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**Scenarios
for the 2026
Hungarian
Parliamentary
Elections**

Grey Rhino

Democratic
renewal

Contested
Ground

Constitutional
crisis

Status quo

Constrained
change



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1. Introduction: Main Questions

Hungary's parliamentary elections will be held on 12 April 2026. According to opinion polls from all government-independent research institutes, the opposition catch-all party Tisza, led by Péter Magyar, is currently ahead of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's governing party, Fidesz. For the first time since 2010, there is therefore a realistic possibility that the incumbent government could be voted out of office.

At the same time, Hungary is commonly described as an "illiberal democracy," a term Orbán himself used in a programmatic speech in the summer of 2014. Against this backdrop, the question of whether—and how—the largest opposition party can bring about a change of government is not only a political one, but also an institutional one. The prospect of government turnover is constrained by both formal legal arrangements and informal obstacles.

The purpose of this analysis is, first, to briefly outline Hungary's political starting position, with particular attention to the consolidation of power by the Fidesz party, the emergence of the new challenger Péter Magyar, and key changes to the electoral system. The central focus, however, is on identifying which scenarios for the 2026 parliamentary elections are institutionally, legally, and politically feasible. In particular, the analysis examines

- whether, and under which conditions, the respective losing side would recognise the election outcome;
- which legal options exist to delay the official certification and announcement of the election results through legal remedies;
- and how the outgoing ("old") parliament could, after the elections but before the constitution of the new parliament, restrict the room for manoeuvre of a future government—especially in the event of an opposition victory.

The analysis does not seek to provide a political or normative assessment of these scenarios. Rather, it is limited to mapping the legal and institutional options arising from Hungary's current legal and constitutional framework in the period immediately following the parliamentary elections.

Given Hungary's electoral system, which systematically favours the winning parties both in single-member constituencies and in the allocation of list seats, a victory by the Tisza party in the popular vote does not guarantee a parliamentary majority. Fidesz may secure a parliamentary majority even if the opposition as a whole receives more votes.

Decisive in this regard are the votes of ethnic Hungarians residing in neighbouring countries, as well as the parliamentary seats allocated to recognised national minorities. These two elements of the Hungarian electoral system can structurally favour Fidesz, even in the event of a narrow victory by Tisza Party.

First, Hungarian citizens living abroad who do not have a registered residence in Hungary—most of whom are ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries such as Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine—are entitled to vote by mail. However, they may vote only for national party lists, not for individual

constituency candidates. Since 2010, a large majority of these voters have consistently supported Fidesz. As a result, their votes tend to strengthen Fidesz's national list totals without affecting the distribution of single-member district mandates. In closely contested elections, this list-vote advantage can translate into additional compensatory seats.

Second, Hungary's electoral system provides for preferential parliamentary representation of officially recognised national minorities. If a minority list reaches a reduced preferential quota, it can obtain a parliamentary seat. In practice, the German minority has regularly secured such a seat, and the Roma minority has also been politically relevant in this context. Although minority representatives are formally independent, their voting behaviour in parliament has often aligned with the governing majority, thereby indirectly benefiting Fidesz.

In the 2022 parliamentary election, Fidesz–KDNP won a clear victory with a two-thirds constitutional majority (135 out of 199 seats). It received substantial support from non-resident voters (ethnic Hungarian abroad), with the overwhelming majority of external list votes going to Fidesz. Additionally, the German minority obtained a preferential seat, and its representative supported the government in key votes. While the 2022 outcome was not close enough for these factors to be decisive for forming a majority, they reinforced the governing coalition's margin. In a much tighter race—such as a narrow Tisza lead in both constituencies and list votes—these structural advantages (external list votes and minority mandates) could amount to an effective bonus of approximately four to six seats for Fidesz.

Should Mi Hazánk be the only other opposition party to enter parliament, Fidesz could potentially rely on its support—either through issue-based external backing or a more formal cooperation—because Mi Hazánk is ideologically closer to Fidesz than to Tisza Party on several core policy areas. (Mi Hazánk is a radical right, nationalist party that split from Jobbik in 2018. It positions itself to the right of Fidesz but overlaps with the governing party on key themes: national sovereignty and Euroscepticism; anti-migration policy; right-wing cultural and identity issues; law-and-order rhetoric.)

In addition, Hungary's constitutional system is designed in such a way that not only constitutional amendments, but also a wide range of laws in key policy areas (including media and the judiciary) can be adopted or amended only by a two-thirds majority. Any lawful dismantling of the existing illiberal system would therefore also require a two-thirds majority of the new governing party or parties.

If Tisza fails to obtain such a majority, there is a risk that Fidesz could significantly constrain the future government after the elections but before the new parliament is constituted. In the event of an electoral defeat, Orbán could draw on a range of legal instruments and informal strategies, including:

- delaying the certification of the official election results through legal challenges (either nationwide or in individual constituencies);
- declaring a state of emergency in order to prevent the constitution of the new parliament;

- adopting additional constitutional laws by a two-thirds majority in the outgoing parliament to limit the scope for action of an incoming government;
- raising the threshold for qualified majorities to constrain the room for manoeuvre even of a future government holding a two-thirds majority.

2. The current electoral system: “The winner takes it all”

2.1. Description of the electoral system.

The current electoral system and electoral procedure in Hungary are regulated by two laws: the Act on the Election of Members of Parliament (Act CCIII of 2011) and the Act on Electoral Procedure (Act XXXVI of 2013). In force since 2011/2013, the Hungarian electoral system combines elements of majoritarian and proportional representation.

The unicameral parliament (*Országgyűlés*) consists of 199 seats. Of these, 106 mandates are allocated in single-member constituencies according to the principle of relative majority, while the remaining 93 seats are distributed proportionally via national party lists.

Parties must obtain at least five per cent of the valid list votes to participate in the allocation of seats. For coalitions of two parties, the electoral threshold is ten per cent; for coalitions of three or more parties, it is fifteen per cent. In addition, the electoral system allows recognised national minorities to submit minority lists and to obtain a parliamentary seat if a defined preferential quota is reached. In the current legislative term, only the German minority has been represented in parliament.

To run in a single-member constituency, candidates must collect 500 valid supporting signatures. A party may submit a national list if it fields candidates in at least 71 of the 106 single-member constituencies, across at least 14 counties as well as Budapest.

Each eligible voter has two votes: one for a direct candidate in their constituency and one for a national party list. Hungarian citizens without permanent residence in Hungary—primarily members of Hungarian minorities living in neighbouring countries who hold Hungarian citizenship—may participate in the election exclusively by postal vote and may cast only a list vote. Voters with residence in Hungary who are abroad on election day, by contrast, may vote only at embassies or consulates; they are entitled to cast both their list vote and their constituency vote for their registered place of residence in Hungary.

The basic structure of this electoral system originates from a comprehensive electoral reform adopted at the end of 2011 and first applied in the 2014 parliamentary elections. Prior to that, Hungary’s electoral system, in place since 1990, consisted of a complex mixed system with a total of 386 seats, of which 176 were allocated in single-member constituencies and 210 through regional and national lists. This system also included a multi-stage and comparatively complex compensation mechanism.

The 2011/2012 reform resulted in a substantial reduction of the size of parliament from 386 to 199 seats and significantly strengthened the majoritarian element of the system. The number of single-member constituencies was reduced from 176 to 106, and the previously existing two-round electoral system was abolished. Since 2014, parliamentary elections have been held in a single round, without run-off elections. At the same time, regional party lists were abolished and replaced by a unified system of national lists.

One of the most politically consequential changes concerned the calculation of votes for the allocation of list mandates. Under the previous system, only the votes cast for losing constituency candidates were included in the compensation mechanism. Under the current system, so-called “surplus votes” of winning constituency candidates are also taken into account. These are the votes exceeding the result of the second-placed candidate. Such votes are added to the respective party lists, systematically benefiting larger parties and potentially yielding additional mandates.

The electoral reforms of 2011 continue to form the institutional core of Hungary’s electoral system. While no fundamental structural changes have been introduced since the 2014 parliamentary elections, constituency boundaries have been redrawn several times in ways favourable to the governing Fidesz party (“gerrymandering”). In traditionally opposition-leaning Budapest, for example, the number of constituencies has been reduced from 18 to 16 for the upcoming elections.

Table 1: Parliamentary elections since 2010

Year	Party/Parties	List votes	Share of seats	Seats
2010	Fidesz / KDNP	52,7%	68,0%	263
	MSZP	19,3%	15,0%	59
	Jobbik	16,7%	12,2%	47
	LMP	7,5%	4,0%	16
2014	Fidesz / KDNP	44,9%	67,0%	133
	MSZP / DK / Együtt / PM	25,6%	19,0%	38
	Jobbik	20,2%	12,0%	23
	LMP	5,3%	3,0%	5
2018	Fidesz / KDNP	49,3%	66,0%	133
	Jobbik	19,1%	13,0%	26
	MSZP / Párbeszéd	11,9%	10,0%	20
	LMP	7,1%	4,0%	8
	DK	5,4%	5,0%	9
2022	Fidesz / KDNP	54,13%	68,0%	135
	MSZP / DK / Jobbik / PM / LMP / Momentum	34,44%	29,0%	57
	Mi Hazánk	5,88%	3,0%	6

2.2. Electoral authorities, election commissions, and legal remedies.

2.2.a. Electoral authorities and election commissions.

Elections are prepared by electoral authorities and conducted by election commissions. These exist at the national, regional, and single-member constituency levels.

The National Election Office (*Nemzeti Választási Iroda, NVI*) is responsible for the administrative preparation of elections. Its chairperson is appointed by the President of Hungary for a nine-year term on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

The National Election Commission (*Nemzeti Választási Bizottság, NVB*) is responsible for the conduct and oversight of elections. It is composed of seven members and three substitute members, who are elected by the parliament for nine years with a two-thirds majority, upon nomination by the President. In addition, all parties holding parliamentary faction status may each appoint one member to the National Election Commission. Since Tisza currently has no representation in parliament, the largest and most popular opposition party cannot delegate any members to the National Election Commission.

At the regional level and in individual constituencies, corresponding electoral authorities and election commissions also exist. These commissions include representation from all parties that field candidates in the respective constituencies; as a result, Tisza will be represented at these levels.

2.2.b. Remedies and procedures.

Hungary's electoral legal protection system is multi-tiered. In the first instance, if a suspected violation of electoral law occurs, an objection (*kifogás*) can be filed with the competent election commission (*választási bizottság*) at the level of the single-member constituency, the region, or nationally. Decisions of these election commissions may be appealed (*fellebbezés*) within short deadlines to the next higher-level commission.

Decisions of the National Election Commission can ultimately be reviewed by the Supreme Court (*Kúria*) through a judicial review request (*bírósági felülvizsgálati kérelem*). The Supreme Court's decision is generally final and binding. Only in exceptional cases can a constitutional complaint (*alkotmányjogi panasz*) be lodged with the Constitutional Court (*Alkotmánybíróság, AB*) if a violation of fundamental rights is alleged. This remedy does not have suspensive effect and is not intended for general oversight of the electoral process, but solely for the constitutional protection of individual rights.

Nevertheless, this structure theoretically allows for repeated "back-and-forth" between the Kúria and the Constitutional Court if decisions are overturned and remanded for reconsideration.

Although such procedures are subject to strict deadlines and are rare in practice, in a highly contested political context they could contribute to delaying the final legal clarification of an election result. In extremis, therefore, the system provides a legal framework that could be used to delay recognition of an opposition victory without formally violating existing law. (For further details, see the scenarios section.)

Table 2: Remedies

Remedy	Competent authority	Who can file it?	Deadline
Objection	Election Commission (local, regional, national)	Voters, candidates, parties	3 days from notification
Appeal	Next higher-level election commission	Participants in the previous procedure	3 days after the decision of the lower commission
Judicial Review	Supreme Court (Kúria)	Voters, candidates, parties	3 days after the decision
Constitutional Complaint	Constitutional Court	Participants claiming a violation of fundamental rights	3 days after notification of the Kúria's decision

3. Scenarios for the Parliamentary elections

3.1. Overview: Scenarios for possible outcomes and government.

Given recent polling data, several election outcomes and subsequent government formations are conceivable on 12 April 2026. Both Fidesz and Tisza could secure either a two-thirds majority or a simple majority. In the case of a relative majority, cooperation with the far-right Mi Hazánk movement is also possible—politically feasible for Fidesz, but only theoretically possible for Tisza.

For Fidesz, a simple majority would already constitute an electoral victory, as the illiberal constitutional framework is already established. Cooperation with Mi Hazánk would be politically unproblematic. This creates several positive scenarios for Fidesz: a two-thirds majority with or without Mi Hazánk support, or a simple majority with or without Mi Hazánk support. In all cases, the basic structure of the existing illiberal system remains secure.

For Tisza, the challenge is significantly greater. A legal dismantling of the illiberal system—such as through amendments to the constitution, cardinal laws, or the replacement of key leadership positions—would only be possible with a two-thirds majority held independently. In all other scenarios, whether a two-thirds majority only with Mi Hazánk support or a simple majority (with or without Mi Hazánk), a Tisza-led government would be legally and/or politically constrained. In such cases, a full overhaul of the system could only occur outside the existing legal framework—i. e., through purely political means—or would be politically and practically impossible due to reliance on Mi Hazánk.

Even with a simple majority for Tisza or a Tisza government dependent on Mi Hazánk, Fidesz would formally move into opposition, but its power position would remain only partially threatened—both because of the continuing constitutional framework and its entrenched institutional and economic presence.

This creates a clear asymmetry in favour of Fidesz: only an independent two-thirds majority for Tisza constitutes a genuine threat to Fidesz. In all other scenarios, Fidesz's power position remains largely secure. At the same time, Fidesz could delay or block a potential Tisza two-thirds majority through legal measures, such as contesting the election results or amending the constitution or cardinal laws—for example, by increasing the required majority for constitutional amendments (see Sections 3.2 and 3.3).

Table 3: Possible results and governments

No.	Result	Seats	Government	Political/legal implication
1	Fidesz wins	Two-thirds majority	Continuation of the government	Consolidation of the illiberal democracy; unrestricted constitutional amendments possible
2	Fidesz wins	Absolute majority	<p>2a: Continuation of the government without a two-thirds majority</p> <p>2b: Continuation of the government with support from Mi Hazánk (with or without a two-thirds majority)</p>	<p>Government operational, but constitutional amendments only partially possible</p> <p>Potential radicalization; restoration of a constitution-amending majority possible</p>
3	Fidesz wins	Relative majority	<p>3a: Continuation of the government with support from Mi Hazánk (with or without a two-thirds majority)</p> <p>3b: Formation of a Tisza government with support from Mi Hazánk</p>	<p>Dependence on Mi Hazánk; politically unstable but system-stabilizing</p> <p>Formal change of power, politically highly unlikely</p>
4	Tisza wins	Two-thirds majority	Formation of a new government	Possibility of a legal overhaul of the constitutional order
5	Tisza wins	Absolute majority	<p>5a: Formation of a new government</p> <p>5b: Formation of a new government with support from Mi Hazánk (with or without a two-thirds majority)</p>	<p>Political change of government without constitutional reform</p> <p>Formal change of power, politically highly unlikely</p>

3.2. Forms and applicability of exceptional measures against the elections or the new parliament.

3.2.a. Types of exceptional measures (“special legal regimes”)

The Hungarian constitutional system currently recognises three types of special legal regimes (különleges jogrend):

1. State of war (*hadiállapot*) – in the event of an external armed attack or its immediate threat;
2. State of emergency (*szükségállapot*) – in the case of violent acts aiming to overthrow the constitutional order; and
3. State of danger (*veszélyhelyzet*) – in response to natural disasters, industrial accidents, or armed conflicts in neighbouring countries.

Hungary is currently under a state of danger (*veszélyhelyzet*), declared in connection with the war in Ukraine. Parliament has extended this state until 14 May, meaning that the next parliamentary elections on 12 April 2026 will take place under this exceptional legal regime. It was in effect during the European Parliament and municipal elections in summer 2024 as well.

3.2.b. Possibility of postponing the elections

Under the current state of danger, postponing the elections is legally not permitted: the scheduled elections must be held. Only under a state of war or a state of emergency does the Fundamental Law prohibit the holding of elections. In such cases, the mandate of the incumbent parliament is automatically extended until the end of the respective state, and elections must be held within 90 days after its conclusion.

3.2.c. Prevention of the new parliament after the election

While any decision to prevent the new parliament—particularly in the event of an opposition victory—would be politically highly risky and could trigger opposition mobilisation or responses from the EU (see scenario details), it is legally possible as long as it occurs before the constitution of the new parliament. Such a measure would require a constitutional amendment.

The mandate of the outgoing parliament ends only with the constitution of the new parliament. According to the constitution, up to 30 days may pass between election day and the inaugural session.

During a state of war or state of emergency, parliamentary elections may not take place. If the elections have already occurred but the new parliament has not yet convened, its constitution could be postponed.

Since a two-thirds parliamentary majority can amend the constitution at any time, it could, within the 30-day period before the inaugural session, modify the Fundamental Law to tie the convocation of the new parliament to the end of the state of danger. In all cases—whether through declaration of a state of war or emergency or through modification of the rules governing the state of danger—the outgoing parliament would remain in office, while the new parliament could not convene. This would automatically extend the term of the government as well.

3.3. Post-Election scenarios: Instruments against the election outcome

The following section outlines scenarios arising from the legal and political room for manoeuvre available to the two major parties. The analysis focuses in particular on the instruments through which the election result could be contested, the constitution of the new parliament delayed or prevented, and the work of a new government restricted or obstructed.

Table 4: Post-election Scenarios

	Election Result	Losing Party Response	Possible Actions	Outcome
A	Fidesz majority	Acceptance	Constitutional amendments → continuation of the illiberal system	System continuation
B	Tisza simple majority	Blockade	Election challenged, state of emergency, constitutional amendments, new president → government unable to function	Government paralyzed
C	Fidesz majority	Non-recognition	Election challenged, mobilisation → continuation of the illiberal system; political escalation	System continuation; tension rises
D	Tisza two-thirds majority	Strong resistance	Election challenged, state of emergency, constitutional amendments, new president → severe constitutional crisis	Severe constitutional crisis
E	Tisza two-thirds majority	Acceptance	Limited measures → legal system reform	Legal system reform



3.3.a. Status Quo Secured: Simple or two-thirds majority for Fidesz, acceptance by the opposition

Result: Simple majority or two-thirds majority for Fidesz

Losing party response (Tisza): Acceptance of the election result without contesting it

Legal instruments:

- If Tisza accepts the election result, no party-initiated legal challenges are filed (only individual election complaints by citizens remain possible).
- Constitutional amendments may be used to facilitate the work of the new government even without a two-thirds majority.

Political consequences:

- Continuation of the illiberal system (in the case of a simple majority, potentially less room for further constitutional amendments).
- Political mobilisation by the opposition in response to potential constitutional changes.

Description:

Depending on whether Fidesz achieves a two-thirds majority or only a simple majority, the key question in this scenario is the extent to which the illiberal system can be constitutionally secured.

In the case of a simple Fidesz majority, the party can either maintain the existing constitution—already largely structured in its favor—unchanged, or make adjustments to the constitutional amendment rules in the “old” parliament, i.e., before the new parliament convenes. For example, it could lower the threshold required for constitutional changes.

Since Fidesz retains a two-thirds majority in the outgoing parliament after the elections, it is legally able to adapt the constitution to reflect the new parliamentary majority. However, this approach would also make it easier for any future opposition majority—e.g., after regular elections in 2030—to enact constitutional amendments.

EU Implications:

Status quo continues: the EU maintains Rule of Law Conditionality (€10-13 billion frozen), ongoing Article 7(1) procedure, and regular infringement proceedings. Hungary continues obstructing EU

foreign policy on Russia, Ukraine, and enlargement. If Fidesz secures two-thirds majority, expect further constitutional entrenchment making future democratic transition harder if not impossible. The Commission should maintain pressure while supporting civil society through non-governmental channels. This scenario normalizes illiberal governance within the EU framework, eroding the Union's normative authority in promoting democracy to candidate countries.

PROBABILITY: VERY LOW



3.3.b. Constrained Change: Tisza Wins with a Simple Majority: Possible Countermeasures

Result: Simple majority for Tisza

Losing party response (Fidesz):

- Contesting the election result → delaying the official certification of results
- Declaring a state of emergency or modifying the current state of danger via the outgoing parliament → preventing the constitution of the new parliament
- Electing Viktor Orbán as President through the outgoing parliament → securing political influence
- Amending the constitutional order, particularly by expanding the scope of laws requiring a two-thirds majority → restricting the new government's room for manoeuvre
- Political mobilisation against the opposition's electoral victory

Legal instruments:

- Election challenges
- Special legal regimes (state of danger, emergency)
- Election of a new President
- Constitutional amendments

Political consequences:

- Securing the illiberal system against a new government
- Countermeasures by the new government would only be possible outside the existing constitutional framework
- Political mobilisation by Tisza in response to blocking measures

Description:

If Tisza holds only a simple majority in parliament, the new government's ability to dismantle or reform the existing system through legal means is severely limited. Key elements—such as the constitution, central state organs, and critical regulatory areas (e.g., electoral law, judicial organisation, media law)—can only be changed with a qualified (two-thirds) majority. From Fidesz's perspective, this represents the second-best outcome after a personal electoral victory, as its institutional power remains secured and can only be challenged through political confrontation.

With a simple majority, the Tisza government would be dependent on political mobilisation to implement major policy initiatives. Legal and political disputes would continually burden governance, potentially enabling Fidesz to exploit government failures and return to power prematurely.

Even in this scenario, Fidesz could attempt to delay or block the election result or the new government's takeover via legal instruments or actions by the still-serving "old" parliament. These tools become especially significant in the scenario of a two-thirds Tisza majority (see below).

Election challenges:

An election result can first be contested before the relevant election commissions and subsequently before the Kúria (Supreme Court). In cases alleging violations of fundamental rights, the Constitutional Court may also be approached. Deadlines are generally short (three to five days). Nonetheless, repeated referrals between the Kúria and the Constitutional Court could create a procedural "ping-pong," delaying a final decision.

Special legal regimes:

The outgoing parliament, which remains in office for up to 30 days before the new parliament convenes, can modify special legal regimes. This could involve altering the current state of danger to delay or prevent the new parliament's constitution or declaring a state of emergency, during which the mandate of the old parliament is extended until the end of the emergency. In both cases, the constitution of a new Tisza-led parliament could be blocked.

Election of a new president:

While the old parliament is still in office, a new president can be elected if the incumbent resigns. This could allow Viktor Orbán to be elected president, potentially with expanded presidential

powers. Such a move would institutionalise his political influence, for example through veto powers, appointment refusals, or constitutional litigation.

Constitutional amendments:

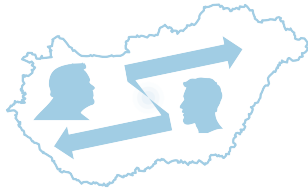
The outgoing parliament could also amend the constitution to severely restrict the legislative and executive powers of a new Tisza government. This could include designating additional laws as “cardinal laws,” which in the future would require a two-thirds majority to amend. As a result, the operational scope of a government with a simple majority would be largely blocked.

EU Implications:

If Fidesz accepts: The EU rapidly unfreezes funds (€10-13 billion) with milestone conditions, provides technical assistance for achievable reforms (administrative, procurement, anti-corruption), and manages expectations—Tisza cannot deliver constitutional transformation without two-thirds majority. Support focuses on building capacity for 2030 elections.

If Fidesz blocks (constitutional coup): A systematic obstruction of democratic government formation would likely trigger extraordinary consultations at European Council level. Escalation under Article 7(2) TEU could become politically conceivable, though unanimity requirements remain a structural constraint. Financial conditionality mechanisms, including the Rule of Law Regulation, would provide the Commission with additional leverage. Further fund suspensions would depend on demonstrable breaches affecting the EU budget. Institutional isolation—such as informal “26+1” coordination formats—would be politically possible but not legally codified. The intensity of the EU response would ultimately depend on the clarity of the constitutional breach and the degree of domestic escalation.

PROBABILITY: VERY HIGH



3.3.c. Contested Ground: Simple or two-thirds majority for Fidesz, non-acceptance by the opposition

Result: Simple or two-thirds majority for Fidesz, challenged legally and/or politically by the opposition

Losing party response (Tisza):

- Contesting the election result (with limited realistic prospects of delaying the official outcome)
- Political mobilisation

Legal Instruments:

- Election challenges
- Declaration of a state of emergency by the “old” or new parliament (in case of escalating political unrest)

Political Consequences:

- Continuation of the illiberal system
- Political mobilisation by Tisza
- Escalation up to a political or constitutional crisis

Description:

If Fidesz wins the election with either a simple or two-thirds majority, Tisza can challenge the result on legal grounds, particularly in the case of documented violations, or refuse to acknowledge it politically. Election complaints must first be submitted to the relevant election commissions and can subsequently be appealed to the Kúria (Supreme Court) and, in cases of fundamental rights violations, to the Constitutional Court. Statutory deadlines for decisions are very short.

A substantial delay in the official certification of results through repeated appeals between the Kúria and the Constitutional Court appears unlikely in this scenario, as both courts are institutionally dominated by Fidesz.

Against this background, the opposition's primary tools are political: publicly questioning the legitimacy of the results, street mobilisation, and, where relevant, refusing to take up seats. However, the latter would only trigger by-elections in the constituencies where opposition candidates have won.

State of Emergency:

If the opposition refuses to recognise the election results due to irregularities and initiates nationwide mass protests that disrupt the state apparatus or government buildings, the "old" or new parliament—if holding a two-thirds majority—could declare a state of emergency on the grounds of an "immediate threat to the constitutional order."

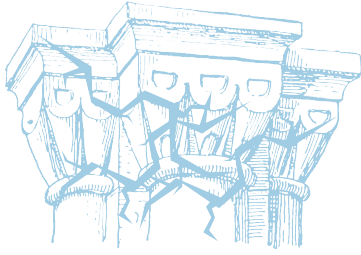
This would empower the government to rule by decree, suspending existing laws. Freedom of assembly could also be restricted, rendering further demonstrations illegal and providing a legal basis for police—or, in extreme cases, the military (Honvédség)—to enforce removal by force. Although the Constitutional Court is supposed to oversee the proportionality of such measures, meaningful judicial review is unlikely given its current composition.

EU Implications:

EU response depends on OSCE/ODIHR election observation findings. If serious irregularities documented: support Tisza's legal challenges and peaceful protest rights, express concern about electoral integrity. If Hungary declares state of emergency to suppress protests: strong condemnation, assessment under European Convention on Human Rights, enhanced financial pressure. If violence occurs: see grey rhino scenario—triggers Article 7(2), comprehensive sanctions, potential Schengen suspension.

However, if international observers conclude elections were conducted properly within existing (albeit biased) framework, the EU cannot support opposition non-recognition without undermining its own democratic principles. The EU would acknowledge results while noting systematic institutional advantages favoring Fidesz, continue existing conditionality measures, and increase support for opposition capacity-building toward 2030.

PROBABILITY: HIGH



3.3.d. Constitutional Crisis: Two-thirds majority for Tisza, possible countermeasures

Result: Two-thirds majority for Tisza

Losing party response (Fidesz):

- Contesting the election result → delaying official certification
- Using the special legal regime through the outgoing parliament → preventing the constitution of the new parliament
- Electing Viktor Orbán as President through the outgoing parliament → securing political influence
- Amending the constitution to raise thresholds for qualified majorities → restricting the new government's operational capacity
- Political mobilisation against the opposition's electoral victory

Legal instruments:

- Election contest / legal challenge
- Special legal regime (state of danger or emergency)
- Constitutional amendments

Political Consequences:

- Securing the illiberal system against a new government
- Opposition mobilisation → political crisis, protests, potential violence

Description:

If Tisza secures a two-thirds majority in parliament, the new government could legally dismantle the illiberal system institutionally and administratively, preventing any blocking efforts by Fidesz or aligned institutions. Consequently, Fidesz would be highly motivated to delay the election results, obstruct the constitution of parliament, or modify the constitutional order in ways that even a two-thirds Tisza majority could not overcome.

While Fidesz could pursue these actions through legal avenues provided in the election law or the constitution, attempts to make the opposition's victory or the formation of a new government legally impossible would effectively constitute a "legal coup." The opposition would have limited legal recourse due to the composition of existing oversight institutions but could trigger a political crisis through street mobilisation, which could not be resolved solely through legal means. This scenario represents the greatest threat to national stability and could prompt reactions from the European Union.

Election Contest / Legal Challenge:

As previously described, election results can first be contested before the relevant election commissions and ultimately before the Kúria. Alleged violations of fundamental rights can also be appealed to the Constitutional Court. Decisions must generally be made within a few days (usually three to five).

With a two-thirds Tisza majority, it becomes even more important for Fidesz to pursue legal avenues. The two highest courts could potentially participate in delaying the official certification through a procedural "ping-pong" between the Kúria and the Constitutional Court. While election commissions and the Kúria must resolve complaints within short deadlines, Kúria decisions can be challenged before the Constitutional Court on fundamental rights grounds. If Kúria rejects the Constitutional Court's ruling—or if the decision is repeatedly referred back—a new case can be initiated, resulting in an ongoing procedural back-and-forth. While legally possible, this strategy is politically very risky: the longer the courts delay the result, the higher the potential for political escalation.

Special legal regime:

The outgoing parliament, in office until up to 30 days (until 12 May 2026) before the new parliament convenes, can modify the special legal regime. It can either alter the current state of danger to prevent the constitution of the new parliament or declare a state of emergency, extending the mandate of the old parliament until the end of the emergency. In both cases, Fidesz could block the constitution of a new Tisza parliament, even with a two-thirds majority.

Constitutional Amendments:

Given a two-thirds Tisza majority in the new parliament, the old parliament could amend the constitution to make legislative and executive work substantially more difficult. This could involve raising the threshold for qualified majorities above two-thirds—for example, 70% for amending cardinal laws or requiring approval by two consecutive parliaments. Additionally, the old parliament could declare virtually all laws as cardinal, subjecting them to these higher thresholds. As a result, Tisza would be unable to reform the constitutional order legally, and the new government's operational capacity would be severely restricted. Any solution would require political confrontation, potentially leading to a constitutional crisis.

Election of a new president:

These measures could be combined with securing Viktor Orbán's political power. If the incumbent president resigns, the old parliament could elect Orbán as the new president, potentially with expanded powers. In this position, he could block the new legislature and executive through vetoes, refusal of appointments, or constitutional litigation, significantly restricting the functioning of the new Tisza government.

EU Implications:

An attempt to prevent the constitution of a newly elected parliament holding a two-thirds majority would represent an unprecedented constitutional confrontation within the EU.

The European Union would face a severe test of its enforcement capacity. Political condemnation at the highest level would be likely. Escalation under Article 7(2) TEU would become significantly more plausible than in previous rule-of-law disputes, although unanimity among the remaining Member States would still be required for sanctions under Article 7(3).

Financial pressure would constitute the most immediate and operational instrument available to the Commission. Beyond formal procedures, coordinated diplomatic and political isolation could occur, though such measures would depend on Member State cohesion.

The Treaties do not provide for expulsion or direct intervention in the internal constitutional order of a Member State. The ultimate resolution of such a crisis would therefore depend primarily on domestic political dynamics.

PROBABILITY: VERY HIGH



3.3.e. Democratic Renewal: Two-Thirds Majority for Tisza, acceptance by Fidesz

Result: Two-thirds majority for Tisza

Losing party response (Fidesz):

- Acceptance of the election outcome

Description:

In this scenario, Tisza's two-thirds majority enables a lawful, comprehensive reform of the illiberal regime. Fidesz's capacity to resist or delay these changes would be severely restricted, limited to minor procedural or political interventions. Unlike in scenarios involving obstruction or contestation, this outcome represents the only situation in which a legal transformation of the constitutional and institutional system could proceed largely unimpeded.

EU Implications:

A peaceful democratic transfer of power followed by constitutional reform would likely lead to the gradual normalisation of Hungary's relationship with EU institutions. Suspended funds could be progressively released upon fulfilment of agreed milestones.

Article 7 proceedings could transition into structured dialogue mechanisms. The speed of normalisation would depend on the credibility and sequencing of domestic reforms.

PROBABILITY: VERY LOW

3.4. Grey Rhino Scenario: Violent Escalation



This scenario represents a low-probability but high-impact contingency. It is included as a stress test of institutional resilience rather than as a forecast of likely developments.

The term “Grey Rhino” is used to describe a visible, structurally conceivable risk whose probability remains limited but whose potential consequences would be severe.

Trigger Conditions

Such escalation would most plausibly emerge from a prior constitutional confrontation, particularly under Scenario D (*Constitutional Crisis*) or, to a lesser extent, Scenario C (*Contested Ground*).

A possible escalation pathway could involve:

- The outgoing parliament using emergency powers or constitutional amendments to delay or prevent the constitution of a newly elected parliament.
- Large-scale, sustained public protests demanding recognition of the election outcome.
- Government reliance on emergency provisions to restrict assembly or expand executive authority.
- The use of force by police or, in exceptional circumstances, military units to disperse demonstrations.
- In this scenario, significant casualties or systematic repression of protest movements could occur. Such developments would mark an unprecedented rupture in the constitutional practice of an EU Member State.

Institutional Preconditions

Hungary’s constitutional framework provides for special legal regimes, including states of emergency and states of danger, which expand executive authority. Under such regimes, the government may rule by decree and restrict certain fundamental rights, including freedom of assembly.

While these provisions are legally codified, their use against post-election protest movements would represent a qualitatively different application than in previous contexts. The proportionality and necessity of such measures would formally fall under constitutional review, although the effectiveness of judicial oversight would likely be contested in a politically polarised environment.

Political and Economic Constraints

Despite institutional feasibility, several strong deterrents limit the likelihood of such escalation:

- Hungary's high degree of economic integration within the European Union.
- Dependence on EU structural and recovery funds.
- Exposure to international financial markets.
- The reputational costs of lethal repression within an EU Member State.
- The risk of internal fractures within state institutions under sustained crisis conditions.
- These structural constraints make prolonged violent repression politically and economically costly for any governing majority.

EU Implications

In the event of lethal repression or a systematic suspension of democratic processes, EU institutions would face intense pressure to respond decisively.

Initial responses would likely include coordinated political condemnation and high-level consultations among Member States. Financial conditionality mechanisms, including suspension of EU funding, would constitute the most immediately operational instruments available to the European Commission.

Escalation under Article 7 TEU could become significantly more plausible in such circumstances. However, sanctions under Article 7(3) would continue to require unanimity among the remaining Member States, representing a structural constraint.

Diplomatic signalling measures — including temporary recall of ambassadors for consultations — and coordinated political isolation could emerge, depending on Member State cohesion. More far-reaching steps, such as targeted restrictive measures against individual office holders, would represent an unprecedented development in intra-EU relations and would require broad political consensus.

The EU Treaties do not provide for expulsion or direct intervention in the internal constitutional order of a Member State. Consequently, even under severe escalation, the Union's leverage would remain primarily economic and political rather than coercive.

This scenario represents a very low likelihood but extreme systemic risk contingency. Its inclusion reflects the importance of testing the outer boundaries of institutional resilience rather than an expectation of imminent violent breakdown.

The ultimate trajectory in such a crisis would depend less on formal legal instruments and more on domestic political dynamics, including the behaviour of security institutions, the scale and persistence of civic mobilisation, and the governing majority's assessment of long-term regime survival under conditions of economic and diplomatic isolation.

PROBABILITY: EXTREMELY LOW

STATUS QUO SECURED: SIMPLE OR TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY FOR FIDESZ, ACCEPTED BY THE OPPOSITION

This scenario would mean the continuation of the existing illiberal system. A simple majority would largely stabilize the current constitutional order, while a two-thirds majority would allow for additional institutional entrenchment through potential constitutional amendments adopted by the outgoing parliament.

CONSTRAINED CHANGE: TISZA WINS WITH A SIMPLE MAJORITY – POSSIBLE COUNTERMEASURES

A victory for Tisza with a simple majority would likely be politically contentious. Fidesz could attempt to delay the transfer of power through legal or institutional measures, such as contesting the election results, modifying the emergency legal framework, or expanding two-thirds majority requirements to additional key policy areas.

Without a qualified majority, the new government would face serious obstacles in implementing fundamental reforms in areas such as the constitution, the judiciary, the media, or electoral law. This scenario would therefore be characterized by persistent institutional tensions and limited political room for maneuver.

CONTESTED GROUND: SIMPLE OR TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY FOR FIDESZ, NON-ACCEPTANCE BY THE OPPOSITION

A Fidesz victory – whether by a simple or two-thirds majority – could be politically or legally challenged by Tisza. Given short decision-making deadlines, however, significant delays in certifying the results would appear unlikely. The primary conflict would likely be political in nature, particularly through potential protest mobilization.

In an escalation scenario, the outgoing (or newly elected) parliament, if holding a two-thirds majority, could declare a state of emergency, enabling rule by decree and potentially restricting freedom of assembly.

CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS: TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY FOR TISZA, POSSIBLE COUNTERMEASURES

A two-thirds victory for Tisza would enable comprehensive institutional reform. However, Fidesz could attempt to delay the transfer of power through legal challenges before election commissions, the Supreme Court, or the Constitutional Court. Politically motivated proceedings could create a “ping-pong” effect between courts.

The outgoing parliament might also declare a state of emergency or otherwise seek to limit the operational capacity of the new parliament.

DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL: TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY FOR TISZA, ACCEPTANCE BY FIDESZ

A two-thirds majority for Tisza, combined with acceptance of the result by Fidesz, would open the path to a comprehensive and lawful transformation of Hungary’s political system. This is the only scenario in which structural democratic change could occur without institutional obstruction.

GREY RHINO SCENARIO: VIOLENT ESCALATION

The so-called “Grey Rhino” scenario describes a highly unlikely but potentially severe escalation risk. Violent confrontation could arise from a constitutional or electoral conflict – for example, if the outgoing parliament were to invoke emergency powers, or if protests against the election outcome were suppressed through coercive measures.