

Save the Hungarian elections in 2026 - stand for democracy!

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party convening in Brussels on 24-25 October 2025:

Considers that:

- Hungary will head to the polls for parliamentary elections in April 2026, marking 16 years under the Fidesz government, with a real chance for change;
- Past OSCE missions have highlighted that elections in Hungary were free but not fair, setting a dangerous precedent for further fraud. Together with other international organisations, they have consistently raised concerns about the misuse of state resources, media capture, and massive disinformation, particularly around elections in Hungary over the recent few years;
- Additionally, Orbán himself has publicly declared in recent months that he doesn't want to give power to another party;
- The electoral system has undergone extensive legislative modifications since 2010 (including gerrymandering, a single-round election system, winner-take-all compensation rules, and modified postal voting), in an effort to help the governing party remain in power;
- Hungary has been governed under a state of emergency since 2020, prolonged again in 2022 with Russia's war on Ukraine as justification. The decree powers have gone so far that in 2023, even the national budget - usually the most important act of parliament each year - was adopted by decree;
- Russian interference and influence are pervasive in Hungary. The Kremlin wants Orbán to remain its Trojan horse within the EU and NATO. This influence does not only manifest in foreign policy alignment but also in disinformation campaigns and election manipulation risks, similar to the practices seen in Russian satellite states. Ahead of the 2026 elections, the Russian intelligence services even issued an official statement, claiming that 'Brussels' seeks regime change in Hungary;
- Based on events in other countries, such as Georgia or Serbia, the following tactics (and more) can be expected: barring candidates from running in the election, launching legal investigations into key parties or candidates, implementing internal voter migration schemes, intimidating certain voter groups, and engaging in vote buying. Several Momentum politicians are already facing more than ten legal procedures each, cases that could even result in suspended prison sentences. Andras Fekete-Györ, a former Member of Parliament, was recently denied entry to the UK due to ongoing proceedings;
- Intimidation of voters in rural areas and vote-buying practices (chain-voting) have been systematically perpetrated in the past elections. In fact, taking a picture of the vote in the ballot box has been legalised.

Believes that:

- Free and fair elections are a cornerstone of liberal democracies and, of course, an essential value of the European liberal family; we should defend them throughout Europe and beyond;
- This election presents a historic opportunity for Hungary to return to the path of becoming a free and prosperous European country, one that future Hungarians deserve and have fought for, notably in

1988-89;

- Suspicion and fear of high-level fraud before and during the 2026 elections are well-founded. Election fraud does not only happen on the day of the election, but also in the weeks and months leading up to it;
- Populists and anti-democratic forces unite and share best practices in terms of how to manipulate elections across borders.
- International support was crucial in opposing the ban on the Budapest Pride in June 2025, helping to counter government fines and police intervention against Pride participants;
- Orban's rule of law violations have led to the freezing of EU funds, depriving the government of vital resources and putting him under unprecedented pressure;
- Fake NGOs and government-organised "civic observers", alias GONGOs, have, in the past, been deployed to legitimise flawed processes, which makes a genuine European and international presence all the more crucial;
- We have many examples of rigged elections in European countries and in the region. In Georgia, in October 2024, a coalition of 2,000 election observers said that, given the scale of vote fraud and violence, it did not believe the preliminary results "reflect the will of Georgian citizens". Similarly, in January 2025, Aleksander Lukashenko won his seventh term in office in Belarus in a rigged election, extending his 30-year reign by another five years. Also in Serbia, recent local and parliamentary elections were marred by serious irregularities, including vote buying, voter migration and ballot box stuffing, watchdogs have reported.

Calls for the ALDE Party and its member parties to:

- Monitor the situation in Hungary closely, raise awareness about the situation within your own political communities and institutions, particularly in the event of irregularities, and support the peaceful transfer of power in the event of the Fidesz party's defeat;
- Prepare your members of parliament (at all relevant levels) to speak out in the event of serious electoral fraud in Hungary or if the current governing party rigs the election results and refuses to hand over power;
- Call on the European Union institutions to prepare immediate responses if the elections do not meet the necessary democratic standards and to explicitly refrain from recognising the results;
- Support Momentum Mozgalom in the deployment of cross-partisan international election observation missions to Hungary, well before and during the elections and especially on polling day, to ensure that free and fair national elections can take place in 2026. The mission should be coordinated with other European political families so that election monitoring does not become a partisan issue but a European democratic consensus;
- Advocate for the Rule of Law in Hungary and pressure the current government to repeal restrictive laws that undermine free speech, civil society, and democracy, as these have significant consequences for Orbán's government. The rule of law mechanism and the freezing of EU funds have contributed greatly to the problematic situation of the Orbán government;
- Ensure that the EU Commission does not use the frozen funds as bargaining chip with Hungary to give up their veto in other policy areas;
- Recognise that illiberal governance in Hungary is part of a global trend of rising far-right authoritarianism and democratic decline. Thus, acknowledge that free and fair elections in Hungary are implicitly in the interest of member parties, their respective countries and the European community as

a whole;

- Highlight the decision of Momentum Mozgalom, a member of the ALDE Party, not to run in the 2026 national elections, which is intended to facilitate a change of regime.