



NATIONAL ELECTION OFFICE

**PRESIDENT**

**Report of the President of the National Election Office on the organisation  
and conduct of state tasks related to the general election of Members of  
Parliament held on  
3 April 2022**

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**Budapest, 28 April 2022**

**Honourable Parliament,**

According to the provisions of Article 13 paragraph (1) of Act XXXVI of 2013 on Electoral Procedure (hereinafter: Ve.) I shall inform you hereby on the state duties and the implementation thereof on the occasion of the 3 April 2022 Parliamentary Elections as follows:

On 11 January 2022, the President of the Republic of Hungary scheduled the general election of Members of Parliament and the national referendums initiated by the Government (hereinafter together referred to as the "elections") for 3 April 2022. For the first time in the history of Hungary, the general election of Members of Parliament and the national referendum were held on the same day in a joint procedure.

The elections were called at a time of uncertainty in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, but the turnout and the number of applications for mobile ballot boxes suggest that the pandemic did not affect the conduct of the elections.

Elections were held in 3177 municipalities, in 10 243 polling stations and at 146 foreign representations.

There was increased international interest in the elections, as demonstrated by the fact that 906 international observers followed the elections. The OSCE/ODIHR monitored not only the voting day but also the entire election period.

## I. Election bodies

1,264 local election offices, 97 parliamentary single-member constituency election offices in 106 parliamentary single-member constituencies, 146 election offices at foreign representations, 19 regional election offices and the National Election Office participated in the elections. More than 20,000 sworn staff carried out electoral tasks in the election offices.

The election committees had around 90 000 members. Nominating organisations and independent candidates were allowed to appoint 2-2 members to the polling station commissions. A total of 40 704 delegated members participated in the work of the polling station commissions, a significant increase compared to the 2018 elections, when 32 000 delegates were present in the commissions, and approximately the same number of delegated members as in the 2014 parliamentary elections. The Democratic Coalition (DK) - Jobbik Movement for Hungary (Jobbik) - Momentum Movement - Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) - LMP Green Party of Hungary - Dialogue for Hungary Party (Párbeszéd) delegated 19 575 members, while Fidesz Hungarian Civic Alliance - Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) delegated 17 787, the MKKP delegated 2 165, Mi Hazánk delegated 948, the NÉP delegated 52, and lastly, Megoldás Movement delegated 42 people. Of the national minority self-governments, the National Self-Government of Hungarian Germans made the most use of the opportunity to delegate, appointing 10 members to the election commission. On the basis of the foregoing, it can be concluded that the nominating bodies exercised their important right to monitor the implementation of the election day tasks and to participate in ensuring the fairness and legality of the elections, in enforcing impartiality and, if necessary, in restoring the legal order of the elections. A new phenomenon was that in many cases delegates came to the polling station commissions from distant municipalities, which in some places caused organisational difficulties during the swearing in of members and the training sessions.

In addition to the delegated members, nominating organisations also made use of the possibilities offered by the Ve. to delegate observers for various special tasks - monitoring of voting at foreign representations, monitoring of counting of postal votes and monitoring of the delivery of postal votes - in the framework of which the National Election Commission has registered a total of 371 observers.

## II. Information, education

### Number of voters

There were 8 215 304 voters on the electoral roll of whom 456 129 were eligible to vote by post. 233 098 were first-time voters. The largest polling station in the 11th district of Budapest was polling station No. 115 with 6 139 voters, the smallest in Debréte with 15 voters. 40 570 voters - on the basis of their nationality registration – was registered on a national minority list instead of a party list.

5 448 020 voters, an equivalent of 70.21% of those eligible to vote, cast their ballot out of the 7 759 337 voters on the electoral roll.

The National Election Office produced 16.3 million ballot papers for the parliamentary elections, taking into account the experience of previous years, and a further 8.3 million ballot papers for the national referendums.

### *Information for voters and nominating organisations*

The National Election Office - in addition to sending out the election notices required by law - has also placed great emphasis on informing voters in 2022, which was particularly justified by the joint

procedure with national referendums. More than ever before, a total of seven short films and radio spots for voters were broadcast on public media and published on the elections website. For the first time, the National Election Office supported the recruitment of members of polling stations commissions through a video and radio campaign, which was also broadcast in the social media.

The topics covered in the short films and radio spots included registration of people without a Hungarian address, postal voting, registration of nationalities in Hungary, nomination of candidates, submitting registration applications and information about election day.

The Election Information Service (VISZ) of the National Election Office has received nearly 3,500 e-mail inquiries and 12,000 phone calls since the day the election was called. Most of the enquiries were related to registration, absentee voting, mobile ballot boxes and voting at foreign representations.

In addition to publishing election booklets on the official website of the elections to assist election offices and commissions, the National Election Office has for the first time sent them to all nominating organisations, asking them to use these in their election training.

#### *Preparing election bodies*

Training of the heads and staff of election offices is a priority of the National Election Office. Five two-day training courses were held in September-October 2021, with a total of around 500 participants. The training courses provided electoral training for the heads and staff of regional electoral offices and the heads of electoral offices in parliamentary single-mandate constituencies.

After the elections were called, training sessions were organised in each county by the regional election offices and in the parliamentary single-member constituency's election offices to prepare their members. The local election offices were responsible for training the members of the polling station commissions and the registrars.

The National Election Office, following the practice of previous years, provided election guidelines to help prepare the members of the election offices and polling station commissions. In addition, the heads of election offices, their staff and the heads of the registrars were given the opportunity to acquire electoral knowledge through e-learning. In order to ensure that the work of polling stations ran as smoothly as possible, practical training materials were produced to help commission and office members working in polling stations to familiarise themselves with the protocols to be used in elections and other forms.

In addition to the above, the National Election Office has responded to all requests in Hungary and the Carpathian Basin, helping to train election office staff in more than 10 locations in Hungary, Romania and Serbia.

### **III. Conduct of the elections**

#### *Nomination of candidates and lists*

At the 2022 election of Members of Parliament, the election offices of the single-member constituencies issued almost 200,000 recommendation forms to a total of 1,086 voters, and after the announcement of the candidates - within the 3 days available to them - they recorded more than 66,000 recommendation forms.

Of the voters registered as candidates, 671 candidates for single-member constituencies were registered by the competent election commissions, while 106 candidates were refused registration. For comparison, it is worth noting that in the 2018 general election of Members of Parliament, 1,547 single-member

constituency candidates were registered. 55 nominating organisations were registered as candidates (43 parties and 12 national minority self-governments), while the National Election Commission rejected the registration of 7 nominating organisations. Of the registered candidates, 8 withdrew, and 1 withdrew with such short notice before the start of voting that the ballot papers could not be re-produced, so the name of this candidate was redrawn on the ballot paper by the election bodies. Of the 7 national party lists notified, 6 met the conditions for inclusion on the list and were included on the the ballot paper, compared to 23 in 2018.

Out of the 13 national minority self-governments, 12 had national minority lists. Based on the amendment to Act CLXXIX of 2011 on the Rights of Nationalities, which entered into force on 26 June 2021, the rules for establishing the list have changed: a final decision of the general assembly of the national minority self-government in the country, taken by 31 January 2022 at the latest, was required for the establishment of the national minority list. The National Roma Self-Government had not decided on the establishment of a national minority list by this deadline, and therefore no national Roma list could be notified and registered. The national minority list of the National Self-Government of the Hungarian Germans won a preferential mandate.

#### *Absentee voting*

Voters who wished to vote in Hungary on polling day but were not at their place of residence were entitled to vote by absentee voting.

The 2021 amendment to the Ve. provided the opportunity for election bodies to implement appropriate organisational measures to avoid voters queuing up to vote by absentee voting. As a result, for the first time in a long time there were no significant queues. In total, 157 551 voters took advantage of the possibility to re-register, compared to 200 041 in 2018.

The National Election Office did not receive any complaints from voters about the shift of the deadline for absentee voting from the fourth day before the vote to the ninth day. The process of absentee voting went smoothly.

#### *Voting at foreign representations*

On election day, Hungarian citizens having a Hungarian address but residing abroad had the opportunity to vote at a foreign representation. A total of 65 480 voters applied to be registered at a representation abroad, of whom 57 627 took part in the election, an increase of more than 10% compared to four years ago. Turnout was 100% in 19 representations, and overall 88% of voters on the electoral roll voted. In 2022, voters were able to cast their vote in 146 representations, up from 118 in 2018. This is almost a quarter more than the number of polling stations available for the last parliamentary elections. The most significant of the new locations are Luxembourg, Innsbruck, Strasbourg, Geneva, Malaga, Nuremberg and Houston. In these polling stations alone, nearly 5,000 people were registered.

The highest number of voters again this year was in London, with a total of 8 138 voters. Many people also asked to be registered in Germany, where a total of nearly 15,000 voters in the five cities concerned (Munich, Stuttgart, Berlin, Düsseldorf, Nuremberg) have indicated their intention to participate. The number of voters exceeded 1000 in 18 representations abroad.

The successful conduct of the voting at foreign representations as described above is particularly noteworthy in light of the fact that both the local epidemiological regulations of the coronavirus epidemic and the war in Ukraine posed serious organisational and logistical difficulties for the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the National Election Office. After the evacuation of the Embassy of Hungary in Kyiv, it was possible to ensure that the affected voters had the opportunity to vote in the city of Lviv. The coronavirus pandemic has forced the electoral authorities to adapt continuously. For all representations, it was necessary to monitor the current epidemiological situation in the host country in order to ensure that the necessary technical equipment for the electoral process

could be delivered on time and in compliance with the required quarantine obligations. In this respect, the main challenge was faced by the Chinese missions abroad, where the essential supplies for the elections had to be delivered more than 3 weeks before the elections. The National Election Office delivered the electoral equipment to all locations on time and in full, but in Shanghai, a curfew from 9 March 2022 to deal with the coronavirus pandemic made voting impossible.

#### *Voting of citizens without residence in Hungary*

It was the third time since the entry into force of our Fundamental Law that our fellow citizens who do not have a Hungarian address could also exercise their right to vote in parliamentary elections. A total of 568 002 applications for entry in the central electoral roll were submitted to the National Election Office by voters without a Hungarian address. Since the 2018 parliamentary elections, 102 282 applications for registration have been received. Most of them provided notification addresses in Romania and Serbia, but a significant number also requested approval of their application by e-mail. They cannot be clearly attributed to a particular country. After the requests have been processed, there were 456 129 voters on the register of postal voters. The postal voting package was returned to the National Election Office by 318 083 voters, almost 72% of those on the postal voters' register. 268 766 postal votes were returned in compliance with the legal requirements, i.e. 84.5% of the total number of postal votes returned were valid.

#### *Securing equal opportunities in elections*

The Ve. provides several possibilities for voters with disabilities to request assistance in exercising their right to vote. A total of 302 visually impaired people requested Braille voting notices and 226 requested Braille ballot paper templates for voting. A total of 24 690 voters have been served with the simplified voting information leaflet. 1 374 voters requested to vote in an accessible polling station.

A total of 7 255 polling stations -70 % of all polling stations - were accessible.

#### *Information Technology*

The infrastructure procurement launched by the National Election Office has renewed the server layer running the election systems. The new servers and network devices provided real redundancy. Functional tests of the applications and load and redundancy tests on the devices were continuously carried out in the pre-election period. Based on previous experience, the website, which provides information to voters, has been upgraded with the introduction of new technology. The concept consists of publishing the data directly related to the elections using a robust, static, heavy-duty system, in addition to the previous dynamic service portal. The new site displayed data generated during the electoral process, in particular the nominating organisations, candidates and results, from the moment the election was called. Thanks to the technology, the system was able to handle 200,000 requests per second, and the new site can handle 2.5 million simultaneous enquiries. However, the actual maximum load was lower than planned, with a total of around 1 million real users - simultaneous connections - were registered on the site.

As a preventive measure against the misuse of recommendations, the National Election Office developed the "Who did I recommend?" service, which allowed voters to find out - after electronic identification - whether a recommendation was submitted in their name for any candidate anywhere in the country. More than 130,000 queries were made using this service, and the number of complaints received by election offices suspecting abuse was less than 100. The National Election Office has reported all suspicious cases or asked the relevant election office to report them to the investigating authority. In order to improve the efficiency of the administration, the service for submitting applications to the polling station has also been renewed in the Personalised Administration Platform. With the support of this application, more than 300,000 voters have successfully submitted electronic applications to electoral offices.

The security of electronic information systems is a priority and the National Election Office operates state-of-the-art security systems that go beyond the requirements of the legislation. The electronic information systems have, inter alia, authenticated logging, continuous security log analysis, DDOS protection on public interfaces, malware protection, endpoint protection and network traffic analysis, and are subject to regular security tests.

In addition to the continuous and high availability, the so-called Election Information Security Operations Centre (hereinafter: NVI-SOC) was also in operation, whose tasks were

- the continuous detection, monitoring and analysis of security alerts from the different protection solutions,
- managing and investigating IT security incidents,
- assessing current threat information and attack trends, and
- cooperation with the national security operations centres and the organisation responsible for cyber defence.

The National Election Office successfully countered the attacks detected during the election period through automated security solutions and in cooperation with the operators in the framework of the NVI-SOC, and managed security incidents effectively.

A results data monitoring system was also in place, which, following the complete visual recording of the polling station minutes, checked the results in an independent IT system, comparing the data from the authentic paper minutes, which formed the basis for the legal result, with the data stored in the IT system. The scanned images of the polling station minutes were then published on the website. The National Election Office, taking into account the demand experienced in previous years, has continuously published on its portal the data of public interest in a format that can be further processed, in particular the polling district files, the descriptive data of polling districts and the files of the polling district results minutes.

In addition to the above, from the beginning of December 2021, the National Election Office published the number of voters by constituency and by municipality on a weekly basis. From these statistics, it is clear that there were no significant changes between the time of the call and the closing of the register.

#### **IV. Financial management data**

The total budget for the elections was HUF 20 726.5 million. Of this amount, HUF 11 655.4 million was allocated to the National Election Office's central election-related expenditure (IT, printing and postal costs). To cover expenditure on local and regional electoral tasks, HUF 5 446.3 million in budget support was pre-allocated to electoral bodies. In addition to the budgetary resources allocated to the electoral bodies, a further HUF 2 874.8 million is available to cover additional support needs (e.g. purchase of polling booths, recruitment of additional commission members and registrars, etc.). The election budget for the conduct of voting at foreign representations included a budget of HUF 750 million, of which the National Election Office transferred an allocation of HUF 718.1 million to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade under a budgetary agreement.

In view of the increased workload due to the joint procedure of the election of Members of Parliament and the national referendum, the legislator significantly increased the amount of the personal allowances (e.g. the honorarium of the elected members of the polling station commissions from HUF 35000 to HUF 50,000).

The regional election bodies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade must account to the National Election Office for the subsidy or appropriation provided for the election by 23 May 2022. The total cost of the election can then be determined.

## **V. Experiences, legislative proposals**

### *Delimitation of constituencies*

I would like to inform the Honourable Parliament that the number of voters in seven single mandate constituencies (Pest County 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11) exceeded the national average by more than 20% on election day, therefore, pursuant to paragraph (6) of Article 4 of Act CCIII of 2011 on the Election of Members of Parliament, by the end of 2025 at the latest a change in the constituency delimitation is required.

### *Postal voting*

The problem with postal voting is that there is a very high number of voters who incorrectly pack the ballot paper and the identification form in the two envelopes. More than 10% of the ballot papers received were invalid in 2022 because of this. I therefore believe it is important to examine how the double envelope solution can be replaced by a procedure that, while ensuring the secrecy of the ballot and excluding unauthorised voting, leaves less room for error.

### *Absentee voting*

In 2018, there was still a serious problem with absentee voters queuing for several hours. Based on the experience, the National Election Office proposed shortening the deadline for re-registration, which was adopted by the Parliament. In addition, in December 2021, the staff of the National Election Office visited two rural municipalities and seven districts in Budapest, where they held a site visit with the head of the local election office to discuss how best to organise the operation of the polling stations concerned. Thanks to these measures, it was possible to avoid a long wait at the polling stations affected by absentee voting, despite the fact that the number of said voters was close to 158 000.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The elections were conducted without disruptions, without long queues, with continuous information on the Internet, in accordance with the Fundamental Law of Hungary and the legislation.

I would like to express my appreciation to the tens of thousands of people who participated in the preparation, organisation and conduct of the elections: civil servants, government officials, elected and appointed members of all election offices and election commissions, law enforcement officials, IT service providers, all partners of the National Election Office, and the press, who also contributed to the successful conduct of the elections.

I ask the Honourable Parliament to kindly accept my report.