 percent of the seats. This disparity comes as a result of the success of Fidesz-KDNP in winning 87 of 106 single member constituencies.

According to the Fundamental Law, Referendums can be appointed at the initiative of 200,000 voters or ordered by the Parliament at the initiative of the President of the Republic, the Government or 100,000 voters. Questions for the Referendum should be submitted to the National Election Commission for verification of its compliance with legal requirements. This Referendum was initiated by the Government and after the decision of the Supreme Court, which removed one question, there were four questions on the ballot paper and voters had to answer “yes” or “no”.²⁸ To be considered valid, more than 50 percent of all voters should have cast valid votes.

²⁸Questions concerned limiting sex education in schools, access to information for children regarding gender reassignment and homosexuality. Holding of the referendum was criticized by the Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović and assessed as instrumentalizing and weakening of human rights of LGBTI people, <https://bit.ly/36C8ABt>

III. ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODIES

The Parliamentary Elections of 3 April 2022 were managed by a three-level election administration:²⁹ the National Election Commission (NEC), 106 Constituency Election Commissions (CoECs) and 10,243 Polling Station Commissions (PSCs), in cooperation with a parallel structure³⁰ of Election Offices, including the National Election Office (NEO), 97 Constituency Election Offices (CoEOs) and 1,264 Local Election Offices (LEOs).

By law, Election Commissions are independent bodies whose primary task is to administer the elections, by establishing their result, ensuring their fairness and lawfulness, ensuring impartiality and, if necessary, restoring the lawful order of elections.³¹ The Election Offices are electoral bodies that carry out tasks related to the preparation, organization and conduct of elections. These offices support, assist and act as secretariats of the respective Election Commissions.

In general, EMBs met the legal requirements and deadlines and managed the technical preparations efficiently. They were open to the public, international observers and media, and acted transparently.

On Election Day, PSCs and LEOs managed the voting and counting procedures efficiently, with some minor procedural deviations, which did not negatively affect the legitimacy of the process and results. The NEO provided information on the voter turnout and election results online, which contributed to an increased transparency of the process.

The majority of interlocutors were confident in the professionalism and efficiency of EMBs. However, some interlocutors raised concerns especially with regards to the appointment of Election Commission members³², at all levels, as well as about the eventual politically biased approach of some EMBs at the local and regional level.

The mechanism of appointment of Election Commission members could be reviewed, in order to provide sufficient safeguards for the political neutrality and impartiality of Election Commissions.

National Election Commission (NEC) and National Election Office (NEO)

The National Election Commission (NEC) is a permanent independent body, composed of elected and delegated members. The president and six members are elected for a nine-year term, on the proposal of the President of the Republic, with votes of two thirds of the Members of the Parliament present.³³ Three elected members of the NEC, including the Vice-President, are women. The political parties that form a faction in the Parliament can delegate an additional member of the NEC each, whose mandates expires upon announcement of the date for the next

²⁹According to Act XXXVI of 2013 on Election Procedure, the Regional Election Commissions should operate as well in Parliamentary elections, while having limited tasks, such as adjudicating appeals challenging a decision by the CoECs on announcement of candidates and establishing the partial regional results of elections for the national list.

³⁰There were 20 Regional Election Offices involved as well, in proposing to the NEC members for Regional Election Commissions, appointing heads of CoEOs and LEOs in case of vacancies, instructing the heads of CoEOs and LEOs regarding the performance of their tasks, supplementing PSCs by delegating members of PSCs from other settlements, if the number of members is less than required by law, in cases when it is impossible for LEOs to do so, and transmitting a copy of the minutes on the partial regional result of national list elections to the NEO.

³¹Higher level commissions also review complaints on lower-level ones, as well as media.

³²Opposition parties' representatives expressed concerns about the predominance of commission members from the ruling majority, especially at the higher level of election administration.

³³The current NEC was elected in September 2013.

Parliamentary elections. After this date, the registered national lists should each delegate an additional member of the NEC, whose mandate ends at the first session of the newly elected Parliament. All six parties and coalitions³⁴ and five³⁵ national minorities³⁶ (out of twelve registered), delegated members to the NEC, after the registration of their national lists or national minorities' lists. Among the eleven delegated members, only one was a woman.

From the announcement of elections, until the registration of national lists, a period during which key decisions, such as registration of nominating organizations and national lists were taken and a number of complaints reviewed, the NEC was composed of only elected members. Most decisions during this interim period were taken without any debate. ENEMO positively assesses the review and adoption of Guidelines before the announcement of the Election Day, with all elected and delegated members involved.³⁷ However, the lack of cross-party oversight during the interim period, remains an unaddressed gap in the legal framework.

The legislation needs to be amended, in order to ensure cross-party oversight, by enabling delegated members of political parties to be part of the NEC during the interim period between announcement of the date of new Parliamentary elections and registration of national lists.

The competencies of the NEC include registering nominating organizations and national lists, issuing guidelines to lower-level commissions, adjudicating complaints, and establishing election results. In connection with the national referendum conducted in a joint procedure with the Parliamentary elections, the NEC supervised the counting of votes cast by post and votes cast at foreign representations, and established the referendum result.

Starting from the announcement of the date of the Parliamentary elections, the NEC held 42 sessions.³⁸ The sessions were open to the public, international observers and media. Although NEC sessions could be held through electronic means,³⁹ these sessions were not broadcasted live and could only be observed at the NEC premises. The sessions' agenda was usually published online in advance. The NEC decisions were published right after sessions and minutes were published with a delay⁴¹. The Elections website⁴² maintained by the National Election Office (NEO) was updated on a regular basis and contained key-election data such as information on candidates, nominating organizations, national lists, decisions, instructions, results, etc. ENEMO assesses the work of the NEC and NEO as overall transparent.

In order to further enhance transparency and access to information of public interest, minutes of NEC sessions should be published in a timely manner. Furthermore, consideration could be given to broadcasting live the sessions of the NEC.

³⁴Solution Movement; Democratic Coalition – JOBBIK (Movement for a Better Hungary) – Momentum Movement - Hungarian Socialist Party - LMP (Hungary's Green Party) - Dialogue for Hungary; Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party; Our Homeland Movement; FIDESZ (Hungarian Civic Alliance) - KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party) and Party of Normal Life.

³⁵German, Slovak, Armenian, Greek and Polish national minorities.

³⁶The registered national minorities should delegate members to the NEC with the right to vote only in matters affecting national minorities; in other matters, they may participate in sessions of the NEC in a consultative capacity.

³⁷The NEC started reviewing the Guidelines in October 2021, at the initiative of the President of the National Election Office. NEC Guidelines [2/2021](#) which amended the guidelines 2/2014, 7/2014, 11/2014, 12/2014, 1/2015, 2/2015, 3/2015, 4/2015 and 4/2018, were adopted in December 2021.

³⁸ENEMO directly observed 26 of them.

³⁹According to the 2020 amendments of the Act on Election Procedure, (section 40 A), the sessions of the NEC may be held also using electronic communication means, if the President of the NEC decides so.

⁴⁰The sessions' agenda, decisions and minutes were being published on the official [website](#) of elections.

⁴¹The minutes of NEC sessions were being published with a delay starting from a few days, up to 3 weeks, while the minutes of the sessions held after 7 March 2022 were not published at all, until 20 May 2022.

⁴²The Elections website contains information in Hungarian, as well as in English, German and French languages. Information in languages other than Hungarian was not updated with the same frequency. The other three versions of the website contain only general information.

The NEC adopted a total of 373 resolutions related to elections and referendum of 3 April, since the announcement of the date of Parliamentary elections. Most adopted resolutions were related to registration of nominating organizations, registration of national lists and adjudication of complaints.

The National Election Office (NEO) is an independent, autonomous public administration agency subordinated only to the law, which should perform tasks related to the preparation and conduct of elections, such as the impartial information of voters, candidates and nominating organizations, assisting the NEC, ensuring the creation of materials and technical conditions necessary for the conduct of elections, maintaining the central voter registry and managing the work of regional and local election offices. Its president is appointed by the President of Hungary on the prime minister's proposal, for a nine-year term.

The NEO conducted the notification of voters, as well as a voter information campaign which included posters,⁴³ short videos⁴⁴ broadcasted in social and traditional media, and a simplified guide⁴⁵ for voters. An information center at the central level was also operated by NEO.

Most processes such as: accreditation of international observers, printing of ballot papers, voter notification and information, etc., were conducted professionally. However, as many ENEMO interlocutors and media reported, the NEO did not fully control the process of postal voting, as in Serbia and Romania, the delivery of ballot packages has not always been conducted in accordance with the law, by respective Postal Offices.⁴⁶

The NEO printed some 7,7 million ballots for the single-member constituency candidates, 8,1 million for national party-list, 70,000 for national minorities and 8,1 million for the referendum.

Constituency Election Commissions (CoECs) and Constituency Election Offices (CoEOs)

The Constituency Election Commissions (CoECs) were composed by three elected⁴⁷ and other delegated⁴⁸ members. Only eight nominating organizations and four independent candidates delegated members to the CoECs.⁴⁹

CoECs register single-member constituency candidates, establish the result of the single-member constituency elections, decide on complaints against the activities and decisions of the polling station commissions (PSCs) and assess complaints related to local media.

Each parliamentary single-member constituency should have a Constituency Election Office (CoEO) headed by the clerk of the settlement that is the seat of the parliamentary single-member constituency. In total, 97 CoEOs assisted the 106 CoECs in the Parliamentary elections of 3 April.⁵⁰ CoEOs received and verified the recommendation sheets for the single-member constituency candidates and prepared the respective registration decisions for the CoECs; they

⁴³Three posters have been published, including [information](#) on the date and time of voting, voting [procedures](#) and [how to cast](#) a valid ballot.

⁴⁴Seven [videos](#) were produced and broadcasted.

⁴⁵<https://bit.ly/37KCaF6>

⁴⁶For more information, please check the section on Registration of Voters.

⁴⁷The representative body in a settlement constituting the seat of a parliamentary single-member constituency should elect three members to the parliamentary single-member constituency election commission, on the proposal from the head of the parliamentary single-member constituency election office (CoEO), after the date for the Parliamentary elections is set, but not later than on the 42nd day before Election Day.

⁴⁸Each electoral contestant in a constituency is allowed to delegate one member to the respective CoEC.

⁴⁹In total, there were 308 CoEC members delegated by electoral contestants (94 by Fidesz – KNDP, 93 by United Opposition, 57 by Our Homeland Movement, 29 by Solution Movement, 20 by the Two-Tailed Dog Party, 7 by Hungarian Labor Party – Yes Solidarity for Hungary Movement, 4 by Party of Normal Life and 4 by independent candidates).

⁵⁰There were eight CoEOs which assisted and supported more than one CoEC.

prepared the decision regarding the draw of candidates for the CoEC, and submitted to the CoEC the draft of the single-member constituency ballot paper for approval.

In general, CoECs did not report any interference or intimidation in their work. They complied with legal deadlines and worked in a collegial and constructive manner. CoECs and CoEOs⁵¹ provided access to accredited observers and in general, published sessions' announcements, decisions and minutes and other useful information on websites of respective local authorities.

Polling Stations Commissions (PSCs) and Local Election Offices (LEOs)

Polling Station Commissions (PSCs) were composed by elected⁵² and delegated⁵³ members. Both processes - the election and delegation of PSC members were completed without any significant difficulty and within the legal deadlines. According to the NEO, the 10,243 established PSCs were composed of more than 80,000 members, of which 40,231 were delegated by electoral contestants, including 11 nominating organizations and 3 independent candidates.⁵⁴ Most elected commission members were experienced, and additional training was provided. Although the majority of interlocutors evaluated training materials provided by NEO and training sessions as more practical and improved over the previous election processes, some of the training sessions for PSC members attended by ENEMO LTOs were assessed as superficial and insufficient for PSC members without previous experience.

All elected and delegated members of PSCs should be provided with adequate training, in order to guarantee the professionalism and efficiency of the electoral administration and to strengthen the integrity of the electoral process.

The average number of PSC members in the 1,219 Polling Stations (PSs) observed by ENEMO STOs on Election Day was seven. Women were well represented in polling station commissions, with 64 percent of PSC members in the observed polling stations being women, including 75.6 percent as Chairperson and 77.66 percent as Deputy Chairperson.

The 10,243 PSCs were assisted by 1,264 Local Election Offices (LEOs), which were headed by the settlement's local government clerk.

On Election Day, PSCs and LEOs managed the voting and counting procedures efficiently, with some minor procedural deviations that did not negatively affect the legitimacy of the process and results.

⁵¹Each parliamentary single-member constituency should have a Constituency Election Office headed by the clerk of the settlement that is the seat of the parliamentary single-member constituency. In total, 97 CoEOs are assisting the 106 CoECs in these elections. There were eight CoEOs which assisted and supported more than one CoEC

⁵²The representative body of the settlements' local government should elect the necessary number of members of PSC, after the date for the Parliamentary Elections is set, but not later than on the 20th day before Election Day, on a proposal from the head of the local election office (LEO).

⁵³Each electoral contestant in a constituency is allowed to delegate two members with voting rights to each PSC.

⁵⁴Each electoral contestant in a constituency is allowed to delegate two members with voting rights to each PSC, at the latest on the 9th day before Election Day. According to the NEO, the united opposition delegated 19,462 PSC members, Fidesz-KDNP - 17,672, the Two-Tailed Dog Party - 2,144, Our Homeland Movement - 888, Party of Normal Life - 42, Solution Movement - 4, Civil Response Movement - 3, Hungarian Labor Party - Yes Solidarity for Hungary Movement - 3, German National Minority - 9, Serbian National Minority - 1 and after Independent Candidates - 3.

IV. REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

Voter registration for Hungarian citizens with an in-country address is passive and continuous. All citizens who attain the age of 18 years by Election Day, as well as married citizens of at least 16 years of age,⁵⁵ are eligible to vote, except for those disenfranchised by an individualized court decision due to a criminal offense⁵⁶ or limited mental capacity.⁵⁷ ENEMO positively assesses the removal⁵⁸ of “pathological addiction” from the reasons for disenfranchisement. Differentiated suffrage rights based on marital status,⁵⁹ as well as deprivation from the right to vote on the basis of a mental disability are at odds with international standards.⁶⁰

To ensure universal suffrage and equal treatment before the law, deprivation from the right to vote on the basis of mental disability should be abolished and differentiated suffrage rights based on marital status should be removed.

The central voter registry is an electronic register extracted from the register of personal data and addresses of citizens and other registers,⁶¹ and is maintained by the NEO.

Starting from December 2021, the NEO was publishing weekly data regarding voter registration in an open format.⁶² Although several mission’s interlocutors raised concerns on the possibility of voters to register in allegedly fictitious addresses⁶³ in contested single-member constituencies, no sudden mass establishment of new residences have been observed in the period from 6 December 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The total number of citizens eligible to vote and included in the voter registry was 8,215,304, of whom 7,759,175 were citizens with an in-country address.⁶⁴ Voters could request changes to their data in the voter registry until two days before election day.

Voters abroad with an in-country address could vote for both national lists and single-member constituency candidates, and only in person, including at one of 145 Hungarian diplomatic missions abroad.⁶⁵ Compared to previous Parliamentary elections, the number of diplomatic missions where voters abroad with an in-country address could vote has increased.⁶⁶ Within the

⁵⁵Upon request.

⁵⁶The number of voters deprived of the right to vote because of mental disability based on a court decision was 47,078.

⁵⁷The number of voters disenfranchised based on criminal conviction was 25,282.

⁵⁸With the 2020 amendments to the Act on Election Procedure.

⁵⁹According to Paragraph 3 of the [General Comment No. 25](#): “The right to participate in public affairs, voting rights and the right of equal access to public service” to the Art. 25 of ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), “no distinctions are permitted between citizens in the enjoyment of these rights on the grounds of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”.

⁶⁰Article 29 of the CRPD requires States to “guarantee to persons with disabilities political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others”. Paragraph 48 of [General Comment No. 1](#) to Article 12 of the CRPD states that “a person’s decision-making ability cannot be a justification for any exclusion of persons with disabilities from exercising their political rights, including the right to vote, the right to stand for election and the right to serve as a member of a jury”.

⁶¹The data in the central voter registry for those voters not recorded in the registry of personal data and addresses of citizens is generated from the central registry of travel documents and the registry of driving licenses, furthermore from the registry of adult citizens without suffrage, from the polling district and constituency registry and from the polling district electoral registry.

⁶²Voter registration data published on the [website](#) is detailed at the county, single-member constituency and settlement level. NEO also published data from 2021 on population and voters by settlement, in a different format.

⁶³With the amendments of the Law on the Records of Citizens Personal Data and Address, the definition of the residence was reduced to the address used by citizens for official communication (Section 5 (2) [Act LXVI of 1992](#) on the Register of Personal Data and Residential Addresses of Citizens). A petition by Members of Parliament seeking to find unconstitutional and annul the section in question has been dismissed by the Constitutional Court with the [decision Nr. II/5048/2021](#) of 08.02.2022.

⁶⁴Only voters with an in-country address were eligible to vote for both single-member constituency candidates and national lists.

⁶⁵Initially NEO announced that voters abroad could vote at one of the 146 Hungarian diplomatic missions. As of March 30, 2022, [NEO informed](#), based on official information received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, that it was impossible to conduct voting at the General Consulate in Shanghai, China, due to restrictions related to the spread of Coronavirus. Consequently, 60 voters registered to vote at the General Consulate in Shanghai, could not vote.

⁶⁶In Parliamentary elections of 2018, voters abroad with an in-country address in Hungary could vote in one of the 118 diplomatic missions abroad.

legal deadline, 65,480 voters, or 7,170 voters more than in previous Parliamentary elections⁶⁷ were registered to vote at one of the Hungarian diplomatic missions abroad. A number of ENEMO interlocutors expressed dissatisfaction about the number and geographic distribution of polling stations established abroad.

Eligible voters with no address in Hungary could request registration in the by-mail voter registry until 9 March⁶⁸ and vote only for a party list and for the national referendum. They should have received the voting package by post or in person, and delivered it in person or by proxy to the diplomatic missions and CoEOs, or have voted by mail. The registry of by-mail voters contained 456,129 registered voters, or 77,680 voters more than in previous Parliamentary elections.⁶⁹ Starting from 8 March 2022, the NEO distributed voting packages to by-mail voters.⁷⁰ Within the deadline, 318,083⁷¹ voting packages were received by NEO,⁷² of which 268,766⁷³ contained a valid voter identification statement⁷⁴.

ENEMO assesses that the principle of equal suffrage has been challenged, as voters abroad underwent differentiated voting procedures, related only to possession of an in-country address.

Differentiated voting procedures for voters abroad should be removed, and suffrage should be equal for all voters.

According to media reports and ENEMO interlocutors, voting packages in Serbia were delivered by political activists of the Hungarian Association of Vojvodina (VMSZ), a political party affiliated with Fidesz, contrary to what is prescribed by the law. As per the above-mentioned reports, the party activists were instructing voters how to vote and collecting voting packages from them. The NEO claimed that they followed the procedures and drew the attention of postal service providers participating in the delivery of voting ballot packages and their contributing partners to the need for their employees to refrain from influencing the free exercise of the right of voters, during the delivery of voting packages.⁷⁵ A formal complaint⁷⁶ against NEO on this matter was first rejected by the NEC on formal grounds, and then by the Supreme Court.⁷⁷

On 30 April, several ballot papers⁷⁹ for Hungarian elections were found in a landfill in Târgu Mureş in Romania. A complaint on this matter has been rejected by the NEC, while the NEO informed that they filed a complaint to the police. In Romania, ENMT,⁸⁰ an organization allegedly affiliated to Fidesz, was instructing voters to send ballots through them as the Romanian post office is not reliable.

ENEMO notes that there are loopholes in the Act of Election Procedures regarding postal voting, while the lack of automatic removal of data of deceased people from abroad from the by-mail voter registry still remains a concern.⁸¹

⁶⁷In total, 58,310 voters requested to vote in diplomatic missions for the Parliamentary elections of 8 April 2018.

⁶⁸The 25th day before Election Day.

⁶⁹The registry of by mail voters for the Parliamentary Elections of 8 April 2018 contained 378,449 voters.

⁷⁰Out of the total number, 308,000 voting packages were sent to Romania, 83,000 to Serbia and 27,000 to Ukraine.

⁷¹69,74 percent of the eligible by mail voters.

⁷²According to the NEO [website](#), 279,727 voting packages were delivered to Hungarian Foreign Representations abroad, 36,784 were delivered directly to NEO and 1,572 were cast at CoEOs headquarters.

⁷³According to [NEO protocol](#) on the counting of by-mail votes.

⁷⁴The voter identification statements were either invalid or missing for the rest of the cases.

⁷⁵A [press release](#) was published by NEO on 21 March.

⁷⁶NEC [decision 187/2022](#) of 21 March 2022.

⁷⁷See the Complaints and Appeals section.

⁷⁸<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gIWsbM8ito>

⁷⁹<https://www.valasztas.hu/sajtokozelemeny-2022/9>

⁸⁰<https://bit.ly/36LAzPj>

⁸¹The removal of data of deceased people abroad from the postal voter registry can be done only upon an official request from their relatives, as such mechanisms to provide for their automatic removal do not exist.

Additional safeguards regarding postal voting should be imposed, in order to avoid any politically motivated interference as well as to ensure a process fully controlled by the responsible authorities.

Efforts should be made to improve the accuracy and reliability of voter lists, by developing effective mechanisms for removal of entries of deceased people from the by-mail voter registry.

Any voter belonging to a national minority could request (until 18 March) to be entered in the voter registry as a national minority voter in Parliamentary elections. Once registered as national minority voters, they could vote for single member candidates and for the respective national minority list. Within the legal deadline, 40,570 voters⁸² were registered to vote for national minority lists, while the NEO removed voter's data relating to the Roma national minority from the polling district's voter registry, as the national minority in question did not have a national minority list.

Until 25 March, voters could request absentee voting.⁸³ The deadline for absentee voting requests has been changed with the 2020 amendments of the Act on Election Procedure, from four days to nine days before the Election Day. Within the legal deadline, 157,551 voters, or 42,490 less than in previous Parliamentary elections,⁸⁴ requested to change their polling district.

Voters with disabilities and health issues could apply for mobile voting, until 12:00 on Election Day. Voters with disabilities could also request to vote in an accessible polling station within their constituency⁸⁵ and could request for a Braille ballot template.⁸⁶

One day before Election Day, the LEOs printed the updated voters' lists and delivered them to PSC.

⁸²For the national minorities' lists were cast 30,635 valid votes in total.

⁸³Voting in a polling district which is different from their address, while voting for a candidate of the single-member constituency where they are registered.

⁸⁴In total, 200,041 voters requested absentee voting for the Parliamentary elections of 8 April 2018.

⁸⁵Until March 30th.

⁸⁶According to the NEO, 250 requests for braille templates were submitted within the legal deadline.

V. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

Every citizen with voting rights has the right to stand as a candidate for Parliamentary Elections. A candidate may run in a single-member constituency and on the national list at the same time, but only in one single member constituency. In general, the right to stand for election has been respected.

In order to nominate candidates in single-member constituencies, political parties had to register as nominating organizations with the NEC.⁸⁷ In total, 43 parties were registered, while the requests of seven parties⁸⁸ were rejected⁸⁹ by the NEC.

Independent candidates and nominating organizations had to collect at least 500 signatures from eligible voters in a specific constituency and submit them to the CoEO until the deadline⁹⁰ for the announcement⁹¹ of candidates. The number of signatures requested is in line with international good practice.⁹² A voter may sign in support of more than one candidate, which is in line with international good practice.⁹³ The signature verification was conducted by CoEOs, by comparing the voter's information to the data in the digital voter register, without verifying the signatures authenticity. Once established that the number of valid recommendations reached 500, the detailed verification of recommendations may be discontinued, in line with international good practice.⁹⁴

For the first time, in these elections, voters could check online⁹⁵ if they signed the recommendation sheets collected by parties and candidates and checked by the election offices. Several claims were made by voters who found their signatures in recommendation sheets for candidates that they did not recommend. A candidate of the Party of Normal Life in Budapest was deregistered, as after removing forged signatures,⁹⁶ he lacked the number of signatures requested by law. Several complaints were made to the Regional Election Offices, while the Police started an investigation.

An effective mechanism for verifying the authenticity of signatures could be considered, in order to remove doubts about the validity of candidacies.

Only 20 out of the 43 registered nominating organizations succeeded to register at least one candidate in single-member constituencies. In total, 663 SMC candidates, including 116 (17.5

⁸⁷The NEC should decide to register a party as a nominating organization if the application for registration complies with the requirements of the law, by verifying the existence and the authenticity of the concerned party data in the court register of non-governmental organizations.

⁸⁸Hungarian National Order Party; Hungarian Social Party; Hungarian Social Democratic Party; Party of Women's Values; Opre Roma; Plato Party and Party of the Poor.

⁸⁹For non-compliance with the statutory requirements.

⁹⁰25 February, 37th day before Election Day.

⁹¹Candidates should be announced to the CoEC competent to register them by handing over the recommendation sheets to the respective CoEO. Voters who wish to stand as independent candidates and the nominating organizations that wish to nominate candidates should hand over all recommendation sheets they received to the election office within the deadline for the announcement of candidates. In the event of non-compliance with this obligation, the election commission competent to register the candidate in question should impose a fine for each missing recommendation sheet.

⁹²As per the Venice Commissions' [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#), Paragraph 1,3 i, the number of signatures should be lower than 1 percent of the voters in the constituency concerned.

⁹³Paragraph 96 of the 2nd edition of Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR [Guidelines on Political Party Regulation](#) states that "It should be possible to support the registration of more than one party, and legislation should not limit a citizen or other individual to signing a supporting list for only one party".

⁹⁴As per the Venice Commissions' [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#), Paragraph 1,3 iv, the checking process must in principle cover all signatures; however, once it has been established beyond doubt that the requisite number of signatures has been collected, the remaining signatures need not be checked.

⁹⁵By submitting an application, after successful authentication on the personalized administration interface magyarorszag.hu/szuf, within the section "Information on the recommendation - Who did I recommend?". According to NEO, more than 100,000 voters used this service.

⁹⁶Out of a total number of 505 recommendation sheets, there were found multiple signatures, with the data of the same person appearing more than once on the recommendation forms, but the signatures on the recommendations were clearly different in each case. The number of valid recommendations after the removal of problematic ones was 485.

percent) women, were registered. In 31 constituencies there were no women candidates. In total, 106 SMC candidates were not registered, mainly due to lack of sufficient signatures, while eight registered candidates withdrew or were deregistered. 34 SMC candidates ran as independents.

In order to register a national list for the proportional race, each party or coalition needed to nominate candidates within the legal deadline⁹⁷ in at least 71 single-member constituencies (out of 106) within 14 counties (out of 19) and Budapest.⁹⁸ A total number of seven coalitions and parties submitted requests within the legal deadline to register national lists. In total, six nominating organizations (two coalitions and four parties) were registered,⁹⁹ while the request of one party was rejected.¹⁰⁰ There were 1,035 candidates, including 205 (19.8 percent) women, in the national lists of coalitions and parties.

National minority self-governments could submit candidate lists on a separate ballot for national minorities. They had to collect supporting signatures from at least one percent of voters included in the specific minority's register, but no more than 1,500 signatures. Within the legal deadline, 12 national minorities¹⁰¹ were registered, with 111 candidates in total, including 48 women.

⁹⁷The deadline for the announcement of national lists was 26 February 36th day before Election Day. The NEC should register the national list no later than on the second day after the day of announcement.

⁹⁸In the 2018 Parliamentary Elections, the requirement for the parties and coalitions to run for the proportional race was to nominate candidates in 27 constituencies in 9 counties and Budapest. This requirement was increased within the 2020 amendments, allegedly to address the problem with parties which run only to obtain public funding.

⁹⁹Democratic Coalition (DK) – Jobbik (Movement for a Better Hungary) – Momentum Movement (M) – Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) – LMP (Hungary's Green Party) – Dialogue for Hungary (P); Party of Normal Life (NEP); Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party (MKKP); Our Homeland Movement; Solution Movement (MEMO); Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Alliance) – KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party).

¹⁰⁰Our Party – IMA registered within the legal deadline only 10 single-member constituency candidates in only 7 Counties and the capital. The NEC rejected their request to register the national list with the [decision](#) 104/2022 of 27 February 2022, due to non-compliance with the legal requirements regarding the number and distribution of single-member constituency candidates.

¹⁰¹Out of 13 officially recognized minorities.

VI. ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Electoral Campaign

According to the Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure, which is the basic legislation framework for campaigning in Hungary, the official electoral period should last 50 days, including election day until the end of voting. Since Parliamentary elections 2022 were set by the President for April 3, the campaigning officially started on 12 February.

Although there is no official election silence prior to or during election day, the law provides several legal restrictions for campaigning particularly on the election day, such as no election rallies should be held, no political advertisement should be published, as well as no campaigning may be conducted in public areas within 150 meters from the polling station. The compliance with these requirements by the contestants is very difficult to control in practice, especially in terms of restriction of publishing the political advertisement, online in particular, and campaigning closer than 150 meters to the polling station.

The campaign was held in an official state of emergency, established in Hungary because of the COVID 19 pandemic¹⁰², but all restrictions, which could affect or limit the freedom of assembly, were lifted four weeks prior to election day, from 7 March, and ENEMO did not observe any impact on the freedom of association due to the pandemic.

The official start of the campaign before the process of candidate registration, i.e., the overlapping between the period for signature collection and the official campaign period, created disadvantages for candidates and parties with fewer resources, which needed more time to collect the supporting signatures and, thus, receive public campaign funds later. Such legal regulation and practice it established goes against international good practice¹⁰³.

To guarantee the level playing field the campaigning should start only once the process of candidate registration is completed, including signature collection and validation, as well as potential complaints.

Although the section 140 of the Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure states that “campaign methods shall include all methods capable of influencing or used in an attempt to influence voters’ choices”, it specifies just four such methods, for instance, posters, direct contact by the nominating organization or the candidate, political advertisements and election rallies. The definition of the political advertisements, provided by the Hungarian legislation, does not properly cover the online advertising, in particular advertising on social media, which was significant during Parliamentary elections 2022, used by all political contestants. Despite this legal gap, the State Audit Office informed prior to the elections that online political advertising, paid by candidates and nominating organizations, would be scrutinized according to the current legislation on campaign methods and election campaign spending limits.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²The state of emergency because of the Coronavirus pandemic was established in Hungary from the beginning of 2020 and will last until 1 June 2022, upon a decision of the parliament of December 2021.

¹⁰³According to [Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#), adopted by the Venice Commission, particularly paragraph I.1.3.v. of the Guidelines on elections, “validation of signatures must be completed by the start of the election campaign.” See also paragraph I.1.3.8 of the Explanatory Report.

¹⁰⁴In 2020 the State Audit Office stated that advertising on social media cannot be confined within the current domestic legislation on political advertising, hence financial spendings by candidates and parties on online advertising could not be scrutinized by the SAO. More details: <https://bit.ly/3lb0KeD> Prior to the Parliamentary campaign 2022 More details: <https://bit.ly/3Nzofly>

To avoid challenges for supervisory bodies and potential misinterpretations, the law should be amended to include online advertising and advertising on social media as campaigning methods or the types of the political advertisements with specific legal regulations.

Campaigning activities are defined in the law as “the use of campaign resources in the campaign period, and any other activity in the campaign period aimed at influencing or attempting to influence voters’ choices”¹⁰⁵. At the same time, law states, that “the activities of election bodies, personal communication between citizens as private persons, regardless of its content and form, the activities arising from functions determined by law and performed by the Constitutional Court, courts, local self-governments and other State entities shall not be considered as election campaign”¹⁰⁶, while there are no provisions as to what kind of activities state entities are and are not allowed to conduct during elections. ENEMO considers this loophole as the legal grounds misused by many state institutions during the campaign, conducting official events that de facto had the nature of an electoral event. This practice contradicts with international standards¹⁰⁷, as well as with one of the basic principles of electoral procedures, that of “equal opportunities for candidates and nominating organizations”¹⁰⁸, determined by the same law.

ENEMO observed, throughout the campaign and prior to it, unhindered systematic misuse of administrative resources, with a significant impact on the election campaign. For instance, since November 2021, three months before the official election campaign started, the Hungarian Government presented a series of socio-economic measures, such as capping the prices of fuel¹⁰⁹ and certain foods¹¹⁰, 13th month pensions¹¹¹, increasing the minimum wage in the country and wages of public administration, etc.¹¹² In November 2021 an official governmental informational campaign was launched to promote these and many other initiatives of the Government. The motto of the campaign was “Hungary is going forward, not backwards!”¹¹³, which overlaps with the official slogan of the election campaign by the ruling Fidesz-KDNP alliance “Let’s go forward, not backwards!”¹¹⁴. After the Russian invasion of Ukraine started another governmental information campaign and the message overlapped with the Fidesz-KDNP narrative about “peace”, “security” and keeping Hungary out of the war.¹¹⁵ During the campaign period ENEMO also observed the involvement of local authorities in the election campaign, in particular mayors and their staff¹¹⁶ mainly in the form of campaigning in favor of the ruling bloc. Allegations about obstacles for the campaigning from the opposition candidates were observed.

¹⁰⁵Section 141 of the Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure

¹⁰⁶Section 142 of the Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure

¹⁰⁷See Article 5 (para 5.4) [of the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE](#).

¹⁰⁸Section 2 of the Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure

¹⁰⁹From 15 November 2021 the Hungarian Government froze the prices of the regular 95 petrol and gas oil at 480 HUF per liter. Initially the measure was established for 3 months, until 15 February 2022, but then was extended until 15 May. This decision was announced by the Prime Minister during his state-of-the-nation speech, delivered on 12 February – exactly the date when the official election period started.

¹¹⁰On 12 January 2022, the Prime Minister announced via his Facebook page that the Government would freeze the maximum prices of 6 staple foods to the 15 October 2021 levels. The measure came into power on 1 February 2022 and was in force until 1 May.

¹¹¹Initially the Hungarian government announced that the first full 13th month pension shall be paid in 2024, but on 7 December 2021, the Prime Minister informed on his Facebook page that the Government’s decree ordering 13th month pensions to be paid out in February 2022 was signed. In December 2021, a uniformed pension bonus of 80,000 forints was distributed as well.

¹¹²Earlier, the Government also announced that people under 25 years of age will not have to pay personal income tax from 2022, as well as that all working parents should receive a rebate on their 2021 personal income tax in February 2022. The latter measure covers approximately 1,9 million people and tax rebates worth a total of 600 billion Forints.

¹¹³Original title in Hungarian – “Magyarország előre megy, nem hátra”

¹¹⁴Original title in Hungarian – “Előre menjük, ne hátra!”

¹¹⁵Other cases include the official state program of the distribution of the laptops in schools, supported by the EU funds, started in mid-February 2022 with Fidesz-KDNP candidates joining these activities. Also, at the end of February, the governmental information newsletter with the phrase “we consider it irresponsible and do not support the opposition’s stance that Hungary should send troops and weapons to Ukraine” was spread to all those who had previously registered for Covid-19 vaccination at the state database.

¹¹⁶E.g., in Nograd, Debrecen, Vásárosnamény, Kemece, Demecser, Gemze and Tiszatelek, Nyíregyháza, Kiszvárd

In-depth legal changes of the legislation to prevent misuse of state resources and public office for electoral advantage and the overlapping between the state and party are needed.

Generally, contestants were able to campaign freely, in a highly competitive environment, overall freedom of association and speech were respected. Instances of early campaigning by or in support of main contestants were also present.¹¹⁷ Almost all parties used rallies, door-to-door campaigning, open air and indoor neighborhood forums, including visits of party leaders to constituencies and countryside, posters, as well as phone calls campaign, public and online presentations, activists' campaigning, online and social media advertising. Fidesz-KDNP and the United Opposition also actively campaigned abroad with billboards¹¹⁸, meetings¹¹⁹ and social media. Several interlocutors of ENEMO, mainly among opposition candidates and parties, stressed that there was no equal access to rent billboard spaces. The billboard campaigns by the ruling alliance, as well as third-party campaigning favoring Fidesz-KDNP and accusing united opposition, were nationwide and much more visible than campaigns by the other contestants. All of the ENEMO's opposition interlocutors emphasized the lack of access to media, including public media, in the central and regional levels as one of the biggest obstacles to reaching voters. Both Fidesz-KDNP and United for Hungary accused each other of using illegal databases with personal information of voters.

Deep polarization along with personal accusations, "black PR", counter-campaigning and coordinated practices of damaging and vandalization of campaign materials were widely present in the campaign. Allegations of pressure and intimidation of voters, especially public servants and vulnerable groups¹²⁰, vote buying and other forms of control of the will of voters also marred the campaign.

While both the ruling coalition and the opposition used third-party campaigning, including support by foreign politicians¹²¹ the majority used these tactics at a much larger scale. ENEMO also observed involvement of representatives of religious entities in campaigning in favor of Fidesz-KDNP and its candidates, particularly in rural areas.

Most parties that registered a national list for these elections presented specific election programs, with the exception of the ruling coalition. Official programs of parties were barely reflected in campaign messages. There were no official public debates between the main contestants¹²². The campaign was characterized by lack of constructive discussions, failing to provide the public with meaningful information.

¹¹⁷After the primary in September and October, in early January the united opposition presented common branding and slogan of the campaign "Let Hungary belong to all of us". Fidesz-KDNP is practicing permanent campaigning and this electoral period early campaigning was mainly represented by third party campaigning, for instance governmental information campaign and pro-Fidesz CSOs, in particular Megafon within bloggers and influencers, Civil Unity Forum (Civil Összefogás Fórum, CÖF), Center for Fundamental Rights (AK), etc.

¹¹⁸For example, since the middle of March and for the last two weeks of the campaign period the united opposition branded billboards were placed in London, particularly at the King's Cross station and the Borough High Street.

¹¹⁹On 14 February, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó visited Romania and called dual Romanian-Hungarian citizens to vote for the ruling alliance.

¹²⁰E.g., Roma minority, persons with low incomes in the country-side and other vulnerable groups of population are particularly dependent on paid public works schemes and other public funds.

¹²¹Donald Tusk, President of the European People's Party, attended the united opposition's rally on March 15 and gave a speech. On the other hand, in the middle of March former U.S. President Donald Trump sent a public letter in support of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

¹²²The prime ministerial candidate of the opposition, Márki-Zay invited several times the incumbent prime minister - Mr. Orbán to a debate, but these were repeatedly rejected.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February heavily influenced the campaign narratives with geopolitical and security topics becoming the main ones, overshadowing domestic matters, social-economic development, corruption, wages, and LGBTQ+ rights.¹²³

The referendum on so-called “child protection law”¹²⁴, which was formally initiated by the Government and scheduled for the same day as the Parliamentary elections, was initially overlapping with Fidesz-KDNP rhetoric and campaign messages, as well as in fact was used by the ruling alliance for additional mobilization of voters and engaging more state resources into the campaign. But the referendum did not become part of the mainstream campaign or key topic, especially after the Russian invasion of Ukraine started. Referendum related topics were weakly integrated into Fidesz-KDNP rhetoric and activities during the first part of the official electoral campaign, and with more intensity in the last stage of the campaign. Counter-campaign to cast an invalid vote on the referendum was initiated and conducted by a coalition of civil society organizations. The opposition had almost totally ignored the referendum campaign, apart from rare calls for casting invalid votes. All this had an impact and determined the final results on referendum, according to which none of the four questions reached the threshold of 50 percent of eligible voters submitted valid responses, as well as more than 1.7 million people casted invalid votes on the referendum.

Campaign Finance

There are three main laws, which regulate the party and campaign finance in Hungary: the Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure, the Act LXXXVII of 2013 on the Transparency of Campaign Costs Related to the Election of Members of the National Assembly, and the Act XXXIII of 1989 on the Operation and Financial Management of Political Parties.

According to the Hungarian legislation, electoral campaigns could be financed with public funds, as well as with other sources, for instance, private donations, parties’ own funds, loans, etc. Donations from legal persons or organizations without legal personality, as well as donations from foreign citizens and entities are prohibited. A party may not accept anonymous donations. There is a strict requirement to disclose contributions only over 500,000 HUF (approx. 1,300 EUR)¹²⁵, which does not lead in a practice to full transparency of such donations and their donors. There are no limits on private donations in the legal framework, which could potentially lead to strong dependence of parties to large donors, as well as to disproportions in resources that different parties can use in between elections, affecting the official campaign period.

To avoid purchasing political influence, ENEMO recommends determining in the law the caps for individual private donations to political parties and election contestants. Additionally, legal mechanisms could be considered to ensure the transparency of donations and its donors.

¹²³Fidesz-KDNP started the official campaign with a key-narrative about Hungarian successful development for the last 12 years and the danger of turning back, as well as ideological choice between “right” and “left”. The final key-messages of the ruling alliance were simplified to the choice between “peace or war”, along with accusations of the opposition for aiming to drag Hungary into the war through a plot with Ukrainian authorities. The “United for Hungary” called for “demonopolization” of the country in a broader sense, fighting corruption and re-establishing Hungary as a western democracy. Throughout the campaign, the opposition also used messages about the social-economic crisis as the result of Orbán’s governing, as well as posed the incumbent Prime Minister, Orbán, as Putin’s main ally, putting at stake in this election the choice between “East or West”, and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine this narrative became the key message. Our Homeland Movement exploited nationalistic, right-wing, pro-Russian and anti-Western narratives, as well as anti-COVID agenda, protesting against mandatory vaccinations. The Solution Movement campaigned for the digitalization of Hungary in a broader sense. The Two-Tailed Dog Party ran with satirical and troll messages, promoting anti-corruption and anti-system politics. The Party of Normal Life campaigned under anti-COVID and conspiracy agenda.

¹²⁴On 15 June 2021, the Hungarian Parliament adopted series of amendments to different Acts, mixing sexual crimes with rights and freedoms of LGBTQ+ people, sexual orientation and gender identity. The amendments were initiated and promoted by the Fidesz along with party homophobic rhetoric and were heavily criticized by the opposition and civil society inside the country and international community. In July 2021 [European Commission launched the infringement procedures](#) against Hungary for violations of fundamental rights, and in December 2021 the Council of Europe’s European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) [in its Opinion](#) concluded that these amendments are incompatible with international human rights standards.

¹²⁵This requirement is mentioned in the Annex 1 to the Act XXXIII of 1989 on the Operation and Financial Management of Political Parties

Public funding for campaigning in Parliamentary elections is provided both for parties¹²⁶ and candidates for single-member constituencies¹²⁷, as well as for minority lists¹²⁸. Parliamentary elections 2022 are the third since the state campaign funding was established in Hungary.

The Hungarian State Treasury (ST) is responsible for providing state support and any technical assistance in this regard, particularly signing agreements with the candidates and parties, opening card coverage accounts, etc. The support from the state budget may only be used during the election campaign period and only to cover costs related to campaign activities. The Treasury card cannot be used to withdraw cash. The Treasury should disburse the first installment of the support to the parties within three working days after the registration of the party list becomes effective, and to the single-mandate constituency candidates within five working days after the procedure for the registration. According to the Treasury officials, this process was conducted in time.

A party that does not reach at least one percent of votes, as well as a candidate for the single-member constituency that does not reach at least two percent of votes or withdraws, should return the public funds they received.

Hungarian legislation determines the limit on campaign spendings for all officially registered contestants. For each single-member constituency candidate and national minority self-government¹²⁹ the cap is 5 million HUF, adjusted according to the consumer price index, and for these elections it was approximately 5.9 million HUF (approx. 16,000 EUR). For the party which registered the party list, the cap of campaign spendings depends on the number of its registered candidates both for single-mandate constituencies and party list, but not more than the number of mandates that can be obtained. Thus, the maximum cap of party spendings for Parliamentary elections 2022 was approximately 1.174 million HUF (approx. 3.2 million EUR).

All candidates and nominating organizations should publish in the Official Gazette of Hungary the amount, source and use of state and other funds, spent on the election within 60 days after the election of the Members of the National Assembly. Within one year from the elections, the State Audit Office (SAO) of Hungary should, ex officio, perform a compulsory audit at the ST or, if necessary, at the candidate or at the party nominating the candidate, concerning the use of public support.

Prior to the Parliamentary elections 2022 SAO provided additional guidance on financial reporting, as well as publicly informed, that online political advertising, paid by candidates and nominating organizations¹³⁰ would be scrutinized according to the current legislation and election campaign spending limits, despite legal gaps on online political advertising¹³¹. However, SAO underlined that the Hungarian legislation still limits the verification procedure by SAO only within reports of the candidates and nominating organizations, which leads to inefficient and incomplete supervision of campaign expenditures, which is substantial. The limited legal mandate of ST and SAO in the auditing process of campaign spendings does not provide sufficient control and transparency to guarantee integrity and fairness of the elections.

¹²⁶For the Parliamentary elections campaign 2022 parties, which registered party lists, were entitled to receive approximately from 471 to 706 million HUF in public funds (approx. from 1.4 to 1.9 million EUR). Only the ruling alliance and united opposition alliance "United for Hungary" were funded at the maximum amount in this campaign.

¹²⁷During the campaign 2022 it is 1,182,896 HUF (approx. 3,200 EUR).

¹²⁸The national minority self-governments, registered their minority list for the Parliamentary elections 2022, were jointly entitled to approximately 353 million HUF (approx. 940,000 EUR) of state support, and this amount of money was shared among 12 registered national minority lists.

¹²⁹Section 7 of the Act LXXXVII of 2013 on the Transparency of Campaign Costs Related to the Election of the Members of the National Assembly

¹³⁰More details: <https://bit.ly/3KW8AdW>.

¹³¹In 2020 the State Audit Office stated that advertising on social media cannot be confined within the current domestic legislation on political advertising, hence financial spendings by candidates and parties on online advertising could not be scrutinized by the SAO. More details: <https://bit.ly/3lb0KeD>.

Additionally, several of ENEMO's interlocutors expressed concerns on the mix of the formal and biased approach of the ST and the SAO, as well as their efficiency and willingness to control and verify in-depth the spending of the public funds.

ENEMO observed that gaps and shortcomings in the legislation on party and campaign finance impacted the elections in terms of campaign spendings' transparency, in particular, the absence of the legal procedures to oversee campaign spendings and lack of requirements to disclose campaign financing reports by contestants prior to Election Day. Besides damaging transparency, this might also lead to overspending, as well as potential misuse of the allocated funds. According to some interlocutors¹³², just during March the pro-Fidesz-KDNP billboard campaign, which includes bloc's own campaign, as well as governmental¹³³ and pro-governmental campaigns, has likely gone beyond the official campaign cap more than 2,5 times¹³⁴, moreover, Fidesz-KDNP with its own billboard campaign has likely gone beyond the official campaign spending cap¹³⁵.

ENEMO recommends developing and introducing appropriate legal mechanisms for effective supervision of campaign spending by ST and SAO not just after election, but also prior to Election Day with the obligation for the contestants to submit and publish detailed interim financial reports.

ENEMO observed that the lack of effective legal oversight and regulations allowed the use of third-party campaigning by different contestants¹³⁶, and created a high disproportion in favor of the ruling coalition Fidesz-KDNP. The overlapping between messages of governmental information campaign and referendum, initiated formally by the Government, on one hand, and Fidesz-KDNP election campaign messages on the other hand, served as a de facto circumvention of campaign expenditure caps. No expenditure limits on the referendum campaign, combined with the simultaneous Government's information campaigns allowed the ruling alliance to use potentially unlimited state funds for promoting Fidesz-KDNP messages during the election campaign without any control and supervision of the institution, responsible for the campaign spendings integrity and level playing field. Thus, ENEMO observed the situation of the critical imbalance in resources of the ruling alliance in comparison to other contestants used during the official election period, which contradicts international standards¹³⁷, as well as goes against one of the basic principles of the electoral procedure, determined by the Hungarian legislation as the "equal opportunities for candidates and nominating organizations".

ENEMO recommends to develop and implement the relevant legislative framework for third-party campaigning, including the introducing caps of the expenditures for such activities.

¹³²The joint research was conducted by K-Monitor, Political Capital and Transparency International Hungary. For more information <https://bit.ly/3J0XAKS>

¹³³Referendum campaign is also included.

¹³⁴According to the report, the total amount is 3095 million HUF (EUR 8.4 m). Official maximum cap for a party during Parliamentary elections 2022 is approx. 3.2 million EUR.

¹³⁵According to the report, it is HUF 1.4 bn (EUR 3.9 m).

¹³⁶Based on the data available in the Meta Ad Library Report for the period from 12 February - 3 April 2022, according to the disclaimer, the advertisers with the highest amount of money spent on ads about social issues, elections or politics on Facebook were: Megafon (380.456.195 HUF), Mediaworks Hungary Zrt. (354.412.659 HUF), Fidesz (206.678.215 HUF), erosito.hu (172.956.722 HUF), EzaLényeg.hu (152.081.237 HUF), kormányvaltok.hu (146.572.571 HUF), and Aktuális Média (105.506.831 HUF). Megafon (PR company), Mediaworks Hungary Zrt. (Media company), Fidesz (political party), and Aktuális Média (media) promoted content in support of the ruling party, while erosito.hu (media amplifier), EzaLényeg.hu (media) promoted pro-opposition posts, and kormányvaltok.hu funded 82 percent of paid ads of profile Márki-Zay Péter.

¹³⁷Article 7 (para 7.6) of the [Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the OSCE](#) calls for "respect the right of individuals and groups to establish, in full freedom, their own political parties or other political organizations and provide such political parties and organizations with the necessary legal guarantees to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law and by the authorities".

VII. MEDIA

Media environment

Overall, the media landscape in Hungary is diverse and includes public and commercial broadcasters, as well as a variety of printed press and electronic media with local and national coverage. However, high concentration of media ownership and economic and political interests of the owners are widely perceived to be influencing media reporting and limiting media plurality, as well as voters' possibility to make a truly informed choice.¹³⁸

The Internet has become one of the most important sources of news, putting in second place TV and radio,¹³⁹ as the online sphere is rated as the most independent segment of the Hungarian media space.¹⁴⁰ According to ENEMO interlocutors, people from the urban areas mainly use the internet to access the news, while in the rural areas public TV and local press are main sources of information.

ENEMO interlocutors reported that the media sector is characterized by a systematic interference of the state with the media ecosystem, which is in particular reflected through a manipulation of the public discourse and information flow control, economic pressure and state's key role in the domestic media advertising market,¹⁴¹ as well as smear campaigning towards critical media outlets and journalists.

No cases of attacks on journalists were reported, but spy surveillance cases, digital harassment, intimidation, and negative public rhetoric towards the media contributed to an atmosphere of threat and intimidation for critical journalism.¹⁴²

ENEMO media interlocutors reported unavailability of political actors, in particular the governmental and public institutions, to give interviews and cooperate with the media. Public information is not always accessible to journalists, while public authorities not answering media questions in a timely manner and providing only general data, aggravates their work. Discrimination of critical media outlets from the Government's press conferences was reported as well. Furthermore, ENEMO interlocutors expressed concerns regarding the internalized pro-Russian narratives and anti-EU sentiments in domestic media.

Further consideration should be given to enforcing effective measures to avoid undue concentration of media ownership that limits media plurality and ensure that government advertising is not used as a vehicle for political interference in the media market. To this end, editorial independence should be strongly protected and access to information by the public should be guaranteed in accordance with international practice.

¹³⁸Media ownership and plurality is seen as a politicized issue in Hungary as during the years the ruling party and its allies has been acquiring critical media outlets. In 2015, the news outlet Origo was taken over by pro-government investors. In 2016, Hungary's largest independent daily, Népszabadság, was closed. In 2018, Central European Press and Media Foundation (KESMA) was founded, merging and encompassing around 500 pro-government media outlets. In 2020, a person associated with the incumbent party bought 50 percent of the Indamedia Group, a partner of Index, the country's largest independent news outlet.

¹³⁹University of Oxford, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, [2021 Digital News Report](#)

¹⁴⁰Freedom House, Data on Freedom on the Net 2021, [Hungary Report](#)

¹⁴¹This was also reported by [the International Press Institute \(IPI\) Mission Report: Media Freedom in Hungary Ahead of 2022 Election](#). Accordingly, in Hungary the state is the largest advertiser in the media market. In 2020 government bodies, ministries and state-owned companies spent €79 million euros on advertising - around one third of the total advertising revenue of the media market. The country's single largest advertiser is the Prime Minister's Office. Lack of legislation on fair and transparent criteria for the distribution of state advertising funds potentially causes discrimination of critical media in the media market.

¹⁴²ENEMO noted that during the campaigning period, there were lawsuits against independent media related to certain wording used in their articles, e.g., Megafon sued Telex for reporting that they "could even receive public money" for their financing. Budapest - Capital Regional Court ruled that the lawsuits were unfounded in this case, however, this could potentially contribute to the creation of the self-censorship environment of the media.

Legal framework

The Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of speech and expression. It recognizes and protects the freedom and diversity of the press, and ensures the conditions for free dissemination of information necessary for the formation of democratic public opinion.¹⁴³ The media legal framework (the Media Act and the Press Act) provides general preconditions for media freedoms.

The Media Act establishes the National Media and Info-communication Authority (NMHH) and Media Council as independent bodies mandated to oversee and guarantee the freedom of press within the framework of the Media Act and Press Act, including carrying out the supervisory and oversight responsibilities defined by law; operating a program monitoring and analyzing service, etc. In this regard, ENEMO notes that mechanisms of selection of members of the Media Council do not provide adequate legal safeguards for its full independence.¹⁴⁴

Media regulatory bodies should be able to operate in a fully independent manner and the rules governing their composition and appointment procedures should ensure impartiality so as to remove risks of any kind of interference.

The conduct of media during the campaign is regulated by the Electoral Procedures Act, which obliges the media to cover the campaign by providing equal and unbiased conditions to contestants. The NEC decides upon complaints relating to the violation of the provisions of the Electoral Procedures Act concerning media service providers and the press, while parliamentary single-member constituency election commission decides upon complaints relating to a district, local or on-demand media service or a press product.¹⁴⁵

On 13 January 2022, the public media established the Public Media Election Office (KVI) responsible for ensuring that all media content services in the public media comply with the provisions of the Civil Service Code and relevant legal provisions during the campaign and elections. The KVI supervises the legal and equal opportunity publication of political advertisements in public media, balanced coverage of other election-related media content, such as news programs and political briefings, and the allocation of airtime for public service media services accordingly.

Traditional media

During the campaign period, the public media is required by law to broadcast political advertisements by parties and national minority lists free of charge, while commercial broadcasters can decide whether to provide advertising or not, but must do so free of charge for all contestants.¹⁴⁶ From among the commercial broadcasters only RTL Televízió Zrt.¹⁴⁷ was registered to provide free of charge political advertisement suggesting a decline in media interest

¹⁴³The Constitution of Hungary, Article IX

¹⁴⁴The Media Act, Section 124, in particular para. (4): "The voting power of members of the nominations committee shall be weighted consistent with the number of members of the Parliament faction on whose behalf they were elected."

¹⁴⁵The Election Procedure Act, Section 151 (1)

¹⁴⁶Public media have to devote a total of 470 minutes to the political advertisement of the parties running in the elections. This means that the parties are allowed to publish their political advertisements in the public media services for 78 minutes and 20 seconds per party list (The NEC Decision No. 124/2022). National minority lists get less time, a total of 130 minutes, thus lists running for these elections may have published their political advertisements in the public media services for 10 minutes and 50 seconds per minority list (The NEC Decision No. 125/2022).

¹⁴⁷The national broadcaster RTL KLUB is entitled to publish political advertisement for a period of 39 minutes 10 seconds for a party list (The NEC, Decision No. 126/2022), and 5 minutes 25 seconds for a national minority list (The NEC, Decision No. 127/2022).

to get involved in politics related matters.¹⁴⁸ When it comes to the referendum campaign, the Government and the seven parties with the parliamentary faction were entitled to publish their political advertising in public media.¹⁴⁹

ENEMO interlocutors reported that the low interest of commercial broadcasters to provide political advertisement is due to the imposed legal obligation to provide it only free of charge for all political contestants.¹⁵⁰ In this way, the broadcasting of political coverage on TV is limited and depends mainly on public broadcasters.

ENEMO observers, both at the local and national level, reported unequal access of electoral contestants to media, biased news reporting, and negative rhetoric and campaigning towards candidates. In particular, public media is perceived to reflect biased reporting with the lack of investigative journalism. ENEMO notes that given the overall media environment and strongly present self-censorship, the public service media is inadequate to provide voters with objective and impartial information about the electoral contestants.

On 6 March, the opposition parties protested in front of MTVA complaining about unequal opportunities and media space for all election participants given the fact that the opposition could not appear on public television. They also protested against the spread of pro-Russian propaganda through public media. Few days later, the Public Media Election Office made the decision to grant 5 minutes for opposition parties' presentations on public broadcaster M1 and public radio Kossuth.¹⁵¹

Given the crucial role and importance of the public service media for citizens' access to comprehensive, fair, and balanced information about the elections on a non-discriminatory basis, ENEMO considers its independence should be strongly supported.

ENEMO notes that some political parties running in elections did not use their legal right to free of charge political advertisements at all, or did not use it on public TV and radio, but only on RTL Klub.¹⁵² However, all parties running in elections used the opportunity to present their political programs in the five-minutes time frame granted to them on public TV and radio.¹⁵³ When it comes to the referendum, no political advertisement was broadcasted free of charge on TV and radio.¹⁵⁴ No public debates were organized among political opponents, mainly due to the lack of political interest of the ruling parties.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁸During the 2018 elections, there were three commercial media registered to provide political advertisement.

¹⁴⁹For a period of 37 minutes 30 seconds each on the public broadcasters (The NEC, Decision No. 5/2022), and for a period of 18 minutes and 45 seconds on RTL KLUB (The NEC, Decision No. 54/2022).

¹⁵⁰This is a challenge for media outlets as paid advertising is their principal source of funding, so many of them are not opting to provide political advertisement to be broadcasted on their channels.

¹⁵¹Representatives of political parties were receiving airtime to present their election program every Wednesday and Thursday from 16 March in the program M1 – This Morning before the 8 o'clock news, Kossuth Radio - Good Morning, Hungary! Representatives of the national minority lists were able to present their program on Duna television on 25 March and 1 April, in the five-minute time frame as well.

¹⁵²[Media Council, Elections 2022 media monitoring reporting](#).

¹⁵³All political parties running for the elections used a live five-minutes time frame on public TV M1, while [Kossuth Rádió's stated](#) that the Two-Tailed Dog Party did not take the opportunity to speak on the radio.

¹⁵⁴[Media Council, Elections 2022 media monitoring reporting](#)

¹⁵⁵During the campaigning period, the opposition's prime-minister candidate Péter Márki-Zay has repeatedly stated that he wanted a television debate with Viktor Orbán, although Viktor Orbán stated that no political debates would be held, in the last parliamentary session of his mandate in March.

ENEMO observers across the country, as well as numerous interlocutors have consistently reported that equal and impartial treatment by media was not sufficiently ensured for all contestants, and nor were the principles of fairness, balance, and impartiality in the coverage of election campaigns respected. The unbalanced and one-sided reporting was in particular visible at the regional and local level.¹⁵⁶

ENEMO observers reported that local TV channels and newspapers are perceived to be strongly influenced by local authorities and are often considered a tool for spreading biased information, while independent local media are less present and visible. Local public in different regions are mainly exposed to an unbalanced and partisan media reporting. In such an environment, with none, or limited access to the local media, opposition and small parties in many cases produced their own printed media products and delivered them to voters' mailboxes physically, relying mainly on volunteers.¹⁵⁷

Further efforts in respect of the principle of equal opportunities during the electoral campaign in particular in terms of impartial and equal access for all candidates and political parties to the media, especially public service TV and radio, should be enhanced.

Electronic media

Paid advertisement is allowed in print and electronic media, which are obliged to determine and publish their price lists within legally defined deadlines.¹⁵⁸ ENEMO notes that among registered electronic media, the biggest independent outlets showed no intention to provide political ads.

ENEMO media analysis has shown that the electoral campaign was visible in electronic media even before 12 February, when the campaign officially started. However, after 24 February, the political campaigning in the media was conducted in the shadow of the Russo-Ukrainian war. Namely, political rhetoric in the media was highly influenced by the invasion of Ukraine, which caused a quick switching of narratives of both the ruling coalition and the opposition during the campaigning period.

With regards to the electronic media, ENEMO used a media monitoring methodology that focused on content-based quantitative and qualitative analysis.¹⁵⁹ By analyzing the media coverage in detail, it may be concluded that in the monitoring period¹⁶⁰ the observed electronic media¹⁶¹ generally reported in neutral tone (65 percent), negatively (27 percent) and least positively (8 percent) on electoral contestants.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ENEMO observers reported allegations against local media for not providing equal opportunity for all nominating organizations and only interviewing ruling party candidates in Bács-Kiskun county. In Hajdu-Bihar county, the biggest weekly newspaper Bihari Hírlap and TV Berettyo reportedly rarely wrote about the opposition candidates. As reported, local newspaper Miskolc Naplo and television channel TV Miskolc predominantly gave space to opposition candidates, while Sajomente, Eszak Magyarország, Bon.hu, Satoraljaiújhely, report mainly on the ruling party in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county. Hatvan online has covered only the ruling party in Heves county, and the same situation was with Kelet Magyarország, Nyiregyhazi Naplo, Szalka TV, Kolcsey TV, in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county. Local Kisalföld newspaper and Molnár TV in Győr-Moson-Sopron county were in particular mentioned as pro-governmental media, almost exclusively broadcasting and publishing positive news about the ruling alliance and negative about the opposition. Érd Radio, Érd TV, erdmot.hu, and Érd Ujsag were perceived to present mainly the opposition parties in Pest County. In Budapest the situation is slightly better as there are more independent media, while the radio frequencies are perceived to broadcast biased information.

¹⁵⁷ENEMO also noted the work of the "Nyomtass te is!" ("Print it yourself!") community initiative around the country, composed of volunteers who took objective media articles, printed, and delivered them to citizens in rural areas.

¹⁵⁸State Audits Office, <https://www.asz.hu/hu/valasztasok>

¹⁵⁹The quantitative measurements include data on the amount of election related media articles in electronic media, while the qualitative measurements comprise the tone of the article (positive, negative or neutral) with additional assessment of the balance in media reporting.

¹⁶⁰Monitoring was conducted for the period from the official start of the electoral campaign, 12 February 2022, until the election day, 3 April 2022.

¹⁶¹Monitored electronic media: 24.hu, Origo, Index, Hirado, Telex, HVG. The selection of the media was conducted based on following criteria: reach, user trust, and ownership in order to include public service and private media.

¹⁶²In total 3310 articles published during the monitoring period were analyzed, out of which 3229 articles were inspected in terms of the reporting tone. 81 articles were not accessible due to the paywall system. See Annex of the Report.

As the campaigning period approached the E-day, ENEMO notes that the percentage of neutral tone in media articles decreased, while positive and negative increased. Although independent electronic media presumably endeavored to preserve its independence, analysis shows that they started to show more politically biased and unbalanced reporting later in the campaigning period.¹⁶³

As a consequence, media articles about elections and contestants in some cases lacked analytical and investigative reporting which, altogether, may have limited voters' access to quality information. At the same time, media articles often refer to Facebook statuses and YouTube videos as their main source of information to report about some events. This reflects the above-mentioned lack of access of media outlets to the politicians and latest events, so they have to resort to social media sources, as well as the importance political parties give to social media during these elections.

ENEMO noted a frequent appearance of Anonymous hacking activities and cyber-attacks both on political parties and media in particular during the last week of the electoral campaign. The first Anonymous was revealing alleged corruption cases among opposition candidates, on a weekly basis through videos.¹⁶⁴ During the election week, a group of Anonymous hacked news sources favorable to the Government and flooded their portals with government-critical content,¹⁶⁵ while political parties and media reported cyber-attacks on their websites.¹⁶⁶

Private and electronic media should ensure balanced coverage about the participants in the electoral process and all contesting points of view should be fairly and equitably communicated respecting the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

Social media

Social media platforms were crucial for these elections and political campaigns showed the fact that political parties maintain their internet presence and engage directly with voters through social networks, mostly Facebook. Other social media channels, such as YouTube and Instagram were used, as well as alternative apps popular among younger generations like TikTok and Spotify podcasts. Hiring professionals for social media campaigning, i.e., PR and communication companies, as well as local influencers for the dissemination and multiplication of political content were used too.

The campaign on social media was characterized by large amounts of money spent on political ads, engagement of third parties (influencers, meme pages) in campaigning, the presence of fake profiles aimed at confusing and deceiving users and attacking political opponents.¹⁶⁷ Modified/redesigned pictures, Facebook quizzes, online interactive meetings to engage voters, were just some of the tools ENEMO noticed/observed in the digital space.

¹⁶³Misinterpretation and taking out of the context of what certain political actors said, conducting interviews with interlocutors and presenting opinion polls that are favorable only to one side of the political scene, were noted. ENEMO notes that in February 2022, Peter Marki-Zay, the prime-minister candidate won a lawsuit against public television and some private media, due to the alleged misrepresentation of his word during his visit to the countryside. Additionally, there was a complaint against TV2 Média Group Zrt. (media content provider) for publishing online video in which the presenters and the news director of the media content provider encourage people to vote for Viktor Orbán. NEC rejected the complaint with the reasoning that the publication of an online video is not considered a linear audiovisual media service, but an internet press product, thus the requirement of balanced information cannot be applied in this case.

¹⁶⁴Anonymous appeared for the first time on 16 March 2022.

¹⁶⁵Mandiner, 888.hu, Metropol, Figyelő, Szabad Föld and Nemzeti Sport and several county newspapers were hacked on 29 March.

¹⁶⁶Fidesz reported cyber-attacks on their website on 30 March, while Momentum Movement reported their websites were hacked on 31 March. Telex.hu and 444.hu were partially inaccessible on 31 March as well.

¹⁶⁷Some interlocutors reported black PR, defamation, as well as organized post commenting (by bots and real people) that creates the impression of mass support towards certain content on social media.

Since the Internet presents an important source of news and plays a significant role in the campaign coverage, the lack of specific regulation regarding social media raises concerns about the influence of campaigns targeting a high number of recipients and therefore may have an impact on the forming of political opinion.

ENEMO social media analysis has shown a high activity of meme pages during the run up to the elections. It is noted that both pro-government and pro-opposition meme accounts have a relevant share in political content creation. Cases of dissemination of content created with the aim to discredit political opponents and women in politics were visible as well.

For the 2022 Parliamentary Elections in Hungary, ENEMO used the CrowdTangle platform to monitor political parties' activity on social media, focusing on Facebook¹⁶⁸ and Instagram¹⁶⁹. On Facebook, a total of 4,614 posts and 7.4M interactions¹⁷⁰ were generated. The most active was Fidesz (918 posts), followed by Socialist Party (539), Dialogue for Hungary (526), Jobbik (429), and Momentum Movement (413). Data shows that 58 percent of all interactions came from only one party - Fidesz (total 4.3M interactions). On Instagram, political parties were less active,¹⁷¹ among which most interactions were generated by the Two-Tailed Dog party and the Solution Movement.¹⁷²

Political parties were also using different structural units (local and regional pages), including political party's leaders and candidate's pages categorized as "politician" on Facebook¹⁷³ and Instagram¹⁷⁴. Data suggests that politicians reached more Facebook users' interactions through their profiles than political parties, counting a total of 31.9M interactions. The most interactions were reached by profiles Orbán Viktor, Márki-Zay Péter, and Szijjártó Péter.¹⁷⁵ On Instagram, profiles of Orbán Viktor and Márki-Zay Péter generated the most interactions.¹⁷⁶

Through all social media platforms, political parties and politicians communicated mostly through photos and videos.

ENEMO interlocutors mentioned that Meta¹⁷⁷ often reduces the reach of the content with far-right connotations¹⁷⁸ and some media outlets¹⁷⁹ reported that their reach was reduced, while a few days before the elections, a right-wing party's official account¹⁸⁰ on Facebook was deleted. ENEMO notes that Meta's frequent interventions may suggest the existence of a high level of far-right narratives that aspire to extremism within the online space in Hungary. Indeed, when it comes to the referendum, ENEMO noted mainly an anti-LGBTI campaign, among which the most distinct page was StopGender¹⁸¹.

¹⁶⁸ENEMO monitored 13 official Facebook pages of political parties during the period from 12 February to 3 April 2022. See Annex of the Report.

¹⁶⁹ENEMO monitored 13 Instagram accounts of political parties. See Annex of the Report.

¹⁷⁰Interactions include: comments, shares, and reactions (like, love, wow, haha, sad, angry, care).

¹⁷¹A total of 412 posts created and 250.843 interactions generated

¹⁷²The Two-Tailed Dog party generated 147.632 interactions (59 percent of all interactions), while the Solution Movement generated 45.910 interactions (18 percent of all interactions).

¹⁷³ENEMO monitored 43 Facebook pages of politicians. See Annex of the Report.

¹⁷⁴ENEMO monitored 11 Instagram accounts of politicians. See Annex of the Report.

¹⁷⁵Profile Orbán Viktor generated 6.5M interaction (16.7 percent of all interactions), Márki-Zay Péter 2.9M (7.4 percent of all interactions) and Szijjártó Péter 2.8M (7.2 percent of all interactions).

¹⁷⁶Profile Orbán Viktor generated 1.1M interactions (55 percent of all interactions), while Márki-Zay Péter 318.829 (15.9 percent of all interactions).

¹⁷⁷Former Facebook

¹⁷⁸In particular, mentioning Rod Dreher was emphasized as highly problematic.

¹⁷⁹According to the [Index.hu reporting](#) their reach was reduced to Facebook/Meta.

¹⁸⁰Meta deleted Our Homeland Movement's official account on 29 March.

¹⁸¹Page was created on 13 December 2021, and has 87 paid ads and 2.252.451 HUF spent on ads about social issues, elections or politics paid by Stop Gender - Alapjogokért Központ (Center for Fundamental Rights).

ENEMO notes that state institutions took no steps to monitor online media, including social media, to address fake news, negative campaigning and rhetoric, and online disinformation, in particular by identifying possible costs involving paid advertising and their sources.

Authorities should enhance the media regulations to address the use of social media during electoral campaigning and take steps to tackle fake news, disinformation campaigning, manipulative and inauthentic behaviors, as well as to effectively monitor social media and online campaign finance during elections.

VIII. GENDER REPRESENTATION

Hungary has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1980. The Fundamental Law of Hungary establishes that women and men are equal, and the state should help to ensure equality of opportunities. However, the engagement of women in politics remains low.¹⁸² There is no specific legal mechanism aiming to increase women participation in politics.¹⁸³ Only some political parties introduced voluntary political party quotas.¹⁸⁴

Low engagement of women was well demonstrated by the number of women candidates registered for the parliamentary elections, in particular, for single-member constituency elections out of 663 candidates, only 116 were women (17.65 percent); for the proportional race, out of 1,035 candidates on national party lists, only 205 were women (19.80 percent). Women were better represented on national minority lists as out of 111 candidates there were 48 women (43 percent). It should be noted that four of them were in the first place of their respective national minority lists. In the National Assembly elected on 3 April, there are only 28 women making 14.07 percent of all members of the parliament.¹⁸⁵ Consequently, women will be underrepresented in the new composition of the National Assembly.

The state should adopt effective measures for increasing women representation in politics, such as reserved quota, at least for the party lists. In case of a female MP's withdrawal, it should be determined that she should be replaced only by a female candidate, in order not to reduce the number of women in the legislature.

When it comes to the media representation of women in politics during these elections, ENEMO noted that from the monitored content in electronic media only around five percent addressed women. The most mentioned women were Judith Varga, Klara Dobrev and Katalin Novak.

Some political parties addressed issues related to women in their programs or during the campaign.¹⁸⁶

Political parties should address issues related to women in their political platforms and during campaigning. Political parties should introduce mechanisms that promote women's engagement in politics.

¹⁸²In the National Assembly elected in 2018, out of 199 members 26 were women (13 percent). Only 2 out of 13 cabinet ministers are women (one without portfolio). An important event was the election of the first woman president, Katalin Novak, by the parliament on 10 March 2022.

¹⁸³E.g., quota for women's inclusion in the party lists for the proportional segment.

¹⁸⁴Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) introduced a 20 percent quota for women, while the Hungary's Green Party (LMP) introduced electoral lists with maximum two repeated candidates of the same sex that may follow each other: [Gender Quotas Database, Hungary](#), International IDEA

¹⁸⁵Fidesz-KDNP -14 women; United Opposition – 13 women, Our Homeland –one woman. <https://bit.ly/3Meehoo>

<https://www.parlament.hu/web/house-of-the-national-assembly/list-of-mps>. From the initially elected 27 women candidates (Fidesz-KDNP - 15; United Opposition -11; Our Homeland -1) two withdrew: one from Fidesz was replaced by a male candidate and another from DK was replaced by a female candidate from LMP. Péter Márki-Zay and Gergely Karácsony were replaced by female candidates from Jobbik and Dialogue for Hungary respectively.

¹⁸⁶For instance, joint opposition in its program and during the campaign addressed some issues related with women, in particular, decreasing salary gap between women and men; increasing resources to prevent domestic violence and starting specific awareness programs; introducing educational programs for women with disadvantaged backgrounds; increasing the support regarding the access to the intimate hygiene products. In the programs of Solution Movement and Our Homeland introducing parenthood as a recognized full-time job is the only issue which could target women.

IX. NATIONAL MINORITIES

Hungary is a party to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.¹⁸⁷ The Fundamental Law determines basic rights of national minorities such as the right to use language, promote culture, receive education in their language, as well as the right to establish minority self-governments. Act CLXXIX of 2011 on the Rights of Nationalities regulates in more detail the rights of national minorities, including the election of national minority self-governments and their competencies. According to the law, there are 13 officially recognized national minorities.¹⁸⁸ National minorities received the right to present a minority list based on Act CCIII of 2011 on the Election of the Members of the National Assembly and had an opportunity to use this right for the first time in parliamentary elections of 6 April 2014.

For these elections, 12 national minorities registered their lists. The Roma minority self-government failed to submit one, due to internal disagreements, as ENEMO received information. Only the German minority list acquired one mandate, by receiving 24,630 votes.

Two major political contestants also had minority representatives on their lists: Fidesz-KDNP coalition had one Roma candidate and the united opposition three. All of them were elected.

The united opposition has addressed in its program specific issues regarding minorities, in particular, to increase the number of Roma people in higher education and provide them entrepreneurship skills for starting private businesses; to improve the infrastructure and life quality in the Roma settlements, etc. The program of the political party Our Homeland also contained minority issues, but in a negative context stating that they would cancel the Roma integration programs and introduce a segregated educational system, as well as restrict the right to vote only to literate persons, a measure that is assumed to target the Roma minority.

As ENEMO was informed by its interlocutors, due to economic and social conditions Roma minorities were targets of vote buying. As it was alleged, the ruling party has been arranging different social events and providing social benefits to leaders of the Roma minority to ensure their support. It was also mentioned that individuals from national minorities employed in the public sector were under pressure, sometimes even directly requested to support the ruling party.

Political parties should engage more national minority representatives in politics and have them on the party list. They should raise issues related with minorities during campaign and refrain from using vote buying and pressure for acquiring their support.

¹⁸⁷Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, February 1995, <https://rm.coe.int/16800c10cf>

¹⁸⁸Armenian, Bulgarian, Croatian, German, Greek, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Serbian, Slovakian, Slovenian and Ukrainian.

X. INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Hungary has been a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) since 2007. Specific legal norms regarding the participation of persons with disabilities in elections are given in the Act on Election Procedures. The major issue regarding the right to suffrage of persons with disabilities is that a person can be deprived of the right to vote due to mental incapacity by a court decision. According to the information provided to ENEMO, 47,078 persons were deprived of the right to vote based on a court decision because of mental incapacity. Disenfranchising citizens based on intellectual disability is at odds with international standards.¹⁸⁹

The Act on Election Procedures defines a voter with disability and determines that persons with disabilities for exercising their right to vote may request poll cards in braille;¹⁹⁰ information materials in accessible format; accessible polling stations;¹⁹¹ ballot papers in braille;¹⁹² voting by mobile ballot box. If the polling station on the voter's registered address is not accessible, the LEO should assign the voter to an accessible polling station, within the same settlement and constituency. Those regulations should be positively assessed as they give the opportunity to voters with disabilities to get relevant information and to cast their votes independently.

As regards requesting ballot papers in braille, although formally it is a positive regulation, in practice it creates additional barriers for voters with disabilities. As ENEMO was informed, there were 250 requests for Braille templates.

All polling stations should be equipped with a template in Braille, which will remove additional burden for persons with disabilities to file requests to that end.

Information about physical accessibility of polling stations was provided on the website of the election administration, which was a positive fact for informing voters. According to it, there were 7,815 accessible polling stations (out of 10,243). However, as ENEMO's interlocutors indicated this information was not always accurate and not all polling stations were accessible in accordance with required standards. Sometimes the problem is also the size of the polling station in case of voters using wheelchairs.

It should be noted that election contestants have not addressed issues relevant to persons with disabilities, neither in their programs, nor during the campaigning.

Authorities should continue efforts to facilitate an equal participation of all citizens in the electoral process, with special focus on persons with disabilities.

¹⁸⁹Article 29 of the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD); Paragraph 48 of the General Comment No.1 (2014) to Article 12 of the CRPD states that "a person's decision-making ability cannot be a justification for any exclusion of persons with disabilities from exercising their political rights, including the right to vote, the right to stand for election and the right to serve as a member of a jury", <https://bit.ly/3K3dMNO>

¹⁹⁰The NEO should send poll cards in braille and/or easy read materials to a voter, if the respective request is submitted no later than sixty-eight days before the Election Day.

¹⁹¹The voter can request an accessible polling station no later than four days before elections. Deadline for requesting accessible polling stations was 30 March.

¹⁹²Deadline for requesting ballot papers in Braille was 25 March.

XI. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Election related complaints are adjudicated by the election management bodies and courts. CoECs are adjudicating complaints regarding the activities and decisions of the PSCs, complaints concerning the single-member constituency elections and local media. Appeals regarding candidate registration can be submitted to the RECs. All other complaints and appeals against the decisions of CoECs are adjudicated by the NEC. Decisions of NEC and RECs can be appealed to the Supreme Court, while the constitutionality of the Supreme Court decisions can be challenged to the Constitutional Court.

Right to file complaints is limited only to natural and legal persons affected by the violation of election legislation. This restriction is strictly followed by the election management bodies and courts, which does not enable all interested stakeholders to file relevant complaints in case of violations.

The right to standing should not be restricted and all interested stakeholders should have the right to file complaints in case of violations.

The complaint/appeal should be submitted to the competent authority within three days from the date of respective violation and/or decision and should be adjudicated within three days from its receipt. ENEMO notes that established timeframes are reasonable for filing complaints and appeals, as well as for rendering substantiated decisions.

The NEC conducted public sessions for adjudicating complaints and appeals. Its decisions, as well as decisions of the Supreme Court were promptly published on the website, which contributed to transparency.

There were 228 complaints and appeals submitted to the NEC.¹⁹³ Many of the complaints/appeals concerned misuse of state resources and blurring of the line between the state and the party.¹⁹⁴ The NEC rejected the absolute majority of those complaints/appeals or overturned decisions of the CoECs based on the argument that those activities were carried out in the official capacity by respective persons belonging to the Fidesz-KDNP coalition and could not be considered as a violation.¹⁹⁵ This position of the NEC was upheld both by the Supreme and Constitutional courts. It can be concluded that legal regulations and established practice of their application by the NEC and the courts proved to be ineffective for addressing cases of misuse of state resources and preventing them.

¹⁹³126 complaints were filed to the Regional Election Commissions. Almost all of them concerned collection of signatures/registration of candidates mostly for candidates of the Party of Normal Life and Solution Movement. Except for a few complaints, all of them were rejected by the RECs. 14 decisions of RECs were appealed to the Supreme Court, but the latter rejected all. More than 500 complaints were received by CoECs.

¹⁹⁴Those cases mostly concerned distribution of digital devices to students or pupils by candidates of the Fidesz-KDNP coalition, who were at the same time MPs or public officials. Several cases also concerned candidates of the ruling coalition presenting different activities/programs implemented by the Government via social networks or other means, allegedly misleading voters by creating the impression that those were implemented by the political party. Several complaints concerned messages of the ruling coalition resembling those of the government, etc.

One of the most important cases was related to using the Government's Information Center for sending emails to citizens who provided their personal data within the coronavirus vaccination campaign. The message sent by the Government concerned its position on the situation in Ukraine, in particular it stated that the Government considers it irresponsible and does not support the opposition's standpoint that Hungary should send troops and weapons to Ukraine, also it does not support proposals that threaten Hungary's gas supply and the reduction of tariffs. As the message was referring to the opposition's stance, complainants argued that it was a violation of the principle of equal opportunities and proper exercise of justice. The NEC rejected the complaint as unfounded, while the Supreme Court partially overruled it, stating that this activity by the Government violated principles of equality of opportunities for contestants and exercise of rights in good faith. Decision of the Supreme Court was appealed to the Constitutional Court, which annulled it stating that the Government fulfilled its obligation under the Fundamental Law to provide information to the public.

¹⁹⁵Justification derived from the regulation of the Act on Electoral Procedures that: "The activities of election bodies, the personal communication between citizens as private persons, regardless of its content and form, and the activities carried out by the Constitutional Court, courts, local governments and other state organs in performing their functions provided for by the law shall not be considered election campaign."

Besides misuse of state resources, one of the important cases concerned distribution of the voting packages for Hungarian citizens living in Serbia, by the Hungarian Association of Vojvodina (VMSZ), allegedly affiliated with the Fidesz-KDNP coalition.¹⁹⁶ The NEC rejected the complaint stating that the NEO did not violate any provisions of the law and the delivery was the responsibility of the postal office. The NEC has not examined the circumstances of the alleged violation further.¹⁹⁷ The decision was appealed to the Supreme Court which upheld it.¹⁹⁸ According to the available information, none of the state authorities took measures regarding the violation.

For ensuring the right to vote of citizens living abroad, state authorities should take more effective measures in case of allegations that voting packages were not delivered to the citizens in the proper way.

One of the problems revealed during adjudication of complaints related to the unclear and insufficient regulations on jurisdiction over certain types of complaints. 30 complaints/appeals submitted to the NEC concerned campaign financing, in particular, financing of campaign advertisements for candidates by third parties. All complaints were rejected by the NEC without examining on merits due to lack of competence. The Supreme Court upheld the position of the NEC. Thus, the alleged violations were left unaddressed.

Legal norms should clearly define competence of respective bodies for adjudicating complaints, especially regarding violations of campaign finance regulations.

Five different complaints were filed against non-governmental organizations campaigning for invalidating ballot papers for the referendum. Insufficient and vague regulations on referendums were used by the NEC to fine non-governmental organizations for conducting campaigns to invalidate ballots for referendum.¹⁹⁹ The reasoning of the NEC was not well-substantiated. It imposed unreasonable restrictions on the right to freedom of expression. It also limited the right of voters to receive information regarding different positions about referendum, which is at odds with international standards.²⁰⁰ The NEC decisions were appealed to the Supreme Court, but the latter rendered inconsistent decisions by annulling decisions of the NEC in three cases and rejecting two appeals without examining on merits stating that those appeals did not specify why the respective decisions of NEC were unlawful. This argument is not justified when the case concerns fining of NGOs. The Constitutional Court upheld the decisions of the Supreme Court. As a result of these decisions one organization - Háttér Társaság (Háttér Society) will have to pay a fine of HUF 3,000,000. ENEMO was informed that an application will be filed to the European Court of Human Rights.

¹⁹⁶Complainant requested to establish the infringement and to prohibit the NEO from delivering the voting packages through the VMSZ, except for citizens who specifically requested them to be delivered to the address of the VMSZ.

¹⁹⁷Another complaint regarding voting abroad concerned ballot papers allegedly cast for opposition parties found open or unsealed in the outskirts of the village Jedd, in Romania. Complainant requested to find the violation of Article 2 (l) "a", "c" and "e" of the Act on Electoral Procedures and repeat of postal voting. Complaint was rejected without examination on merit, because of lack of territorial jurisdiction over the violations committed on the territory of another country. According to NEO, it filed a complaint to the police.

¹⁹⁸The Supreme Court ruled that the NEO has properly fulfilled its obligations under the law by handing over postal items to the Hungarian postal office and as assessment of the alleged violation of the Serbian postal delivery rules does not fall within the competence of the NEC, it correctly rejected the complaint.

¹⁹⁹By [decision 324/2022](#) the NEC found that NGO-Háttér Társaság had violated regulations by conducting a campaign to invalidate ballot papers for referendum and fined it with HUF 3,000,000. It stated that the campaign was an abusive exercise of rights incompatible with the constitutional purpose of the referendum and against the spirit of election laws. The NEC decision was appealed, but the Supreme Court rejected it without examining its merits ([Kvk.IV.39.419/2022/4](#)). The Constitutional Court upheld the decision of the Supreme Court (decisions [IV/984/2022](#)) In two other cases the NEC also found a violation and imposed the fine on NGOs (with the decision 325/2022 it fined Amnesty International to pay HUF 3,000,000 and with the decision 327/2022 16 NGOs were fined to pay HUF 176,400). In two more cases it only found a violation without imposing the fine as the campaign period had ended. Those four decisions were also appealed to the Supreme Court. Appeals were assigned to three different chambers. In three cases the Supreme Court overruled the decision of the NEC and annulled the fines based on the right to freedom of expression guaranteed by the Fundamental Law ([Kvk.V.39.421/2022/5](#), [Kvk.V.39.422/2022/3](#), [Kvk.VI.39.423/2022/6](#)). Accordingly, 16 NGOs, including Amnesty International, were exempted from paying a fine. One appeal was rejected without examination ([Kvk.IV.39.420/2022/4](#)). This decision was upheld by the Constitutional Court ([IV/985/2022](#)). As ENEMO was informed

²⁰⁰[Paragraph 1.3.1.d. of the Venice Commission Code of Good Practice on Referendums](#).

Clear regulations should be adopted enabling all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations to provide their opinions and information to the voters regarding the referendum issues and voting.

Five complaints concerned posting/sharing political posts on social networks by the lower-level election commission members. Initially, the NEC found violations of the impartiality of commission members, although in one case the Supreme Court overturned the decision of the NEC, stating that the commission member delegated by the political party was linked to its nominating party and need not be independent. Those members of the commission are required to be impartial and independent only in connection with the performance of their public duties. According to that decision, the Supreme Court adopted a differentiated approach between appointed and delegated commission members in respect of posting partisan messages on social networks. The NEC followed the practice set by the Court in similar cases.²⁰¹

The NEC rejected 89 complaints and appeals without examining the merits, due to different reasons. Mostly referring to violation of deadlines, lack of required personal data or evidence, lack of competence or legal standing, etc. NEC did not examine those complaints ex officio in order to address alleged violations.²⁰² Generally, adjudication of complaints showed that many complaints were rejected on formal grounds, limiting the access to effective legal redress, which is at odds with international good practice.²⁰³

To ensure the right to effective remedy and reduce a high number of complaints rejected on formal grounds, legal regulations should allow complainants to address technical errors in complaints in a reasonable time. The NEC should have the competence to consider alleged violations ex officio when the complaint is rejected on formal grounds.

In most cases when NEC established a violation, it only prohibited violators from further infringement without imposing sanctions. This approach was applied regardless of the severity of violations, which raises questions regarding its effectiveness in terms of preventing violations.

Courts adjudicated complaints without public hearings. In total 98 appeals were filed with the Supreme Court regarding the decisions of the NEC and lower-level election management bodies. The Supreme Court rejected 25 appeals without examining on merits and overturned fully or partially 36 decisions of the NEC. 20 constitutional complaints were submitted to the Constitutional Court. In three cases, the Court annulled the decisions of the Supreme Court and rejected 17 complaints.

Courts should adjudicate complaints at public hearings allowing complainants and defendants to present their arguments and be heard.

²⁰¹The NEC received a total of 32 complaints and appeals related to campaign posters/flyers, 19 complaints/appeals related to the media and nine related to the collection of signatures.

²⁰²Paragraph II.3.3.i of the [Code on Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) of the Venice Commission: "Where the appeal body is a higher electoral commission, it must be able ex officio to rectify or set aside decisions taken by lower electoral commissions".

²⁰³Paragraph 96 of the [Code on Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#) of the Venice Commission: "The procedure must also be simple, and providing voters with special appeal forms helps to make it so. It is necessary to eliminate formalism, and so avoid decisions of inadmissibility, especially in politically sensitive cases." Paragraph 5.10 of the [1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document](#) states that: "everyone will have an effective means of redress against administrative decisions, so as to guarantee respect for fundamental rights and ensure legal integrity."

XII. ELECTION DAY

On Election Day, ENEMO deployed 200 Short-term observers (STOs) in multinational teams of two observers to follow the process of preparation and opening of polling stations, the voting and counting process, as well as the transfer and intake of election materials by LEOs. Observers monitored the opening procedures in 100 polling stations, voting in 1,119 polling stations, and closing and counting in 99 polling stations. Additionally, ENEMO observed the intake of election materials in 96 Local Election Offices.

Election Day was, overall, calm and peaceful. The management of the polling and conduct of PSCs and LEOs was assessed positively in the majority of the cases observed, with some procedural deviations that are assessed not to have negatively affected the legitimacy of the overall process. Instances of organized transportation of voters and active campaigning in proximity of polling stations were observed, as well as a high number of cases of violation of secrecy of the vote.

In general, counting procedures, although lengthy due to different types of ballots to be counted, were followed properly and issues were addressed professionally, and delivery of materials was conducted in an organized manner.

Opening procedures

ENEMO observed the opening procedures in 100 polling stations.

The opening procedures started before 6.00 AM in 91 percent of the observed polling stations, and after 06.00 AM (between 6.00 and 6.10 AM) in 9 percent of polling stations. 67 percent of the polling stations were opened for voting at 6 AM, 28 percent between 6.00 and 6.15 AM and 5 percent between 6.15 and 6.30 AM.

Out of 100 observed polling stations, 99 were equipped with all essential materials needed for the voting at the moment of opening and other informational materials, with the exception of one polling station where seals were missing.

The procedure of sealing stationary ballot boxes was followed properly in 99 of the observed polling stations, while in 1 polling station the ballot boxes were not sealed properly. With regards to mobile ballot boxes, sealing procedures were followed properly in 99 observed polling stations, while in 1 PS, the mobile ballot box was not sealed at all.

With regards to accessibility of PSs to persons with disabilities, 58 percent of the polling stations were accessible, 17 percent not suitable, while in the other 25 percent of the polling stations, minor assistance was required in order for PwDs to access the polling stations.

The arrangement of premises of polling stations was assessed as adequate in 99 observed polling stations, while in one, the observers assessed that the arrangement was inadequate.

ENEMO observers were able to properly monitor the opening procedures in all observed polling stations, except for one, which was too overcrowded. No complaints related to the opening process were reported in any of the observed polling stations.

Procedural violations were observed in one polling station during the opening. However, in 96 percent of observed polling stations, the opening procedures were assessed positively (very good or good). In only four of the observed polling stations, observers assessed the opening procedures as bad, due to negligence of PSC members.

The voting process

ENEMO observers monitored the environment around polling stations and the voting process in 1,119 polling stations, throughout 100 constituencies in 19 counties and Budapest. Out of the total number of observed polling stations, nine were only for absentee voting, while 269 were for both regular and absentee voting.

The environment around polling stations was assessed as orderly in 99 percent of the polling stations. Organized transportation of voters was reported in 1 case and excessive presence of police was observed in two cases. Certain campaigning activities were noticed in only a few PSs (less than one percent).

All polling stations were operating with at least the minimum number of PSC members required by the law. Women were well represented in the polling station commissions, with 64 percent of PSC members being women, including 76 percent as Chairperson and 78 percent as Deputy Chairperson.

Presence of unauthorized and/or unidentified persons inside the polling station was not noticed in the observed polling stations.

In total, 97 percent of the polling stations were assessed to have an adequate arrangement for voting, while at 3 percent, the arrangement was assessed as inadequate, mainly due to positioning of the voting booths or improper premises, which sometimes led to overcrowding, with a potential to jeopardize the secrecy of the vote, or impossibility for all PSC members and observers to have a clear view of the entire voting process. Polling stations' accessibility for persons with mobility impairments was assessed as easy in approximately 76 percent of the polling stations, and as requiring assistance, or completely inaccessible in 15 and 9 percent respectively. The main reasons for inaccessibility was the lack of ramp for wheelchairs and presence of stairs.

Essential materials for the conduct of voting were present in all observed polling stations.

Information materials on voting procedures and candidates were present at 99 percent of the polling stations. At one percent, information materials were not posted on the walls of the polling station.

Breaches of the secrecy of the vote was one of the issues observed frequently, throughout election day. In 13 percent of the observed polling stations more than one individual in the voting booth was noticed over the period of 30 minutes of observation, in 4 percent voters were revealing their vote, and in 7 percent voters were not voting in secrecy due to various reasons as voting outside of the booths, improper set up of the booths or overcrowded polling station. Breach of rules for assisted voting was reported in 3 cases, as well as two cases of a voter taking a photo of a marked ballot paper.

Violation of the secrecy of vote is at odds with international standards²⁰⁴ and international good practice.²⁰⁵

The legal framework should be amended, in line with international standards and international good practice, in order to guarantee secret suffrage. Existing safeguards, such as use of envelopes and voting booths should be mandatory, and voters should be forbidden to take photos of marked ballot papers.

In 95 percent of the polling stations, observers did not notice, nor were reported cases of voters not included in the voters' list, while at five percent of polling stations they observed or were reported about voters not finding their names on the list.

ENEMO observers were able to observe properly in 99 percent of the visited polling stations, while in 1 percent, the observation was difficult due to the improper arrangement of the polling station, small premises of the precinct, or overcrowded polling stations. In one polling station the observers were deliberately denied access to some aspects of the voting process.

In 99 percent of polling stations, observers indicated that no formal complaints had been filed. In 1 percent there were minor complaints and in one polling station the PSC had received substantial complaints.

In total, 91 percent of the polling stations were assessed to be functioning and managed properly by PSC members, whereas 7 percent were somehow crowded, but still managed adequately. At 9 polling stations, ENEMO observers assessed the process as disorganized, confusing and overcrowded. The overall assessment of the voting process was positive (very good or good) in 97 percent of polling stations and in 3 percent, observers assessed the process as bad, due to negligence.

The counting process

ENEMO followed the closing and vote-counting procedures in 99 polling stations. From all observed polling stations, one did not close in time, and voters were queuing in one of the 99 polling stations observed at the moment of closing.

Procedures that precede the counting process were followed properly in 95 percent of the polling stations, while in 5 percent of them certain deviations from the procedures were noticed.

In 88 percent of all observed polling stations, the counting procedures were followed properly, whereas in 7 percent of polling stations ENEMO observers noted that the minute taker was participating in the counting. In a few polling stations there were some deviations in the procedures for filling in the protocol. However, observers assessed that these deviations did not appear to damage the legitimacy of the process, nor affected the results. One formal complaint on the counting process was recorded in the observed polling station. Procedures were not followed properly and in the right sequence in 6 percent of observed PSs where absentees voted.

²⁰⁴As per [UN \(CCPR\): General Comment No. 25: The Right to Participate in Public Affairs, Voting Rights and the Right to Equal Access to Public Service \(Article 25\)](#), para. 20, "States should take measures to guarantee the requirement of the secrecy of the vote during elections... This implies that voters should be protected from any form of coercion or compulsion to disclose how they intend to vote or how they voted, and from any unlawful or arbitrary interference with the voting process"

²⁰⁵As per [CoE \(Venice Commission\): Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#), I.4.b, and [CoE \(Venice Commission\): Code of Good Practice on Referendums](#), para. 4.b "Voting must be individual. Family voting and any other form of control by one voter over the vote of another must be prohibited". As per [CoE \(Parliamentary Assembly\): Resolution 1897\(2012\) on Ensuring Greater Democracy in Elections](#), para. 8.1.1, "Multiple voting should be prevented effectively without, however, violating the principle of the secrecy of the vote". Furthermore, as per [CoE \(Venice Commission\): Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters](#), I.4.d, "The violation of secret suffrage should be sanctioned".

All ENEMO observers could observe the counting procedures properly. In all of the observed polling stations, only authorized people were present during the counting procedures. In 96 percent of the polling stations, the protocols were provided to all persons entitled to receive them.

The overall assessment of the counting procedures by ENEMO observers was positive (very good or good) in 94 percent of the polling stations and in 6 percent, the counting process was assessed as bad. However, all cases of negative evaluation were attributed to negligence. In general, the process of counting and filling in the protocols was very slow in almost all observed polling stations.

The postal votes were counted at the NEO premises. The votes cast at foreign representations abroad, as well as the absentee votes, were counted on 9 April, after being sorted centrally, by the 106 designated PSCs, one in each Single Member Constituency.

Transfer of materials to Local Election Offices (LEOs) and LEOs activity

ENEMO observers monitored the transfer of election materials and respective intake in 96 LEOs. The transfer of materials was conducted in an orderly manner and following the procedures in all LEOs in which ENEMO observed this process.

The observers assessed that 94 percent of observed LEOs were acting transparently and straightforwardly, whereas the work of LEOs was assessed as disorganized and confusing in two cases.

LEOs' premises were assessed as spacious and adequate for the delivery of election materials in 98 percent of the observed LEOs, whereas two LEOs were assessed as not spacious enough. LEOs were not overcrowded in 90 percent of the observed cases, while in 9 percent of the observed cases there were long lines of persons in the LEO, however it was easy to enter and move around. One observed LEO was too overcrowded. In 96 percent of observed LEOs, all authorized observers were able to observe the process properly.

The evaluation of the work of LEOs by ENEMO observers was positive (very good or good) in 95 percent of the observed LEOs. Only five LEOs were assessed as bad, due to negligence.

XIII. OBSERVERS

Domestic civil society organizations are not allowed to observe elections, which contradicts best international practice²⁰⁶ and does not ensure a large-scale non-partisan and civic observation. Apart from that, legislative regulations establish unreasonable requirements for CSOs. In 2021, the parliament adopted a new law on the transparency of non-governmental organizations active in the field of public policy.²⁰⁷ According to the new law, the State Audit Office is authorized to check organizations with balance sheets exceeding a certain amount during the year.²⁰⁸ Besides that, CSOs, especially those critical towards the Government, operate under pressure, because of discrediting rhetoric, conducted against them mostly by the ruling party.²⁰⁹ Another problem that CSOs face in Hungary is lack of funding, which in conjunction with the existing legislation prevents them from being actively engaged in monitoring elections.

In line with international best practice and in order to improve transparency and trust in the election process, non-partisan civil society organizations should be allowed to observe and assess elections in all their stages.

For these elections, CSOs were mainly organizing trainings and conducting voter education activities, recruiting volunteers to be delegated as PSC members. Some were also providing legal assistance in case of violations. CSOs also conducted a campaign for invalidating referendum ballots. In respect of this, based on received complaints, the NEC fined NGOs finding that their campaign for invalidating ballots for referendum contradicted the legislation.²¹⁰ Prohibiting NGOs to provide information to the voters about different positions and options does not contribute to ensuring democratic process and may have a chilling effect on civil society. Accordingly, decisions of the NEC were not justified and did not serve to ensure diversity of opinion.

The NEC should abstain from restricting activities of NGOs and imposing sanctions for informing voters about different positions and options related with the elections and referendums, as access to diverse information and well-informed voters are one of the conditions of democratic elections and referendums.

International observers have the right to observe all stages of elections. Election management bodies, primarily the NEO and the NEC, were cooperative, transparent and provided all the requested information to ENEMO observers. Accreditation of ENEMO's observers was conducted in a timely manner without any hindrance, which should be positively assessed.

A total of 906 international observers were accredited by the NEO.²¹¹ High number of accredited observers proves the interest towards Parliamentary elections and the need for election observation. As ENEMO was informed, one organization was denied registration, without disclosing a specific reason for rejection.

In case of rejecting the accreditation of observers, concrete reasons should be disclosed to ensure trust and avoid suspicions regarding the real motives for rejection.

²⁰⁶Paragraph 8, [1990 OSCE Document of Copenhagen Conference](#).

²⁰⁷The adoption of the act was caused by the judgment of the Court of Justice of 18 June 2020, Commission v. Hungary, C-78/18. With the adoption of the new law the Act LXXVI of 2017 on the Transparency of Foreign Funded Organizations was abolished, as according to the Court of Justice it violated the EU Treaties and fundamental rights.

²⁰⁸[XLIX of 2021 Law on the Transparency of Non-governmental Organizations Active in the Field of Public Life](#)

²⁰⁹2021 Rule of Law Report, Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Hungary, European Commission, SWD(2021) 714 final, 20 July 2021.

²¹⁰For more details, see the Complaints and Appeals section.

²¹¹The list of accredited organizations and observers can be accessed at the following link: <https://bit.ly/3JS6TTt>

As regards partisan observation, organizations that delegate members to the NEC are entitled to appoint up to five observers to the NEO for verifying the lawfulness of voters' identification documents and ballot counting. National self-governments of national minorities do not enjoy this right. Also, Political parties and independent candidates can have not more than two observers at each diplomatic mission. Accredited media representatives have the right to observe voting and counting procedures at polling stations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Priority Recommendations

1. Inclusive and transparent electoral reform should be conducted with the involvement of all the relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, in a reasonable time ahead of next elections. The reform should address crucial gaps and insufficient regulations primarily concerning campaign financing, misuse of state resources and blurred lines between the state and the party, media, citizen observation and other issues. Also, the legal framework on referendums should be revised to improve existing gaps and to ensure legal certainty and equality of opportunities principles.
2. In order to ensure the principle of equality of the vote, boundaries of the single-member constituencies should be revised in accordance with the law and international best practice. There should be an independent body composed of relevant experts responsible for reviewing delimitation of single-member constituencies through an inclusive and transparent process.
3. Further consideration should be given to enforcing effective measures to avoid undue concentration of media ownership that limits media plurality and ensure that government advertising is not used as a vehicle for political interference in the media market. To this end, editorial independence should be strongly protected and access to information by the public should be guaranteed in accordance with international practice.
4. In line with international best practice and in order to improve transparency and trust in the election process, non-partisan civil society organizations should be allowed to observe and assess elections in all their stages.

Other Recommendations

To the Parliament

5. Certain aspects of the electoral system establishing excessively restrictive requirements should be revised to ensure multiparty democracy, in particular, requirement for nominating 71 candidates in single-member constituencies in order to run in proportional elections should be either annulled or the number of candidates to be nominated should be reduced.
6. The mechanism of appointment of Election commissions' members could be reviewed, in order to provide sufficient safeguards for the political neutrality and impartiality of Election Commissions.
7. The legislation needs to be amended, in order to ensure cross-party oversight, by enabling delegated members of political parties to be part of the NEC during the interim period between announcement of the date of new Parliamentary elections and registration of national lists.
8. To ensure universal suffrage and equal treatment before the law, deprivation from the right to vote on the basis of mental disability should be abolished and differentiated suffrage rights based on marital status should be removed.
9. Differentiated voting procedures for voters abroad should be removed, and suffrage should be equal for all voters.
10. Additional safeguards regarding postal voting should be imposed, in order to avoid any politically motivated interference as well as to ensure a process fully controlled by the responsible authorities.

11. Efforts should be made to improve the accuracy and reliability of voter lists, by developing effective mechanisms for removal of entries of deceased people from the by-mail voter registry.
12. An effective mechanism for verifying the authenticity of signatures could be considered, in order to remove doubts about the validity of candidacies.
13. To guarantee the level playing field the campaigning should start only once the process of candidate registration is completed, including signature collection and validation, as well as potential complaints.
14. To avoid challenges for supervisory bodies and potential misinterpretations, the law should be amended to include online advertising and advertising on social media as campaigning methods or the types of the political advertisements with specific legal regulations.
15. In-depth legislative changes and appropriate mechanisms should be set in place to prevent misuse of state resources and public office for electoral advantage.
16. To avoid the purchasing of political influence, ENEMO recommends determining in the law the caps for individual private donations to political parties and election contestants. Additionally, legal mechanisms could be considered to ensure the transparency of donations and donors.
17. ENEMO recommends developing and introducing appropriate legal mechanisms for effective supervision of campaign spending by the State Treasury and the State Audit Office not just after election, but also prior to Election Day with the obligation for the contestants to submit and publish detailed interim financial reports.
18. ENEMO recommends developing and implementing the relevant legislative framework for third-party campaigning, including introducing caps of the expenditures for such activities.
19. Media regulatory bodies should be able to operate in a fully independent manner and the rules governing their composition and appointment procedures should ensure impartiality so as to remove risks of any kind of interference.
20. Further efforts in respect of the principle of equal opportunities during the electoral campaign in particular in terms of impartial and equal access for all candidates and political parties to the media, especially public service TV and radio, should be enhanced.
21. Authorities should enhance the media regulations to address the use of social media during electoral campaigning and take steps to tackle fake news, disinformation campaigning, manipulative and inauthentic behaviors, as well as to effectively monitor social media and online campaign finance during elections.
22. The state should adopt effective measures for increasing women representation in politics, such as reserved quota, at least for the party lists. In case of a female MP's withdrawal, it should be determined that she should be replaced only by a female candidate, in order not to reduce the number of women in the legislature.
23. The right to standing should not be restricted and all interested stakeholders should have the right to file complaints in case of violations.
24. Legal norms should clearly define the competences of respective bodies for adjudicating complaints, especially regarding violations of campaign finance regulations.
25. Clear regulations should be adopted enabling all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, to provide their opinions and information to the voters regarding the referendum issues and voting.

26. To ensure the right to effective remedy and reduce a high number of complaints rejected on formal grounds, legal regulations should allow complainants to address technical errors in complaints in a reasonable time. The NEC should have the competence to consider alleged violations ex officio when the complaint is rejected on formal grounds.
27. The legal framework should be amended, in line with international standards and international good practice, in order to guarantee secret suffrage. Existing safeguards, such as use of envelopes and voting booths should be mandatory, and voters should be forbidden to take photos of marked ballot papers.

To the Election Management Bodies

28. In order to further enhance transparency and access to information of public interest, minutes of NEC sessions should be published in a timely manner. Furthermore, consideration could be given to broadcasting live the sessions of the NEC.
29. All elected and delegated members of PSCs should be provided with adequate training, in order to guarantee the professionalism and efficiency of the electoral administration and to strengthen the integrity of the electoral process.
30. All polling stations should be equipped with a template in Braille, which will remove additional burden for persons with disabilities to file requests to that end.
31. The NEC should abstain from restricting activities of NGOs and imposing sanctions for informing voters about different positions and options related with the elections and referendums, as access to diverse information and well-informed voters are one of the conditions of democratic elections and referendums.
32. In case of rejecting the accreditation of observers, concrete reasons should be disclosed to ensure trust and avoid suspicions regarding the real motives for rejection.

To the Government and Other Institutions involved in the Electoral Process

33. Given the crucial role and importance of the public service media for citizens' access to comprehensive, fair, and balanced information about the elections on a non-discriminatory basis, ENEMO considers its independence should be strongly supported.
34. Authorities should continue efforts to facilitate an equal participation of all citizens in the electoral process, with special focus on persons with disabilities.
35. For ensuring the right to vote of citizens living abroad, state authorities should take more effective measures in case of allegations that voting packages were not delivered to the citizens in the proper way.
36. Courts should adjudicate complaints at public hearings allowing complainants and defendants to present their arguments and be heard.

To Political Parties and Candidates

37. Political parties should address issues related to women in their political platforms and during campaigning. Political parties should introduce mechanisms that promote women's engagement in politics.
38. Political parties should engage more national minority representatives in politics and have them on the party list. They should raise issues related with minorities during campaign and refrain from using vote buying and pressure for acquiring their support.

To the Media

39. Private and electronic media should ensure balanced coverage about the participants in the electoral process and all contesting points of view should be fairly and equitably communicated respecting the principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

ABOUT ENEMO

The European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) is an international nongovernmental organization that represents a network of national nongovernmental civic organizations founded on September 29, 2001, in Opatija, Croatia. It consists of 21 leading domestic monitoring organizations from 17 countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including two European Union countries.²¹²

ENEMO seeks to support the international community's interest in promoting democracy in the region by assessing electoral processes and the political environment and offering accurate and impartial observation reports. ENEMO's international observation missions use international benchmarks and standards for democratic elections to evaluate the electoral process and the host country's legal framework. ENEMO and all its member organizations have endorsed the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations. Each ENEMO observer signed the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers.

ENEMO member organizations have monitored more than 250 national elections and trained more than 240,000 observers.

To date, ENEMO has conducted 39 international election observation missions to 10 countries.²¹³

²¹²ENEMO member organizations are: Center for Civic Initiatives CCI, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Center for Democratic Transition – CDT, Montenegro; Centre for Monitoring and Research – CeMI, Montenegro; Center for Free Elections and Democracy – CeSID, Serbia; In Defense of Voters' Rights 'GOLOS', Russia; GONG, Croatia; International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy – ISFED, Georgia; KRIIK Association, Albania; Citizens Association MOST, Macedonia; Promo- LEX, Moldova; OPORA, Ukraine; Society for Democratic Culture SDC, Albania; Transparency International Anti-Corruption Center (TIAC), Armenia; Election Monitoring and Democratic Studies Center (EMDS), Azerbaijan; Belarussian Helsinki Committee (BHC), Belarus; FSCL, Kazakhstan; Kosovo Democratic Institute (KDI), Kosovo; Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, Kyrgyzstan; Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA), Serbia; Obcianske OKO (OKO), Slovakia; Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU), Ukraine.

²¹³Serbia 2022, Presidential and Parliamentary Elections; Georgia 2021, Local Elections; Kosovo 2021, Local Elections; Albania 2021, Parliamentary Elections; Moldova 2021, Parliamentary Elections; Moldova 2020, Presidential Elections; Ukraine 2020, Local Elections; Montenegro 2020, Parliamentary Elections; Serbia 2020, Parliamentary Elections; Moldova 2019, Local Elections; Ukraine 2019, Early Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2019, Presidential Elections; Moldova 2019, Parliamentary Elections; Armenia 2018, Early Parliamentary Elections; Moldova 2016, Presidential Elections; Ukraine 2015, Local Elections; Ukraine 2014, Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2014, Presidential Elections; Ukraine 2013 – re-run of Parliamentary Elections 2012 in 5 DECS; Kosovo 2013, Local Elections; Ukraine 2012, Parliamentary Elections; Kosovo 2011, Re – run of Parliamentary Elections; Kosovo 2010, Parliamentary Elections; Kyrgyzstan 2010, Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2010, Presidential Elections, second round; Ukraine 2010, Presidential Elections, first round; Kosovo 2009, Local Elections; Moldova 2009, Parliamentary Elections; Georgia 2008, Presidential Elections; Kyrgyzstan 2007, Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2007, Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2006, Local Elections in Poltava, Kirovograd and Chernihiv; Ukraine 2006, Parliamentary Elections; Kazakhstan 2005, Presidential Elections; Albania 2005, Parliamentary Elections; Kyrgyzstan 2005, Presidential Elections; Kyrgyzstan 2005, Parliamentary Elections; Ukraine 2004, Presidential Elections, second round rerun; Ukraine 2004, Presidential Elections.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AK	Center for Fundamental Rights
CoE	Council of Europe
CoEC	Single-Member Constituency Election Commission
CoEO	Single-Member Constituency Election Office
CÖF	Civil Unity Forum
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DK	Democratic Coalition
EC	Election Commission
E-Day	Election Day
EMB	Election Management Body
ENEMO	European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations
ENMT	Hungarian National Council of Transylvania
EOM	Election Observation Mission
Fidesz	Hungarian Civic Alliance
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IEOM	International Election Observation Mission
Jobbik	Movement for a Better Hungary
KDNP	Christian Democratic People's Party
KVI	Public Media Election Office
LEO	Local Election Office
LMP	Hungary's Green Party
LTO	Long-term Observer
MEMO	Solution Movement
MKKP	Hungarian Two Tailed Dog Party
MSZP	Hungarian Socialist Party
MTVA	Media Service Support and Asset Management Fund
NEC	National Election Commission
NEO	National Election Office
NEP	Party of Normal Life
NMHH	National Media and Info-communication Authority
P	Dialogue for Hungary (P)
PS	Polling Station
PSC	Polling Station Commission
REC	Regional Election Commission
REO	Regional Election Office
SAO	State Audit Office
SMC	Single-Member Constituency
ST	Hungarian State Treasury
STO	Short-term Observer
VMSZ	Hungarian Association of Vojvodina

ANNEX 1.- ELECTION RESULTS

Number of Voters

Type	No. of voters	Type	No. of votes	% of votes
Total number of registered voters	8,215,304	Total turnout	5,717,182	69,59%
Voters with an in-country address in Hungary	7,759,175	Votes cast by voters with an in-country address in Hungary	5,448,020	70,21%
By-mail voters	456,129	Ballot envelopes received from by-mail voters	318,083	69,73%
		Ballot envelopes received from by-mail voters, containing valid documents	268,766	58,92%
Absentee voters	157,551	Ballot envelopes received from absentee voters and voters in diplomatic missions	206,980	
Voters in diplomatic missions	65,480			

Election results

National Lists				Single-Member Constituencies	Total	
	Votes	% of votes	Seats	Seats	Seats	% of seats
FIDESZ (Hungarian Civic Alliance) - KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party)	3,060,706	54,13%	48	87	135	67,83%
Democratic Coalition - JOBBIK (Movement for a Better Hungary) - Momentum Movement - Hungarian Socialist Party - LMP (Hungary's Green Party) - Dialogue for Hungary	1,947,331	34,44%	38	19	57	28,64%
Our Homeland Movement	332,487	5,88%	6	0	6	3,01%
Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party	185,052	3,27%	0	0	0	
Solution Movement	58,929	1,04%	0	0	0	
Party of Normal Life	39,720	0,70%	0	0	0	
German National Minority	-	-	1	-	1	0,5%

National Minorities results

National Minority	Registered voters	Votes	% of votes	MP mandate / Advocate of National Minority Mandate
German	31,856	24,630	0,44	MP
Croatian	2,268	1,760	0,03	Advocate
Slovak	1,563	1,208	0,02	Advocate
Ruthenian	1,044	645	0,01	Advocate
Romanian	966	526	0,01	Advocate
Serbian	641	418	0,01	Advocate
Ukrainian	732	396	0,01	Advocate
Polish	369	281	0,00	Advocate
Greek	355	232	0,00	Advocate
Slovenian	280	219	0,00	Advocate
Armenian	278	163	0,00	Advocate
Bulgarian	218	157	0,00	Advocate
Total	40,570	30,635	0,53%	

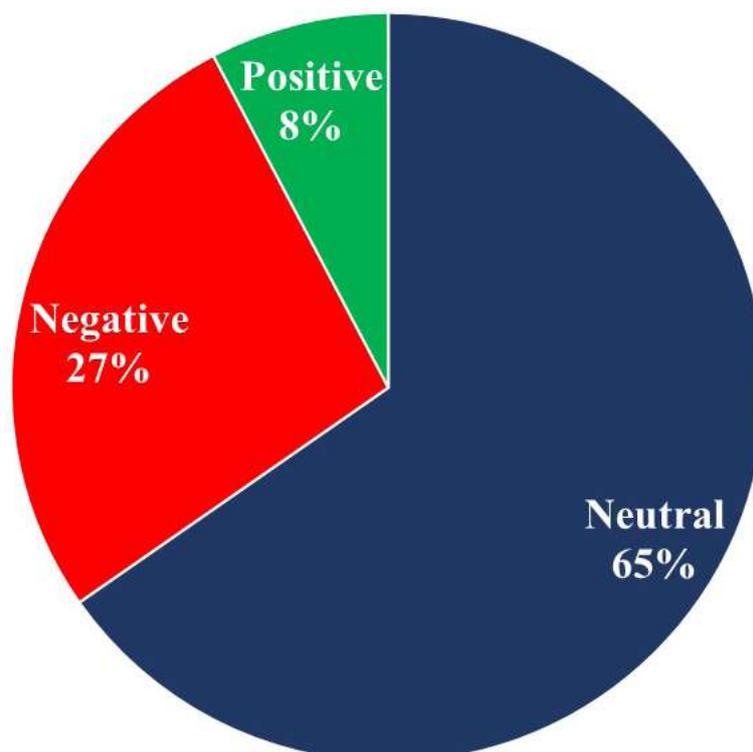
ANNEX 2.- MEDIA MONITORING RESULTS

Monitoring period: 12.02.2022. – 03.04.2022.

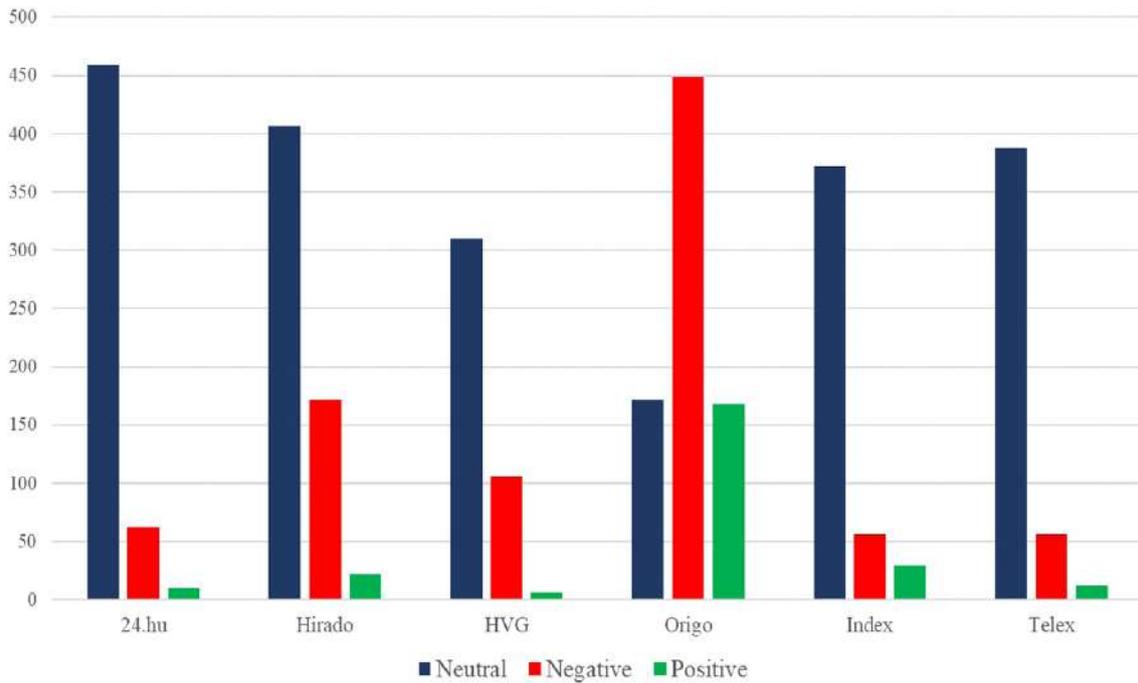
List of monitored electronic media

Electronic Media	Number of analyzed articles
24.hu	531
Hirado	573
HVG	422
Origo	789
Index	458
Telex	456
Total	3229

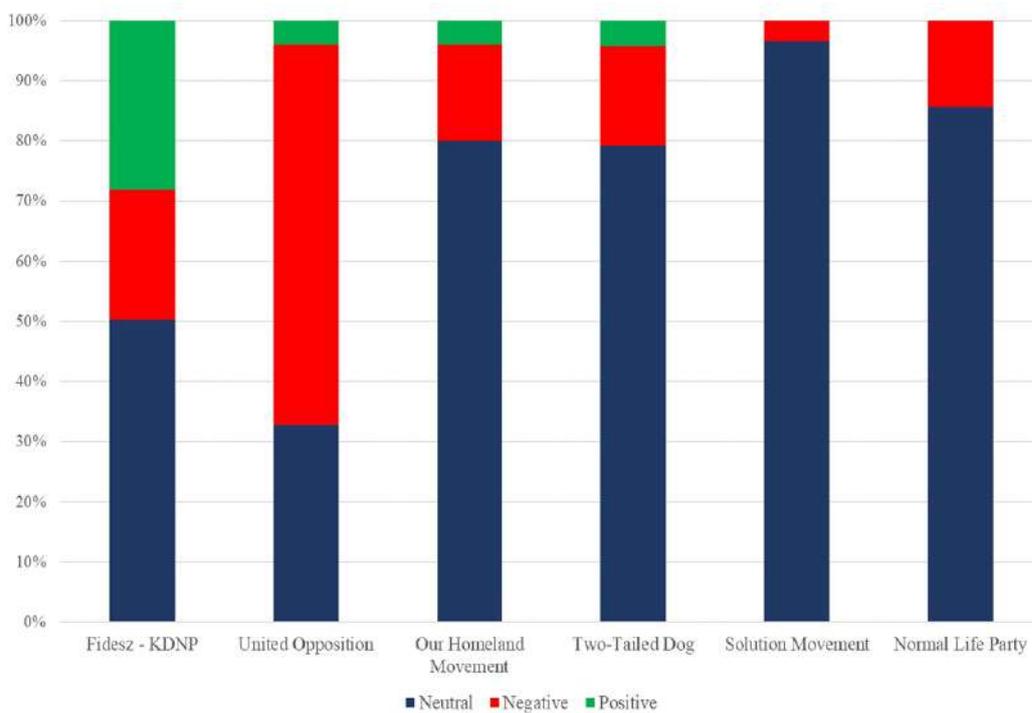
All electronic media – tone of the coverage in media articles related to the elections



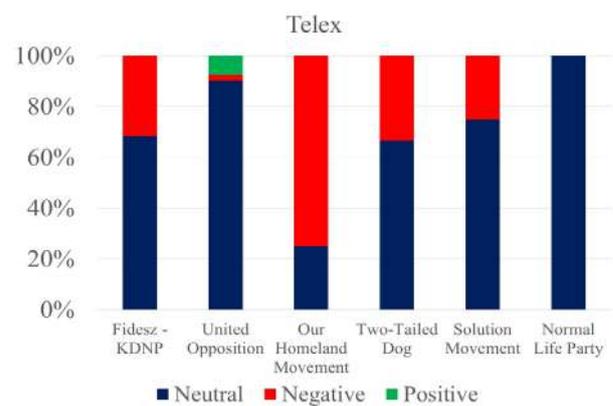
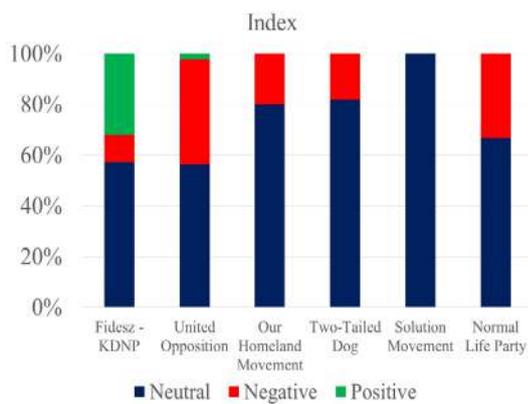
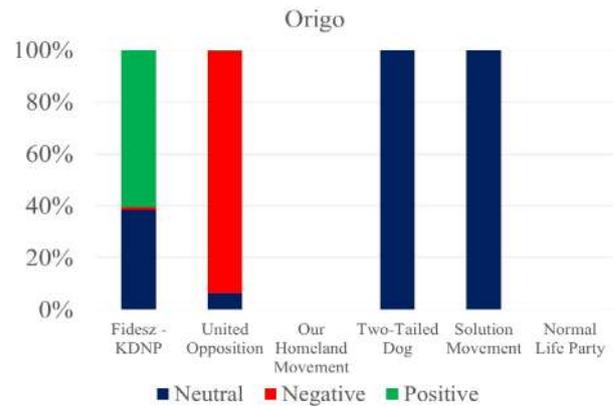
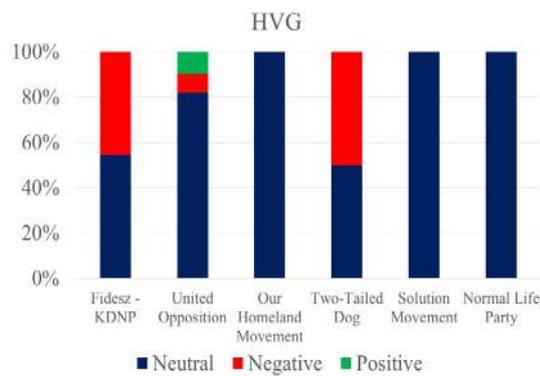
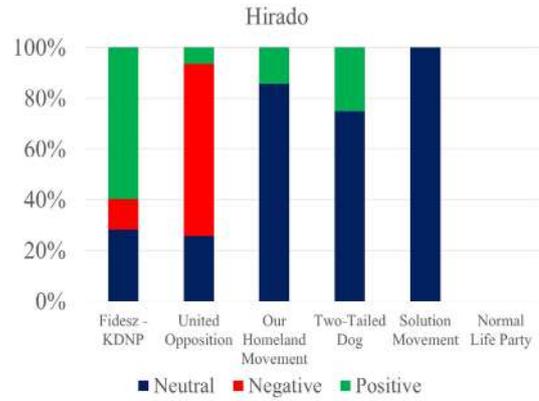
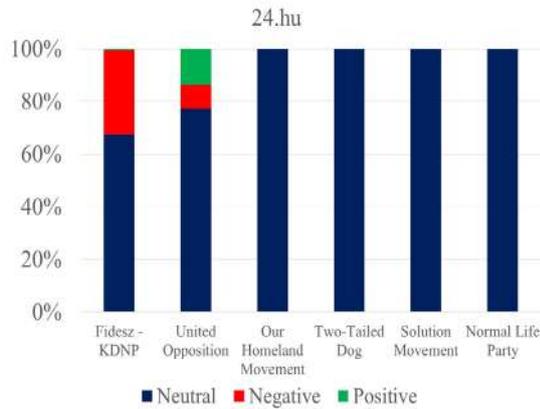
Individual electronic media - tone of the coverage in media articles related to the elections



All electronic media – tone of the coverage in media articles about political parties

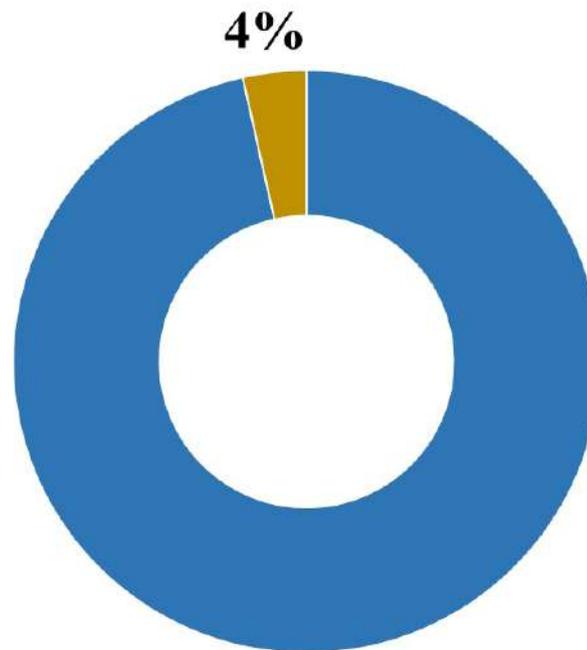


Individual electronic media – tone of the coverage in media articles about political parties



GENDER REPRESENTATION

All electronic media - women in politics in media during elections



■ Percentage of media articles mentioning women in politics

Most mentioned woman in politics	Percentage
Judith Varga	27,5%
Katalin Novák	16,5%
Timea Szabo	14,7%
Klára Dobrev	10%
Ágnes Kunhalmi	10%
Dóra Dúró	3,7%
Anna Donáth	2,8%

SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING RESULTS

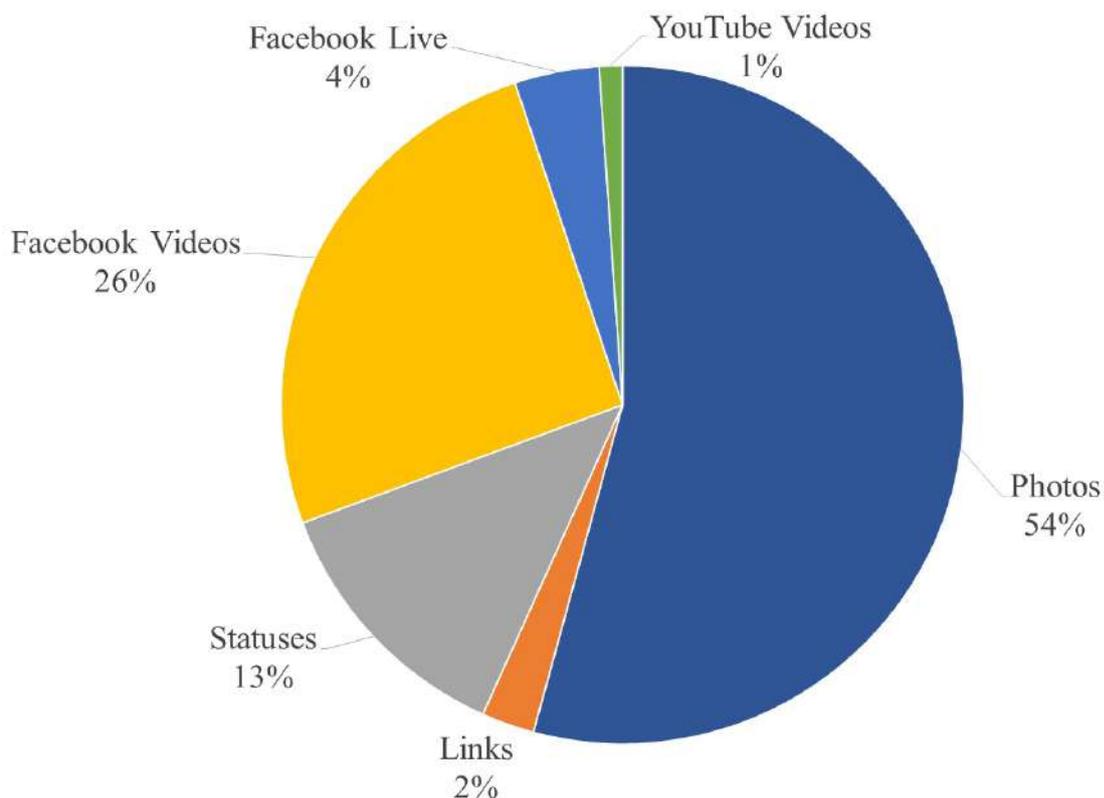
FACEBOOK

Monitoring period: 12.02.2022. – 03.04.2022.

Political parties – list of monitored pages and their activity

Page	Total Interactions	Total Posts	Page Likes
Fidesz	4,362,602	918	346,523
Magyar Kétfarkú Kutya Párt	611,451	167	320,670
Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom	588,143	429	536,175
Párbeszéd Magyarországért	473,903	526	129,119
Demokratikus Koalíció	353,498	223	151,138
KDNP és Frakciója	283,015	315	133,417
Magyar Szocialista Párt	247,066	539	208,241
Megoldás Mozgalom	215,525	81	9,870
Momentum Mozgalom	154,169	413	109,778
Egységben Magyarországért	81,313	332	16,562
LMP - Magyarország Zöld Pártja	64,559	366	78,843
Igen Szolidaritás	10,418	196	9,573
LdU / MNOÖ	3,962	109	5,449

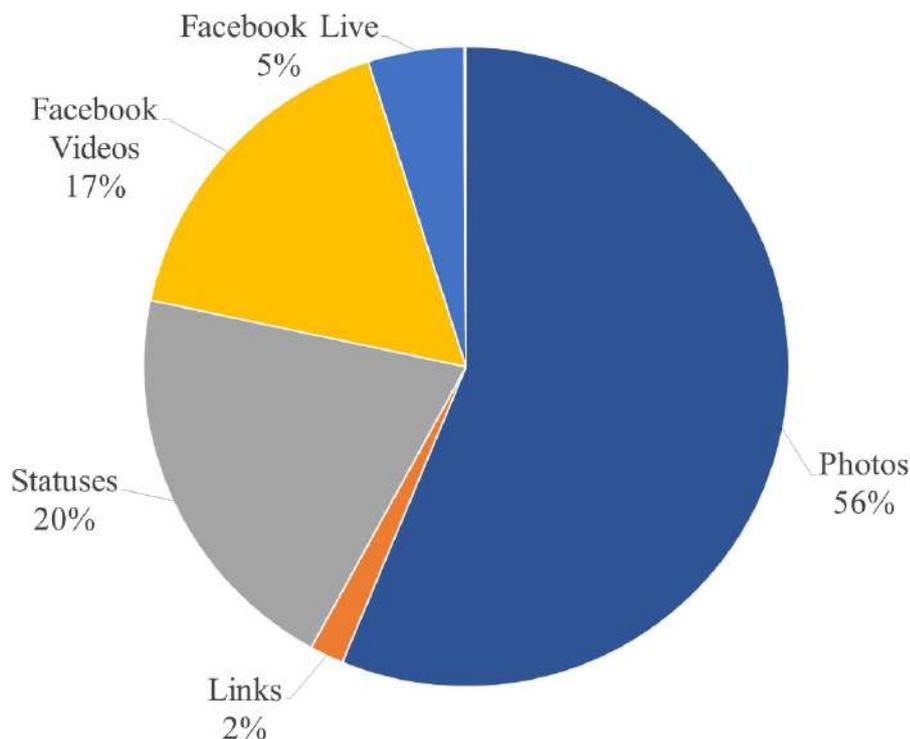
Political parties - means of communication



Politicians - list of monitored pages and their activity

Page	Total Interactions	Total Posts	Page Likes
Orbán Viktor	6,519,401	257	1,005,967
Márki-Zay Péter	2,994,751	605	149,317
Szijjártó Péter	2,868,125	345	239,006
Dúró Dóra	1,654,870	448	278,148
Varga Judit	1,555,257	284	134,797
Jakab Péter	1,385,592	284	301,896
Hadházy Ákos	1,115,429	217	160,127
Dr. Aradszki András országgyűlési képviselő	1,099,577	394	32,401
Zsigmond Barna Pál	970,612	514	39,157
Gyurcsány Ferenc	959,678	122	289,163
Szabó Tímea	842,714	274	139,695
Karácsony Gergely	774,901	170	288,911
Kocsis Máté	717,744	173	120,173
Novák Katalin	676,623	60	115,886
Dobrev Klára	632,077	167	107,756
Donáth Anna	620,316	220	71,453
Ujhelyi István dr.	584,596	265	130,220
Varga Mihály	573,379	166	100,989
Potápi Árpád János	552,264	381	47,446
Dömötör Csaba	478,280	182	52,485
Mesterházy Attila	472,112	279	244,986
Szentkirályi Alexandra	459,173	177	78,462
Hollik István	431,154	133	39,879
Dr. Keresztes László Lóránt	326,190	246	43,846
Menczer Tamás	316,180	324	37,483
Rétvári Bence	291,042	335	46,491
Cseh Katalin	236,167	177	57,826
Kubatov Gábor	222,357	121	40,435
Fekete-Győr András	204,380	109	50,454
Z. Kárpát Dániel	197,241	312	54,622
Semjén Zsolt	174,726	50	55,617
Dr. Molnár Csaba	154,165	41	128,543
Németh Szilárd	141,150	306	35,963
Orbán Balázs	133,080	186	32,810
Dr. Bósz Anett	100,921	230	18,448
Baranyi Krisztina	95,723	54	32,208
Gyöngyösi Márton	86,478	92	103,221
Tompos Márton	69,509	60	4,841
Ágh Péter	58,350	207	17,415
Hajnal Miklós	55,599	206	7,554
Hende Csaba	54,692	224	23,830
Dr. Varga-Damm Andrea	36,397	53	63,575
Döme Zsuzsanna Suzi- MKKP	7,001	35	5,275

Politicians – means of communication



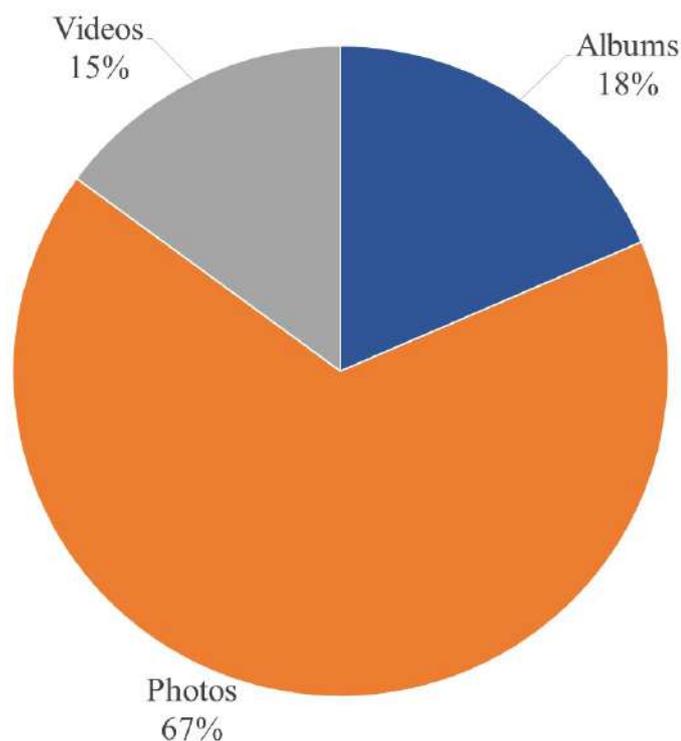
INSTAGRAM

Monitoring period: 12.02.2022. – 03.04.2022.

Political parties - list of monitored accounts and their activity

Account	Total Interactions	Total Posts	Followers
Magyar Kétfarkú Kutya Párt	147,632	50	71,833
Megoldás Mozgalom	45,910	72	4,773
Momentum Mozgalom	26,974	64	19,717
Fidesz	17,094	12	13,889
JobbikMagyarországértMozgalom	8,457	56	15,492
Párbeszéd Magyarországért	1,941	25	3,169
Polgári Válasz	761	23	1,032
LMP - Magyarország Zöld Pártja	673	57	1,365
Magyar Szocialista Párt	650	29	1,264
KDNP Országgyűlési Frakció	512	5	2,500
IGEN SZOLIDARITÁS	141	14	1,145
Liberálisok	98	5	481
Demokratikus Koalíció	0	No posts in this timeframe	2,839

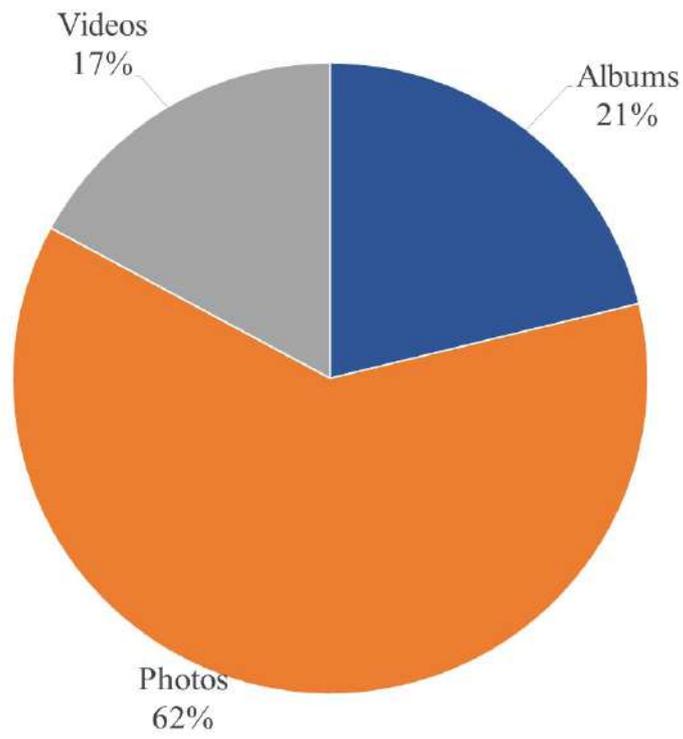
Political parties – means of communication



Politicians - list of monitored accounts and their activity

Account	Total Interactions	Total Posts	Followers
Orbán Viktor	1,178,993	212	148,755
Márki-Zay Péter	318,829	155	31,096
Varga Judit	174,463	152	33,545
Szijjártó Péter	94,382	36	53,819
Hadházy Ákos	77,062	156	13,572
Dúró Dóra	64,127	202	11,714
Jakab Péter	61,443	75	35,043
Gyurcsány Ferenc	44,033	13	50,218
Németh Szilárd	35,130	120	10,383
Fekete-Győr András	18,774	33	14,004
Dobrev Klára	15,115	14	12,765

Politicians – means of communication



ANNEX 3. – ENEMO observers

Short Term Observers

Name and Surname	Country	ENEMO member organisation
Dmitry Chernyh	Belarus	BHC
Alena Sankovic	Belarus	BHC
Goce Borovski	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Zlatko Dimitrioski	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Jovica Stojanovski	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Magdalena Aleksoska	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Dejan Dodovski	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Aleksandar Dimitrioski	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Sanja Gligorova	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Andrej Vasilevski	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Borche Aleksoski	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Filip Popovski	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Natali Varga	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Zhivko Mickoski	North Macedonia	CA MOST
Danijel Stjepanović	Bosnia and Herzegovina	CCI
Almer Kardovic	Montenegro	CDT
Katarina Kovačević	Montenegro	CDT
Katarina Zekovic	Montenegro	CDT
Marko Pejovic	Montenegro	CDT
Danilo Papovic	Montenegro	CDT

Maja Nikolic	Montenegro	CDT
Dragiša Vujačić	Montenegro	CDT
Bojan Bugarin	Montenegro	CDT
Yuliia Solodchuk	Montenegro	CEMI
Izabela Vucic	Montenegro	CEMI
Daryna Sokolova	Ukraine	CEMI
Sara Vlahovic	Montenegro	CEMI
Dusan Tomic	Montenegro	CEMI
Dejan Bjelic	Montenegro	CEMI
Nikola Popovic	Montenegro	CeMI
Stefan Knezevic	Montenegro	CEMI
Miljana Rakocevic	Montenegro	CEMI
Zarija Vujosevic	Montenegro	CEMI
Jovan Dasic	Montenegro	CEMI
Dijana Radovic	Montenegro	CEMI
Lana Komatina	Montenegro	CEMI
Ivana Lakic	Montenegro	CEMI
Natasa Glogovac	Montenegro	CEMI
Anesa Catovic	Montenegro	CEMI
Marija Drobnjak	Montenegro	CEMI
Boris Vukicevic	Montenegro	CEMI
Sekule Raicevic	Montenegro	CEMI
Milka Tadic Mijovic	Montenegro	CEMI
Emin Redzepagic	Montenegro	CEMI

Marija Latkovic	Montenegro	CEMI
Marijana Simonovic	Montenegro	CEMI
Milan Lekovic	Montenegro	CEMI
Anja Ilic	Serbia	CeSID
Ivan Mihajlovic	Serbia	CeSID
Violeta Sretenović	Serbia	CeSID
Emir Skrijelj	Serbia	CeSID
Sara Mikic	Serbia	CeSID
Marija Sretenović	Serbia	CeSID
Andrej Ivosev	Serbia	CeSID
Ljiljana Bjelicic	Serbia	CeSID
Cholpon Babalieva	Kyrgyz Republic	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
Zhypariza Zhumagazieva	Kyrgyz Republic	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
Akylbek Esengulov	Kyrgyz Republic	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
Asygul Balybaeva	Kyrgyz Republic	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
Daria Romanovskaia	Kyrgyz Republic	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
Ulan Dastan Uulu	Kyrgyz Republic	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
Erik Iriskulbekov	Kyrgyz Republic	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
Nurbek Abdrazak uulu	Kyrgyz Republic	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
Adlet Mamyrov	Kyrgyz Republic	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society

Murat Atagoziev	Kyrgyz Republic	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
Talgat Otemis	Kazakhstan	Committee of Voters of Ukraine
Sanubar Heydarova	Azerbaijan	EMDS
Mammad Mammadzada	Azerbaijan	EMDS
Murad Rustambayli	Azerbaijan	EMDS
Murad Aghazada	Azerbaijan	EMDS
Vusal Garibov	Azerbaijan	EMDS
Emin Abbasov	Azerbaijan	EMDS
Ibrahim Jahangirli	Azerbaijan	EMDS
İlkin Aliyev	Azerbaijan	EMDS
Emin Aslanov	Azerbaijan	EMDS
Aleksandar Velan	Croatia	Gong
Oriana Ivkovic Novokmet	Croatia	Gong
Anita Podvorec	Croatia	Gong
Dunja Pejić	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Gong
Dragana Stojić	Croatia	Gong
Isabel Putinja	Croatia	Gong
Anton Finderle	Croatia	Gong
Lucija Vulić	Croatia	Gong
Ivor Fuka	Croatia	Gong
Tatia Kinkladze	Georgia	ISFED
Erekle Gozalishvili	Georgia	ISFED
Lili Gabadadze	Georgia	ISFED

Sopio Gogitadze	Georgia	ISFED
Babutsa Pataraiia	Georgia	ISFED
Tamar Kirvalidze	Georgia	ISFED
Nino Karchava	Georgia	ISFED
Ketevan Balakhashvili	Georgia	ISFED
Mirian Tediashvili	Georgia	ISFED
Tamta Kusikashvili	Georgia	ISFED
Natia Barbakadze	Georgia	ISFED
Malkhaz Mikeladze	Georgia	ISFED
Ekaterine Janiashvili	Georgia	ISFED
Tamta Danelia	Georgia	ISFED
Nika Gurini	Georgia	ISFED
Giorgi Oganessiani	Georgia	ISFED
Mariam Bragvadze	Georgia	ISFED
Ia Khasaia	Georgia	ISFED
Mikha Korshia	Georgia	ISFED
Data Akubardia	Georgia	ISFED
Nika Nanobashvili	Georgia	ISFED
Davit Logua	Georgia	ISFED
Teona Maisuradze	Georgia	ISFED
Ismet Kryeziu	Kosovo	KDI
Violeta Haxholli	Kosovo	KDI
Agon Hysaj	Kosovo	KDI
Agnesa Haxhiu	Kosovo	KDI

Marko Trajković	Kosovo	KDI
Boban Stankovic	Kosovo	KDI
Noljan Lole	Albania	KRIIK Association
Sokol Haxhiu	Albania	KRIIK Association
Emona Ferhati	Albania	KRIIK Association
Antuela Male	Albania	KRIIK Association
Alketa Gogo	Albania	KRIIK Association
Marsel Rexha	Albania	KRIIK Association
Entjon Dodi	Albania	KRIIK Association
Ervis Zenelhocxa	Albania	KRIIK Association
Bledar Meniku	Albania	KRIIK Association
Hergys Dividi	Albania	KRIIK Association
Albert Vorfaj	Albania	KRIIK Association
Orion Hazati	Albania	KRIIK Association
Elvis Mece	Albania	KRIIK Association
Migena Nako	Albania	KRIIK Association
Laureta Aliaj	Albania	KRIIK Association
Marsida Sipri	Albania	KRIIK Association
Kristina Gjinaj	Albania	KRIIK Association
Besmira Mino	Albania	KRIIK Association
Sidrit Shehu	Albania	KRIIK Association
Marxhen Bokshi	Albania	KRIIK Association
Eglinton Metaliaj	Albania	KRIIK Association
Kimete Mazari	Albania	KRIIK Association

Peter Németh	Slovakia	Obcianske oko
Matteo Bezzi	Italy	Obcianske Oko
Peter Novotny	Slovakia	Obcianske oko
Patrik Dubovsky	Slovakia	Obcianske oko
Robert Bystrický	Slovakia	Obcianske Oko
Stanislava Dzurikova	Slovakia	Obcianske oko
Branislav Solovic	Slovakia	Obcianske oko
Veronika Basta	Slovakia	Obcianske oko
Jozef Majchrák	Slovakia	Obcianske oko
Marek Kapusta	Slovakia	Obcianske OKO
Ladislav Garassy	Slovakia	Obcianske oko
ANDRAS NAGY	Slovakia	Obcianske oko
Florin Poenaru	Romania	Obcianske Oko
Robert Antl	Slovakia	Obcianske oko
Miroslava Gúčiková	Slovakia	Obcianske oko
Ion Manole	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Pavel Postica	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Mariana Dobrovolschi	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Iulia Macarenco	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Alexei Munteanu	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Diana Bujor	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Mihaela Duca-Anghelici	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Silvia Stepaniuc-Balmus	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Silvia Bogonovschi	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association

Nicolae Panfil	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Alexandru Gheţan	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Mariana Novac	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Sorina Bodiu	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Constantin Turuta	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Vasile Pruneanu	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Vadim Vieru	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Igor Bucataru	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Igor Spalatu	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Elena Prohniţchi	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Jazgul Orozova	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Olga Manole	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Tatiana Dragan	Moldova	Promo-LEX Association
Niko Papadhima	Albania	SDC
Igli Mucaj	Albania	SDC
Gazmend Agaj	Albania	SDC
Arjana Mucaj	Albania	SDC
Enis Pregja	Albania	SDC
Silvana Bylyku	Albania	SDC
Najra Qato	Albania	SDC
Abel Stafa	Albania	SDC
Rei Hida	Albania	SDC
Dajan Shatraj	Albania	SDC
Eralda Bendo	Albania	SDC

Teuta Agalliu	Albania	SDC
Eglantina Alliaj	Albania	SDC
Ronaldo Dodaj	Albania	SDC
Anila Hoxhaj	Albania	SDC
Isida Verija	Albania	SDC
Eralda Zhilla	Albania	SDC
Ermir Cota	Albania	SDC
Dea Avdalli	Albania	SDC
Anzhela Amirjanyan	Armenia	TIAC
Meri Minasyan	Armenia	TIAC
Sargis Ghonyan	Armenia	TIAC
Lusine Stepanyan	Armenia	TIAC
Gayane Baghdasaryan	Armenia	TIAC
Aleksey Petrosyan	Armenia	TIAC
Shushanik Melikyan	Armenia	TIAC
Tatevik Ghazaryan	Armenia	TIAC

Long-term observers

Name	Country	ENEMO member organisation
Mariam Chubabria	Georgia	ISFED
Maja Bjelic	Montenegro	CeMI
Dragan Nikodijevic	Serbia	CeSID
Zoran Rakocevic	Montenegro	CDT
Milos Antic	Serbia	CeSID
Teona Gogishvili	Georgia	ISFED

Nino Gvilia	Georgia	ISFED
Danijel Kalezic	Montenegro	CeMI
Milan Soldatic	Croatia	Gong
Momcilo Radulovic	Montenegro	CeMI

Core Team

Name	Position	Country	ENEMO member organization
Dritan Taulla	Head of Mission	Albania	KRIIK Association
Elene Nizharadze	Deputy Head of Mission/Legal Analyst	Georgia	ISFED
Elidon Lamani	Election Administration Analyst	Albania	KRIIK Association
Dmytro Tuzhanskyi	Political and Campaign Analyst	Ukraine	Committee of Voters of Ukraine
Milica Zrnovic	Media Analyst	Montenegro	CEMI
Ana Mihajlovic	LTO and STO Coordinator	Serbia	CESID
Dubravka Tomic	Finance, Logistic and PR Officer	Montenegro	CEMI
Ivana Vujovic	Data Analyst	Montenegro	CEMI
Lazar Keskinov	Data Analyst	North Macedonia	CA MOST

ANNEX 4. Statistical report on evaluation of PSCs by Short-Term Observers on Election day

OPENING

Counties / Capital City	Polling Stations Observed	Percentage
Budapest	20	20%
Csongrád	19	19%
Hajdú-Bihar	17	17%
Baranya	16	16%
Győr-Moson-Sopron	14	14%
Pest	5	5%
Komárom-Esztergom	2	2%
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	2	2%
Heves	1	1%
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	1	1%
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok	1	1%
Vas	1	1%
Zala	1	1%

Type of observed Polling Stations	Number of Answers	Percentage
PS for regular voting	80	80%
PS for regular and absentee voting	17	17%
PS only for absentee voting	3	3%

Opening Procedures	Number of Answers	Percentage
The opening procedures started before 6 AM	91	91%
The opening procedures started after 6 AM (from 6 to 6.30 AM)	9	9%

Stationary Ballot Box Sealing	Number of Answers	Percentage
Stationary ballot boxes properly sealed according to procedures	99	99%
Some procedures of sealing stationary ballot boxes were violated	1	1%

Mobile Ballot Box Sealing	Number of Answers	Percentage
Mobile ballot boxes properly sealed according to procedures	99	99%
Mobile ballot boxes were not sealed at all	1	1%

Control Sheet	Number of Answers	Percentage
Control sheet filled out properly and procedure was transparent	98	98%
Control sheet was not inserted in the mobile ballot box	1	1%
Control sheet was improperly filled	1	1%

Opening Time	Number of Answers	Percentage
PSC Finished opening procedures in time and opened at 6 am	67	67%
PSC finished opening procedures between 6am and 6:15 am	28	28%
PSC finished opening procedures between 6:15 and 6:30am	5	5%

Observation	Number of Answers	Percentage
All authorized observers able to observe properly	99	99%
Observers could not observe properly due to overcrowded PS	1	1%

Formal (official) complaints submitted on the opening procedures	Number of Answers	Percentage
There were no formal complaints	100	100%

Presence of unauthorized persons inside PS	Number of Answers	Percentage
None (only authorized persons present)	100	100%

PSC Conduct	Number of Answers	Percentage
PSC generally conducted opening in order and according to the procedures	99	99%
PSC opened the precinct without completing opening procedures	1	1%

Evaluation of PSC	Number of Answers	Percentage
Very Good	56	56%
Good	40	40%
Bad	4	4%

VOTING

Counties / Capital City	Polling Stations Observed	Percentage
Budapest	196	17.52%
Pest	140	12.51%
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	70	6.26%
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	67	5.99%
Győr-Moson-Sopron	59	5.27%
Bács-Kiskun	53	4.74%
Hajdú-Bihar	52	4.65%
Veszprém	49	4.38%
Békés	48	4.29%
Csongrád	47	4.20%
Baranya	46	4.11%
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok	46	4.11%
Fejér	45	4.02%
Vas	36	3.22%
Komárom-Esztergom	35	3.13%
Heves	30	2.68%
Zala	29	2.59%
Somogy	28	2.50%
Nógrád	22	1.97%
Tolna	21	1.88%

Type of observed Polling Stations	Number of Answers	Percentage
PS for regular voting	841	75.16%
PS for regular and absentee voting	269	24.04%
PS only for absentee voting	9	0.80%

Environment around/outside PS (events that can affect voters' free choice)	Number of Answers	Percentage
Regular (no influence on voter's choice)	1106	98.84%
Campaigning activities less than 150 meters from the polling station	10	0.89%
Excessive police presence around PS	2	0.18%
Organized transportation of voters	1	0.09%

PS Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities	Number of Answers	Percentage
Easy	848	75.78%
Requires minor assistance	172	15.37%
Not suitable	99	8.85%

No. of women PSC members (Mean)	Median	Mode
4.70	5.00	4.00

PSC Chairperson	Number of Answers	Percentage
Man	846	75.60%
Woman	273	24.40%

PSC Deputy Chairperson	Number of Answers	Percentage
Man	869	77.66%
Woman	250	22.34%

Polling Station set up	Number of Answers	Percentage
Acceptable	1083	96.78%
Unacceptable	36	3.22%

Essential Materials	Number of Answers	Percentage
All essential materials are present	1119	100.00%

Informational Materials	Number of Answers	Percentage
All informational materials are present	1113	99.46%
Information on voting procedures is missing	6	0.54%

Stationary ballot box sealing	Number of Answers	Percentage
Stationary ballot boxes properly sealed	1093	97.68%
Stationary ballot boxes not properly sealed	26	2.32%

Mobile ballot box sealing	Number of Answers	Percentage
Mobile ballot boxes properly sealed	1041	93.03%
Mobile ballot boxes were not present at the PS (mobile voting was ongoing)	58	5.18%
Mobile ballot boxes not properly sealed	16	1.43%
N/A (No requests for mobile voting were received)	4	0.36%

Voter lists	Number of Answers	Percentage
All voters found their names on the list	1056	94.37%
Some voters did not find their name on the list	51	4.56%
Other	11	0.98%
N/A (no voters voted while the team was in the PS)	8	0.71%
Non-eligible voters included in the voter list (e.g., deceased persons still included in the list)	1	0.09%

Voters' identification	Number of Answers	Percentage
Identification procedures always followed properly	1107	98.93%
N/A (no voters voted while the team was in the PS)	10	0.89%
Other	4	0.36%

Secrecy of voting	Number of Answers	Percentage
Secrecy of voting respected	894	79.89%
More than one person in the booth	148	13.23%
Voters were revealing their vote	48	4.29%
Voters could not vote in secrecy due to set up of booths	30	2.68%
Other violations of the secrecy of the vote	26	2.32%
Voters did not vote in secrecy due to overcrowded PS	23	2.06%
N/A (no voters voted while the team was in the PS)	10	0.89%
Breaches of rules for assisted voting	3	0.27%
Voters taking photo of marked ballot paper	2	0.18%

Identification procedures for absentee voting	Number of Answers	Percentage
Identification procedures always followed properly	226	81.29%
N/A (no absentee voters voted while the team was in the PS)	52	18.71%

Suspension / Termination of voting	Number of Answers	Percentage
Voting was never suspended during observation	1116	99.73%
Other reasons	2	0.18%
The number of members of the PSC present in the PS was below 3.	1	0.09%

Serious violations (inside polling station)	Number of Answers	Percentage
No serious violations observed	1084	96.87%
Other	16	1.43%
NA (no voters voted while the team was in the PS)	9	0.80%
Multiple voting (more than one ballot for each type issued to one voter intentionally)	7	0.63%
Proxy voting (voting on behalf of another person)	5	0.45%
Limiting access of voters into the PS	1	0.09%
Pressure on voters inside PS	1	0.09%

Organization of PS	Number of Answers	Percentage
Polling station is managed properly and PSC functions orderly	1020	91.15%
Polling station is somewhat crowded, but PSC seems to manage it well	75	6.70%
N/A (no voters voted while the team was in the PS)	8	0.71%
PS disorganized, and process is confusing	7	0.63%
Other	7	0.63%
PS is overcrowded, disorganized, makes it impossible to properly monitor the voting process	2	0.18%

Campaign inside PS	Number of Answers	Percentage
There were no campaigning or campaign materials inside PS	1119	100%

PSC Conduct	Number of Answers	Percentage
PSC generally conducted voting according to the	1096	97.94%
N/A (no voters voted while the team was in the PS)	13	1.16%
Other	8	0.71%
PSC members using means of recording or transmitting data	6	0.54%
PSC intentionally deviated from procedures	1	0.09%

Formal (official) complaints submitted on the voting or opening	Number of Answers	Percentage
There were no formal complaints	1109	99.11%
There were some minor, not substantial formal complaints	9	0.80%
There were some substantial formal complaints	1	0.09%

Observation	Number of Answers	Percentage
All authorized observers able to observe properly	1103	98.57%
Observers could not observe properly due to overcrowded PSC	11	0.98%
Observers could not observe properly due to set up of the polling station (e.g. sitting too far, etc.)	6	0.54%
Observers were deliberately denied access to some aspects of voting by the PSC	1	0.09%

Presence of unauthorized persons inside PS	Number of Answers	Percentage
None (only authorized persons present)	1119	100.00%

Evaluation of PSC	Number of Answers	Percentage
Very Good	678	60.59%
Good	408	36.46%
Bad	31	2.77%
Very Bad	2	0.18%

CLOSING AND COUNTING

Counties / Capital City	Polling Stations Observed	Percentage
Budapest	17	17.17%
Pest	12	12.12%
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	7	7.07%
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	6	6.06%
Győr-Moson-Sopron	5	5.05%
Hajdú-Bihar	5	5.05%
Bács-Kiskun	4	4.04%
Fejér	4	4.04%
Baranya	4	4.04%
Békés	4	4.04%
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok	4	4.04%
Csongrád	4	4.04%
Veszprém	4	4.04%
Vas	3	3.03%
Somogy	3	3.03%
Komárom-Esztergom	3	3.03%
Heves	3	3.03%
Zala	3	3.03%
Nógrád	2	2.02%
Tolna	2	2.02%

Type of observed Polling Stations	Number of Answers	Percentage
PS for regular voting	68	68.69%
PS for regular and absentee voting	31	31.31%

Closing time	Number of Answers	Percentage
Polling station closed in time (19:00)	98	98.99%
Polling station did not close in time	1	1.01%

Voters at closing time	Number of Answers	Percentage
No queue of voters at closing	98	98.99%
Voters in queue at time of closing were allowed to vote	1	1.01%

Pre-counting procedures	Number of Answers	Percentage
Pre-Counting procedures were followed properly and in the right sequence (process was legitimate)	94	94.95%
PSC did not count and pack the unused ballots	1	1.01%
PSC did not count separately spoiled ballots for each type of ballot papers and packed in sealed envelope	2	2.02%
PSC did not count the number of signatures on the voters list	2	2.02%

Procedures for absentee voting	Number of Answers	Percentage
Procedures were followed properly and in the right sequence (process was legitimate)	29	98.99%
Procedures were not followed properly	2	1.01%

Counting procedures	Number of Answers	Percentage
Counting procedures were followed properly and in the right sequence (process was legitimate)	87	87.88%
Ballot papers considered invalid for minor, illegitimate reasons (e.g., although the will of the voters is clearly expressed, PSC considers them invalid)	1	1.01%
PSC did not declare invalid a number of votes cast for each candidate and each list equal to the number of surplus votes	2	2.02%
PSC did not count valid votes separately for each candidate, party list, nationality list and referendum	2	2.02%
The minute keeper was participating in the counting	7	7.07%

Observation	Number of Answers	Percentage
All authorized observers able to observe properly	99	100%

Formal (official) complaints submitted on the opening procedures	Number of Answers	Percentage
There were no formal complaints	98	98.99%
There were some minor, not substantial formal complaints	1	1.01%

Completion of protocols	Number of Answers	Percentage
Protocols were filled out in accordance with the law	97	97.98%
PSC somewhat deviated from procedures, without affecting the results	2	2.02%

Presence of unauthorized persons inside PS	Number of Answers	Percentage
None (only authorized persons present)	99	100.00%

Protocols distribution	Number of Answers	Percentage
Protocols given to all entitled individuals to receive them	96	96.97%
Protocols not given to all entitled to receive them	3	3.03%

Evaluation of PSC	Number of Answers	Percentage
Very Good	62	62.63%
Good	31	31.31%
Bad	6	6.06%

TRANSFER TO LEO AND LEO ACTIVITY

Counties / Capital City	LEOs Observed	Percentage
Budapest	16	16.67%
Pest	11	11.46%
Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén	7	7.29%
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	6	6.25%
Hajdú-Bihar	5	5.21%
Győr-Moson-Sopron	5	5.21%
Fejér	4	4.17%
Bács-Kiskun	4	4.17%
Békés	4	4.17%
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok	4	4.17%
Baranya	4	4.17%
Veszprém	4	4.17%
Vas	3	3.13%
Somogy	3	3.13%
Komárom-Esztergom	3	3.13%
Csongrád	3	3.13%
Heves	3	3.13%
Zala	3	3.13%
Nógrád	2	2.08%
Tolna	2	2.02%

Transfer of election materials to LEO	Number of Answers	Percentage
Transfer to LEO was made in an orderly manner by PSC members	96	100.00%

LEO activity	Number of Answers	Percentage
LEO activity was transparent and straightforward	90	93.75%
LEO activity was disorganized, confusing and chaotic	2	2.08%
Other	4	4.17%

Adequacy of LEO premises	Number of Answers	Percentage
LEO premises were spacious and adequate for delivery of the materials	94	97.92%
LEO premises were not spacious enough for adequate delivery of the materials	2	2.08%

Overcrowding	Number of Answers	Percentage
LEO was not overcrowded	86	89.58%
Long lines of persons in the LEO, however it was easy to enter and move around	9	9.38%
LEO was too overcrowded; it was very hard to move around	1	1.04%

Observation	Number of Answers	Percentage
All authorized observers able to observe properly	92	95.83%
Observers were deliberately denied access to some aspects of the work of the LEO	1	1.04%
Observers could not observe properly due to set up of the LEO	2	2.08%
Observers could not observe properly due to overcrowded LEO	1	1.04%

Checking protocols by the LEO	Number of Answers	Percentage
Most protocols were checked and processed in accordance with procedures	92	95.83%
Other	4	4.17%

Evaluation of LEO	Number of Answers	Percentage
Very Good	60	62.50%
Good	31	32.29%
Bad	5	5.21%

