



HUNGARIAN  
HELSINKI  
COMMITTEE

# Information Note on Recent Updates National Elections of Hungary 2022

Information Note  
2 April 2022

Hungary held its national elections alongside with a national referendum on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2022. The political campaign period lasted from 12<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 until the end of the single round Election Day (3 April), for 50 days.

Following the [baseline information note](#) of 18 February 2022 and the [updates](#) of 7 March and 23 March 2022, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee publishes its third update on some important developments in the last ten days of the campaign period towards the national elections and national referendum.

## 1. Electoral system

8,215,466 voters were registered with 157,551 absentee voters, 65,480 citizens having the right to vote at the foreign representations, 456,129 mail voters, and 40,570 minority list voters.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Party and campaign finance

### (a) General elections

According to the calculations of three NGOs (K-Monitor, Political Capital, and Transparency International Hungary), the campaign related billboard expenditures of March showed an uneven access of parties. While 390 million HUF (ca. 1.03 million EUR) was spent on billboards in the interests of the United Opposition (281 million HUF by parties, and 109 million HUF by two civil organisations running the campaign) and Mi Hazánk (Our Homeland) spent 79 million HUF (ca. 210,000 EUR), Fidesz party spent 1,427 million HUF (ca. 37.8 million EUR), the Government spent 1,036 million HUF (ca. 27.5 million EUR), and the pro-government civil organisation CÖF (Civil United Forum) spent 623 million HUF (ca. 16.5 million EUR) on billboards. Therefore, it can be stated that altogether 3,095 million HUF (ca. 82 million EUR) was spent on billboards in the interest of Fidesz. The legal limit of the whole campaign expenditure per party list is 1,177 million HUF (ca. 31.2 million EUR). The calculations were made based on the number of billboards and the list price of a billboard.<sup>2</sup>

The practice of the National Election Commission and the Curia (Supreme Court of Hungary) shows that there is no effective legal remedy against the unlawful campaign financing and expenditure.<sup>3</sup> The National Election Commission and the Curia claim that complaints maybe raised only against violation of the principles of the electoral procedure<sup>4</sup> under the Electoral Procedure Act<sup>5</sup>, and violations of the Act on Transparency of Campaign Costs<sup>6</sup> may not be remedied in complaint procedures even if the complainant believes that the violation of the transparency of campaign costs rules causes the violation of the electoral procedure principles. Legal remedy is not available before reports of the campaign expenditure by the parties and candidates are submitted which is due after the elections.

## 3. Election campaign and media

See the [first](#), [second](#), [third](#) and [fourth](#) updates of Mertek Media Monitor's election campaign news monitoring. See also the struggles of small scale independent media outlets in the report of RFE/RL.<sup>7</sup>

### (a) General elections

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<sup>1</sup> See the website of the National Election Office [here](#)

<sup>2</sup> *K-Monitor, Political Capital Institute, Transparency International Hungary, 'Orban's Fidesz to overspend in Hungary's election campaign'*, 30 March 2022

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Decisions [235/2022](#) or [236/2022](#) of National Election Commission

<sup>4</sup> The principles of electoral procedure, Section 2 Subsection (1) of the Electoral Procedure Act: a) the protection of the fairness of the election; b) voluntary participation in the election procedure; c) equal opportunities for candidates and nominating organisations; d) support for voters with a disability in exercising their right to vote; e) exercising of rights in good faith in accordance with their purpose; f) the publicity of the electoral procedure.

<sup>5</sup> Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure

<sup>6</sup> Act LXXXVII of 2013 on the Transparency of Campaign Costs related to the Election of the Members of the National Assembly

<sup>7</sup> A. Heil, A. Keller-Alant, ['The Hungarian Journalist Trying To Break Viktor Orban's Grip On Media, And Voters'](#), *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 31 March 2022

The public media had offered 5-5 minutes of airtime for each organisation running a party list at the elections<sup>8</sup>, for most of the parties this was the only time during the campaign when their representatives could talk to the viewers of the very pro-government public media. The 5-5 minutes talks of opposition parties' representatives were not repeated while the Prime Minister's speech of Memorial Day was played back 9 times within 24 hours on the public media<sup>9</sup>. The overlap between the government's and Fidesz-KDNP's resources and campaign remained enormous since the last update of these information note series.

The public media and pro-government media reported about the anti-Russia, anti-Orbán, pro-Ukraine demonstration held on 2 April as being a 'pro-war demonstration'.<sup>10</sup> The TV2 television channels' news reporters posted a video endorsing Mr. Viktor Orbán on the website of the channel's news.<sup>11</sup> The National Election Commission ruled that publishing the video fell under the editor's freedom as the channel is a commercial one, therefore the electoral procedure rules were not violated.<sup>12</sup>

There were no debates during the whole election campaign due to the unwillingness of Fidesz candidates. Mr. Orbán has given interviews only for pro-government media in the past more than 10 years<sup>13</sup>.

All parties put most of the efforts in the last week of the campaign period with several public forums, different types of advertisement tools, thousands of activists.

After the speech of Ukraine's prime minister Mr. Zelensky at a European Council meeting in which he criticised the foreign politics of Hungary<sup>14</sup>, the governing Fidesz-KDNP politicians started to claim in their election campaign that the United Opposition made a deal with the Ukrainian government<sup>15</sup>, and Zelensky intervenes in the Hungarian elections<sup>16</sup>. The main message of the Fidesz-KDNP party coalition became during the campaign that the United Opposition would endanger peace and economic prosperity in the country. Some mayors continued unlawful campaign to support Fidesz-KDNP.<sup>17</sup>

Our Homeland ended its campaign by listing at the closing event all the conspiracy theories its campaign was built on, such as: U.S.A is behind the war in Ukraine, the government plans to forcibly vaccinate people with 9 million Pfizer vaccines, Fidesz is operated by global companies, the United Opposition's prime minister candidate was appointed by the former prime minister Mr. Gordon Bajnai, Director-General of WHO Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was the third person of a Marxist terror organisation etc.<sup>18</sup>

Facebook suspended and deleted the site of Our Homeland ('Mi Hazánk') due to violations of its Community Standards, the party leaders described this as serious intervention and threat to the Hungarian elections.<sup>19</sup> The National Election Commission ruled that it does not have the competence

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<sup>8</sup> 5 minutes for the parties in the public media: United Opposition [video](#), Party for Normal Life [video](#), Hungarian Two Tailed Dog Party [video](#), Solution Movement [video](#), Our Homeland [video](#), Fidesz-KDNP [video](#)

<sup>9</sup> I. Kiss, [„24 óra alatt kilencszer ismételte meg Orbán március 15-ei beszédét az M1”](#) ('M1 TV repeated Orbán's 15 March speech within 24 hours'), *444.hu*, 16 March 2022

<sup>10</sup> B. Nagy, [„A közmédiában háborúpárti tüntetés lett az ukránpárti tüntetésből”](#) ('Pro-Ukraine demonstration became pro-war demonstration in the public media'), *Telex*, 2 April 2022

<sup>11</sup> See the video of *Tények.hu* [here](#), 28 March 2022

<sup>12</sup> [Decision 268/2022](#) of National Election Commission

<sup>13</sup> J. Presinszky, [„Több mint tíz éve csak kormányközeli sajtónak nyilatkozik”](#) ('He has given interviews for more than 10 years only for press close to the government')

<sup>14</sup> T. Vaski, [„Zelenskyy-Orbán Clash Over “Strategic Calm” Regarding Sanctions and Military Aid’](#), *Hungary Today*, 25 March 2022

<sup>15</sup> See a Facebook post of Viktor Orbán [here](#), 1 April 2022, and video of the Minister of Foreign Affairs [here](#), 30 March 2022

<sup>16</sup> See a Facebook post of an MP [here](#), 26 March 2022

<sup>17</sup> M. Herczeg, [„Sarkad és Kötegyán polgármesterei jogsértő módon kampányolnak a Fidesznek”](#) ('Mayors of Sarkad and Kötegyán campaign for Fidesz unlawfully'), *Telex*, 2 April 2022

<sup>18</sup> A. Mizsur, [„A legvadabb háborús konteókkal tartott kampányzárót a Mi Hazánk, de Márki-Zay is megkapta a magáét”](#) ('Mi Hazánk held a campaign closing event with the wildest war related conspiracies, but Márki-Zay got also his share'), *Telex*, 1 April 2022

<sup>19</sup> See the video of Mrs. Dóra Dúró [here](#), 29 March 2022

to identify electoral rule violation because the complaint concerns a private law dispute between the party and the company operating Facebook.<sup>20</sup>

The National Roma Self-Government endorsed the United Opposition among Roma ethnic voters<sup>21</sup>, since the pro-government Roma organisation's activity prevented the registration of a Roma minority list. (See Section 1 Subsection (e) Recent Updates of the [Baseline Information Note](#) of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee)

## **(b) Referendum**

NGOs campaigning for invalid votes at the referendum travelled across the country, and used limited (due to financial burdens) accessible campaign tools (e. g. posters, some billboards, some media advertisements). The government campaigned via advertisements, commercials, bill boards, and posters on a high scale and with huge amount of (public) funds which cannot even be compared to the NGOs' campaign. Members of the government continued their hate speech in the last days of the campaign in the course of the attempt to convince voters (see below Section 7).

The government used again its data base collected when people signed up for the COVID-19 vaccination and sent an email 6 days before Election Day with the subject 'information on the referendum', but the content explicitly called for casting 'no' at the referendum (which was the message of the government).<sup>22</sup> The Hungarian Helsinki Committee, two NGOs (Amnesty International Hungary and Háttér Association) coordinating the 'invalid vote' campaign and some private persons submitted separate complaints to the National Election Commission referring to the misuse of data, unlawful referendum campaigning by the government, and unequal chances for the NGOs to disseminate their campaign message. The National Election Commission joined the complaints, although the complaints referred to different violations of law, and rejected all of them. The decision of the National Election Commission regarded information provision and referendum campaign as same kind of acts despite clear, separate legal definitions, and the National Election Commission ruled that the government acted lawfully.<sup>23</sup>

NGOs coordinating the 'invalid vote' campaign submitted a complaint against the public media because the public news channel M1 broadcasted only the government's referendum campaign and invited only pro-government experts to its shows. The National Election Commission rejected the complaint saying that the 'invalid vote' campaign is unlawful.<sup>24</sup>

## **4. Complaints and appeals**

The previous practice remained according to which members of the government basically do not conduct campaign basically in any case because they act in their official positions at protocol (not campaign) events. Mayor's letter endorsing Fidesz was found by the National Election Commission as lawful practice of freedom of expression.<sup>25</sup>

In the case of mail voter packages delivered by pro-Fidesz activists in Vojvodina, Serbia instead of the Serbian Post Office (see Section 5 Subsection (b) of [information note](#) on recent updates of 23 March), the National Election Commission decided that the National Election Office handed over the mails to the Hungarian Post Office, the Hungarian Post Office delivered the mails to the Serbian Post Office, and therefore the Hungarian actors did not violate the electoral procedure rules<sup>26</sup>. The Curia ruled in the same case upon review application (appeal) that the National Election Office does not have to follow the mails after handing them over to the Hungarian Post Office, and the National Election Commission

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<sup>20</sup> [Decision 266/2022](#) of National Election Commission

<sup>21</sup> G. Czene, [„Roma politikusok buzdítanak az ellenzék támogatására, teljes fordulat jöhet”](#) ('Roma politicians encourage support of the opposition, full turn may come'), Népszava, 25 March 2022

<sup>22</sup> *Hungarian Helsinki Committee*, [„A választási bizottság előtt a kormány e-mailes népszavazási kampánya”](#) ('The Government's email referendum campaign is before the election commission'), 30 March 2022

<sup>23</sup> [Decision 259/2022](#) of National Election Commission

<sup>24</sup> [Decision 270/2022](#) of National Election Commission

<sup>25</sup> [Decision 228/2022](#) of National Election Commission

<sup>26</sup> [Decision 187/2022](#) of National Election Commission

does not have the jurisdiction to examine the conduct of the Serbian Post Office.<sup>27</sup> The complainant requested review of the decision of Curia by the Constitutional Court. The Constitutional Court refused to examine the application in the merits stating that the application did not contain any reasoning why the Curia's decision would violate fundamental rights.<sup>28</sup> The case involved mail voter packages being delivered by a pro-Fidesz party's activists instead of the post office ended without any court finding an infringement occurred.

Hungarian Socialist Party submitted a complaint to the National Election Commission because TV2 television channel invited in its morning show only pro-Fidesz interviewees. The National Election Commission rejected the complaint because the Hungarian Socialist Party listed only 8 morning shows in its submission even though the campaign period lasts for 50 days. The National Election Commission added that members of Fidesz may appear in TV show for other reasons than promoting the Fidesz during campaign period.<sup>29</sup>

Our Homeland party complained because pro-government media outlets denied publishing the party's political advertisement despite the clear legal obligation. National Election Commission found violation of law<sup>30</sup>, Curia agreed with the National Election Commission<sup>31</sup>, no fine was imposed.

See also paragraph 2 of Section 2 Subsection (a), paragraph 2 and 6 of Section 3 Subsection (a), paragraph 2 and 3 of Section 3 Subsection (b), paragraph 5 of Section 6

## 5. Third party actors

Unknown hackers attacked pro-government media sites<sup>32</sup> and someone created a fake Facebook page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which then they made seem as under hacker attack as well during the last week of the campaign.<sup>33</sup>

### (a) Pro-government NGOs

See paragraph 1 of Section 2 Subsection (a), and paragraph 2 of Section 8.

### (b) Churches

Leaders of the Hungarian Reformed Church endorsed Fidesz-KDNP party coalition, and encouraged believers to cast 'No' votes (as the government) at the referendum.<sup>34</sup>

A Budapest based priest told the community after Sunday mass that the United Opposition would endanger the religious institutions and communities, cancel religious and moral education in schools, renationalise religious schools, and seize the financial support of church institutions. He added that the sexual propaganda has reached Hungary, and the organisations providing information on sexual minorities aim to influence children.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Decision [Kvk.I.39.354/2022/5.](#) of Curia

<sup>28</sup> Decision [IV/878/2022.](#) of Constitutional Court

<sup>29</sup> [Decision 269/2022](#) of National Election Commission

<sup>30</sup> [Decision 193/2022](#) of National Election Commission

<sup>31</sup> Decision [Kvk.II.39.355/2022/3.](#) of Curia

<sup>32</sup> D., Bolcsó, [„A kormány médiát megtámadó hekkerek mindenre lőttek, amit értek”](#) ('The hackers attacking the government media shot at everything they could access'), *Telex*, 29 March 2022

<sup>33</sup> *Euronews*, [„A Külügyminisztérium szerint nem hekkelték meg a Facebook-oldalukat”](#) ('Ministry of Foreign Affairs says their Facebook page was not hacked'), 31 March 2022

<sup>34</sup> *Magyarországi Református Egyház*, [„Nyilatkozat az április 3-i országgyűlési választás előtt”](#) ('Statement before the parliamentary elections on 3 April'), 31 March 2022

<sup>35</sup> A. Mizsur, [„A zugligeti templomban kampányolt az ellenzék ellen egy plébános, és azt is elmondta, hogy kinek kell vezetnie az országot”](#) ('A priest-parish priest campaign against the opposition in the church of Zugliget, and he also explained who has to lead the country'), *Telex*, 31 March 2022

A middle school's director of the reformed church campaigned for Fidesz-KDNP and for casting 'No' at the referendum in his email sent to parents of all students.<sup>36</sup>

### (c) Pro-Fidesz-KDNP organisations abroad

The Romanian Post Office issued a public statement complaining against the acts of two organisations (Hungarian National Council of Transylvania, and Hungarian People's Party of Transylvania) which had encouraged in a radio commercial and on leaflets mail voters not to trust the post office but instead hand over the filled out ballots to the organisations' staff.<sup>37</sup> Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ), Romanian party supporting Fidesz-KDNP, sent text messages to Hungarian voters not to take the mail ballots to Consulates but to hand them over to RMDSZ.<sup>38</sup> Átlátszó Erdély (Transparent Transylvania) media outlet collected violations sent by readers: family members casted mail votes of voters, mayor and local business also tried to convince voters not to trust the Romanian Post Office, county council president posted photos as his whole family is casting the mail votes for Fidesz-KDNP.<sup>39</sup>

## 6. Suppression of votes / unlawful campaign activity

Several reported to the Hungarian Helsinki Committee and to HCLU<sup>40</sup> that they never received their mail voting packages, and therefore they could not exercise their fundamental right to vote. It is not possible to vote on Election Day at a polling station if the voter is on the list of mail voters.

A bag of partly burned, already filled out ballots were found near Târgu Mures, Romania. The ballots were casted for the United Opposition and Our Homeland. The Romanian police started an investigation.<sup>41</sup> HCLU<sup>42</sup> and the National Election Office<sup>43</sup> also filed police reports. Fidesz claimed that it was the 'leftists' themselves who burned their own votes, because they want to 'nullify the votes of Hungarians across the borders'.<sup>44</sup> This statement of Fidesz should be read in line with Section 5 Subsection (b).

Fidesz and United Opposition candidates as well used photos with children<sup>45</sup>. Fidesz member of the Parliament and candidate Mr. Péter Hoppál pulled off the power cord of the United Opposition's led wall in the city of Pécs.<sup>46</sup>

In February 2022, member of the parliament and candidate, Ms. Zsófia Koncz and a Secretary of State handed over emergency call devices to an elderly supporting organisation in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County in front of the media. A few days before Election Day, several holder of such devices reported that the emergency call device suddenly started to play the recorded message of Mr. Viktor Orbán. The

<sup>36</sup> J. Haász, [„Iskolaigazgató buzdítja a szülőket: szavazzanak a kormány álláspontjával megegyezően a népszavazáson”](#) ('School director encourage parents to cast votes at the referendum according to the opinion of the Government'), *Telex*, 31 March 2022

<sup>37</sup> B. Barnóczki, [„A Román Posta sérelmezi, hogy erdélyi magyar szervezetek arra biztatják szimpatizánsaikat: ne bízzák rá a levélszavazataikat”](#) ('Romanian Post Office is offended because Hungarian organisations in Transylvania encourage supporters not to trust is with their mail ballots'), *Telex*, 30 March 2022

<sup>38</sup> See the post of Átlátszó Erdély [here](#)

<sup>39</sup> Z. Sipos, „Választási visszaélések: kitöltött szavazólapok egy Jedd melletti szemétdombon” ('Violations of electoral procedure: filled out ballots at a garbage dump near Jedd'), *Átlátszó Erdély*, 31 March – 1 April 2022

<sup>40</sup> G. Tóth, [„Néhány külföldi szavazóhoz nem érkezett meg a levélszavazáshoz szükséges csomag, az ő voksuk el is úszott”](#) ('Some voter abroad did not receive the package necessary for mail voting, their votes are out'), *Telex*, 1 April 2022

<sup>41</sup> E. Vig, [„Kidobott levélszavazatokat találtak Marosvásárhely mellett”](#) ('Thrown out mail votes were found near Târgu Mures'), *Transtelex*, 31 March 2022

<sup>42</sup> J. Mészáros, [„A TASZ büntetőfeljelentést tesz az Erdélyben elégetett levélszavazatok ügyében”](#) ('The HCLU files a police report in the case of burned mail votes in Transylvania'), *444.hu*, 31 March 2022

<sup>43</sup> B. Bozay, [„Feljelentést tett a Nemzeti Választási Iroda a kidobott erdélyi levélszavazatok miatt”](#) ('The National Election Office files a police report because if the thrown out Transylvanian mail votes'), *Telex*, 31 March 2022

<sup>44</sup> *hvg.hu*, [„A Fidesz szerint az ellenzék gyűjtötte fel a Marosvásárhelyen talált szavazólapokat”](#) ('Fidesz believes that the opposition burned up the votes found in Târgu Mures'), 31 March 2022

<sup>45</sup> D. Szűcs, [„Nincs különbség a két oldal között, ha gyerekekkel kell kampányolni”](#) ('There is no difference between the two sides if it comes to campaigning with children'), *Telex*, 30 March 2022

<sup>46</sup> Szabad Pécs, [„Hoppál Péter elsötétítette a képet a pécsi főtéren álló ellenzéki kivetítőn, azt mondta, polgári engedetlenségből cselekedett”](#) ('Péter Hoppál darkened the picture of the opposition projector on the main square of Pécs. He said that he acted out of civil disobedience'), 28 March 2022

line could not be broken until voice message was over. The holders said that they did not even know that the device can take incoming calls, since there is only one bottom which is connected to the ambulance.<sup>47</sup> Voters reported that they have received Fidesz supporting text messages from unknown numbers and without a signature. Fidesz claimed that they have followed the data protection regulations but they did not confirm or deny whether they sent the messages.<sup>48</sup> The United Opposition also used the campaign tool of text messages and phone calls to reach voters. Recipients claimed that they did not give consent to be contacted by the United Opposition, too. Mr. Viktor Orbán said in his regular public radio interview that he has not seen such a huge campaign fraud in the past 30 years<sup>49</sup>, then the Hungarian National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information started a procedure to examine the data protection aspects of these contacts<sup>50</sup>. The National Election Commission decided upon a complaint by Fidesz, that the text messages violated the electoral procedure laws but the perpetrator is unknown.<sup>51</sup> The Hungarian National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information has not initiated a procedure because the emails sent by the government with campaign messages to people who gave their consent to further contact when registering for the vaccination against COVID-19.

See also paragraph 4 of Section 3 Subsection (b).

## 7. Hostile environment

Hate speech against LGBTQ people continued in the government's referendum campaign. Mr. Viktor Orbán said in his interview at the TV2 television channel that a few decades ago 'strange fashion' started in Western Europe, which at first seemed to be 'a funny thing' that people with different 'life style' appeared, but then 'lobby groups' started to 'popularize' their 'conception of life' among children, and parents' right of upbringing their children should be protected.<sup>52</sup> The Prime Minister said in another interview at Hír TV that 'one cannot be sure that a person with uncertain identity in Western Europe would not go to people in the school to explain whether they are a boy or a girl', he added that the referendum is supported by all party supporters because they will not let 'their lives to be turned upside down through their children'.<sup>53</sup> Mr. Orbán said at the Fidesz campaign closing event about the referendum that '[t]he world lost its mind. Such fashions appear that one can just wonder'.<sup>54</sup> Mr. Orbán called the LGBTI movement a 'crazy fashion' in another interview, and talked about people who 'choose different life style' than his.<sup>55</sup>

The newly elected president, Mrs. Katalin Novák compared the gender ideology to a 'slowly killing poison', and called it 'ideological warfare'.<sup>56</sup>

Member of the parliament, Mr. Barna Pál Zsigmond gave an interview at the Târgu Mures public radio where he said that he wished to read more positive opinions on the Hungarian government. He also named an acknowledged Transylvanian investigative journalist whose work Mr. Zsigmond does not like because the journalist criticises Mr. Orbán and the Fidesz.<sup>57</sup> These statements, beside the serious threat to media freedom by naming an opposition journalist as enemy, should be read in line with the

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<sup>47</sup> See the Facebook post of Clear Vote [here](#), 2 April 2022

<sup>48</sup> F. Bakró-Nagy, „Névtelen sms-ben küldözgetik a Fidesz választási jelszavait” ('Fidesz's election slogans are sent in anonymous text messages'), *Telex*, 1 April 2022

<sup>49</sup> *Hirado.hu*, „Orbán Viktor: A baloldal veszélybe sodorja az ország energiaellátását” ('Viktor Orbán: The 'left' endangers the energy supply of the country'), 1 April 2022

<sup>50</sup> *Hirado.hu*, „A NAIH eljárást indított az ellenzéki SMS-kampány ügyében” ('The Hungarian National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information initiated a procedure in the case of the opposition's text message campaign'), 1 April 2022

<sup>51</sup> [Decision 267/2022](#) of National Election Commission

<sup>52</sup> See the interview [here](#), 2 April 2022

<sup>53</sup> Cs. Körömi, „Orbán szerint nincs felelősségünk a háborúban, de örülne, ha lenne magyar tenger” ('According to Orbán we have no responsibility in the war but he would be glad if Hungary had a sea'), *Telex*, 28 March 2022

<sup>54</sup> B. Cseke, „Orbán: A világnak elment az esze” ('Orbán: The world lost its mind.'), *Telex*, 1 April 2022

<sup>55</sup> P. Csermely, „Háború vagy béke” ('War or peace'), *Magyar Nemzet*, 2 April 2022

<sup>56</sup> T. Tóth-Holló, „Novák Katalin: Magyarország szíve most a magyar-ukrán határon dobog” ('Katalin Novák: Hungary's heart is beating now at the Hungarian-Ukrainian border'), *Magyar Nemzet*, 1 April 2022

<sup>57</sup> E. Vig, „Túl sok a kritikus hang, nincs elég Fidesz-tartalom az erdélyi közmédiában, mondja egy fideszes képviselő” ('Too much critical voices, not enough Fidesz content in the Transylvanian public media, says a Fidesz Member of the Parliament'), *Telex*, 24 March 2022

facts of pro-government companies and individuals purchasing many of the Hungarian language media outlets in Transylvania and exercising strong censorship.<sup>58</sup>

Mr. Viktor Orbán said in his speech at a campaign event in connection with the referendum that 'we expect the teachers and schools not to brainwash our children, we did not hand over our rights' to decide about the sexual education of the children.<sup>59</sup> The speech was given after teacher's right to strike was cut off in a government decree (see paragraph 5 Section 7 of [information note](#) with recent updates of 7 March), and ever since the government has not negotiated with the teacher's union.

First instance court ruled that pro-government Hír TV television stated untruthfully that prime minister candidate of the United Opposition, Mr. Márki-Zay would close emergency services and midwiferies.<sup>60</sup>

Opposition mayor of Érd town, Mr. László Csőzik reported that they found secret surveillance tools (camera and microphone) in his deputy's office a week before Election Day.<sup>61</sup>

United Opposition's prime minister candidate, Mr. Márki-Zay<sup>62</sup> and opposition candidate, Ms. Tímea Szabó<sup>63</sup> filed police reports against Mr. Orbán and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Szijjártó for allegedly committing scaremongering and threatening with public danger when stating that the United Opposition made secret deals with the Ukrainian government. The government started to threaten by initiating criminal procedures of scaremongering in a wilder scale to scare off critics at the beginning of the pandemic and this year in connection to petrol supply. The United Opposition seemingly decided to use similar tools.

A new video was sent to the pro-government media by an unrecognizable man stating that the campaign of member of the parliament and United Opposition candidate, Ms. Tímea Szabó is financed by cocaine business from Marbella, Spain.<sup>64</sup> Such videos were released last year to spread smear messages about the national opposition led Budapest municipality, and the allegations were found untrue. Marbella is the town where daughter of Mr. Orbán moved with her family. The police started an investigation upon a police report made by a Fidesz member of parliament, Mr. Gyula Budai to investigate the allegations of the video coming from unknown sources and feathering no evidence<sup>65</sup>.

See also paragraph 3 of Section 8.

## 8. Election observation

More than 40 thousand polling station commissioners were delegated by parties altogether.<sup>66</sup> The United Opposition's (19,500 delegates) and the Two Tailed Dog Party's (1,700) delegates were volunteers, probably many of the delegates of Fidesz-KDNP and Our Homeland volunteered as well. A mayor said in the local television that polling station commissioners delegated by the United Opposition from other parts of Hungary were provocateurs.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Sz. Horváth-Kovács, [„A romániai magyar sajtó Fidesz általi befolyásoltságáról cikkeznek a G4media”](#) ('G4media publishes on Fidesz influence on Hungarian media in Transylvania'), *Transindex*, 12 August 2021

<sup>59</sup> 168.hu, [„Orbán Viktor üzent a tanároknak”](#) ('Viktor Orbán sent message to teachers'), 30 March 2022

<sup>60</sup> B. Bozzay, [„Valótlanul állította az első fokú ítélet szerint Márki-Zayról a Hír TV, hogy sürgősségi osztályokat és szülészeteket zárna be”](#) ('The Hír TV stated untruthfully about Márki-Zay, according to the first instance judgement, that he would close emergency services and midwiferies'), *Telex*, 31 March 2022

<sup>61</sup> See the post of mayor Mr. László Csőzik [here](#), 29 March 2022

<sup>62</sup> G. Tenczer, [„Márki-Zay rémhírtéjesztésért feljelentette Szijjártót”](#) ('Márki-Zay filed a police report for scaremongering against Szijjártó'), *Telex*, 30 March 2022

<sup>63</sup> V. Weiler, [„Közveszéllyel fenyegetés miatt feljelentette Orbán Viktort a párbeszéd Szabó Tímea”](#) ('Tímea Szabó from Dialogue filed a police report against Viktor Orbán for threatening with public danger'), *Telex*, 1 April 2022

<sup>64</sup> *Magyar Nemzet*, [„Kokainbizniszből származó pénzből finanszírozhatják Szabó Tímea kampányát + videó”](#) ('Campaign of Tímea Szabó might be financed from money coming from cocaine business + video'), 26 March 2022

<sup>65</sup> B. Árpási, [„Kábítószer-kereskedelem gyanúja miatt indult nyomozás Szabó Tímea kampánya kapcsán”](#) ('Investigation was started in connection with the campaign of Tímea Szabó because of drug trafficking suspicion'), *Népszava*, 31 March 2022

<sup>66</sup> See the number of delegates to election commissions at the website of the National Election Office [here](#)

<sup>67</sup> F. Előd, [„Karcag fideszes polgármestere provokátornak nevezte a városba érkező civil szavazatszámálólókat”](#) ('Fidesz mayor of Karcag called provocateurs the civilian polling station commissioners arriving to the town'), *Telex*, 1 April 2022

Pro-government NGO, Századvég published an open letter addressed to the head of OSCE ODIHR election observation mission, Ms. Jillian Stirk referring partly to the report of the government organised non-governmental organisation Ordo Iuris. In the open letter, Századvég stated that OSCE ODIHR mission intervenes in the elections, and it is politically biased.<sup>68</sup>

Mr. Orbán gave an interview to pro-government online news outlet, Origo where he stated that the Western peace institution like OSCE election observations became 'combat institutions', election observation nowadays is about accusations.<sup>69</sup>

**For more details see:**

[Mertek Media Monitor: Hungarian News Monitoring, 2022 Election Campaign – Part 3](#)

[Mertek Media Monitor: Hungarian News Monitoring, 2022 Election Campaign – Part 2](#)

[Mertek Media Monitor: Hungarian News Monitoring, 2022 Election Campaign – Part 1](#)

[Hungarian Helsinki Committee: Information Note on Recent Updates, National Elections of Hungary 2022, 7 March 2022](#)

[Hungarian Helsinki Committee: Baseline Information Note on the National Elections of Hungary 2022](#)

[Hungarian Helsinki Committee: A Threat Assessment of the 2022 Hungarian Parliamentary Elections, 2022](#)

[Unhack Democracy: ODIHR Needs Assessment Mission Briefing](#)

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<sup>68</sup> Századvég Foundation, [„Nyílt levél az EBESZ Demokratikus Intézmények és Emberi Jogok Hivatala Magyarországra delegált választási megfigyelő misszió vezetőjének”](#) ('Open letter to the head of OSCE ODIHR election observation mission delegated to Hungary'), 29 March 2022

<sup>69</sup> L. Gábor, A. Kovács, „Orbán Viktor: A választás tétje most béke vagy háború” ('Viktor Orbán: Peace or war depends on the elections'), *Origo*, 31 March 2022

[www.helsinki.hu](http://www.helsinki.hu)

