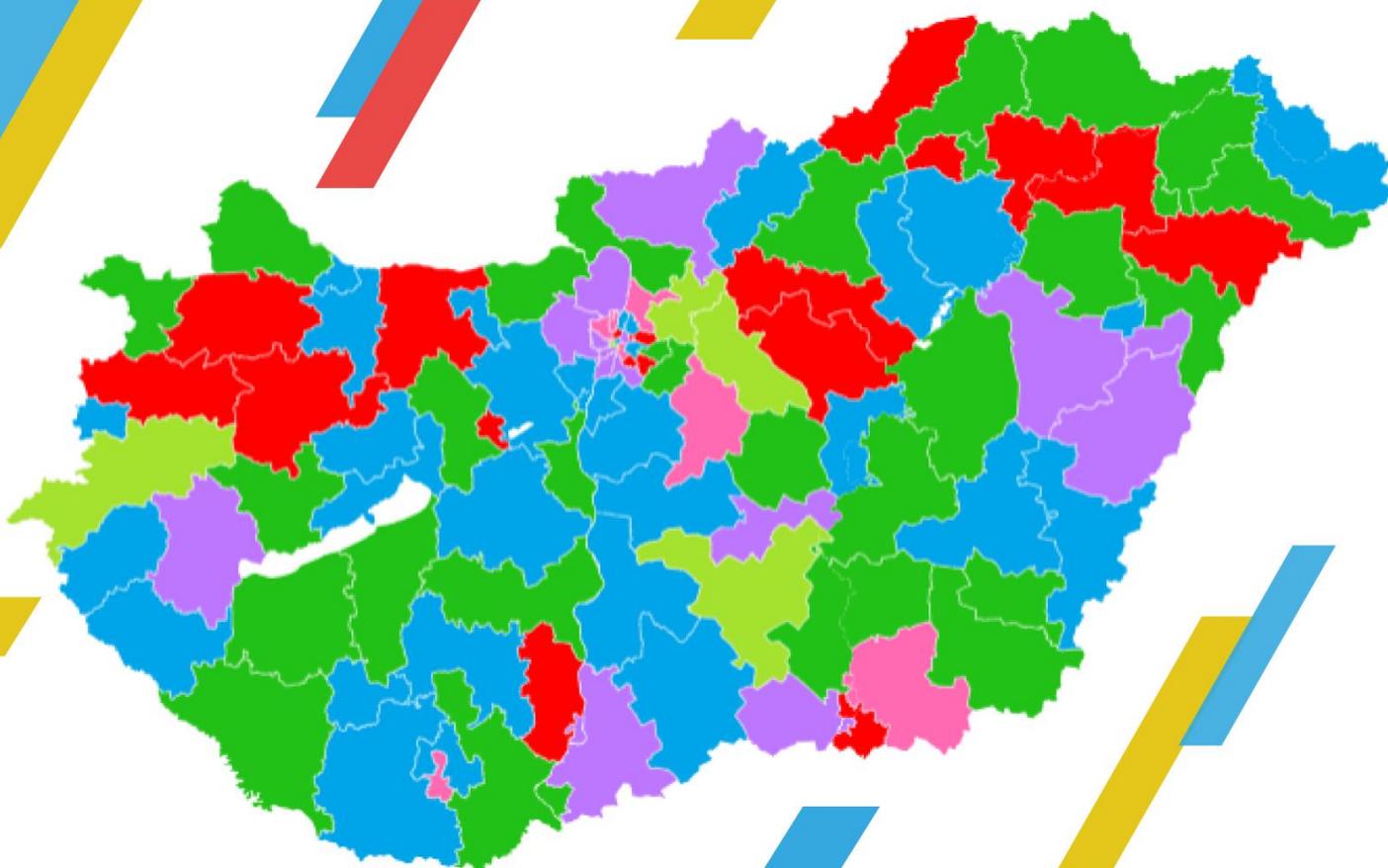


MULTICOLOURED OPPOSITION

AN ANALYSIS OF THE OPPOSITION PRIMARY'S FIRST ROUND



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Executive Summary

The [previous analysis](#) of 21 Research Center examined the socio-political background of the candidates running in the opposition primary, the balance of power between the opposition parties, and the expected outcome of the electoral districts' struggles. The present analysis takes stock of the primary's winners on the basis of similar criteria and offers a glimpse at the primary's second round.

The primary achieved its most important goals: in every single-member constituency, and - after the second round - on the level of prime minister candidates as well, there will only be one challenger competing against the Fidesz candidate. Despite the inevitable friction, no candidate has questioned the rules of the game, and for now it seems that none of the losing candidates will run in the general elections. The visibility of the opposition has increased significantly in the process - with the prime minister candidates' debates attracting more than a million views -, and 634 thousand voters were successfully mobilised in nearly 800 settlements. However, participation in townships lagged far behind those in the capital, both in terms of absolute numbers and in the proportion of opposition voters. The primary also served as a selector, with the voters screening out participants with scandals. Lastly, it was proven that the competition was free for many incumbent candidates who previously seemed to have a clear chance failed (e.g. Csaba Tóth, Gyula Molnár, Sándor Burány).

Most constituencies were won by the Democratic Coalition (DK) and Jobbik (32 and 29 respectively), with their dominance being especially significant in battlegrounds and electoral districts projected to go for Fidesz-KDNP - they won more than half of these districts. For this reason, these parties could benefit the most from next year's victory of the opposition. Jobbik, however, could only secure 3 electoral districts projected to go for the opposition, and in this respect, Momentum, MSZP and even Párbeszéd overtook the party. The overall picture is nevertheless balanced: even the party winning the most constituencies, DK, only won one-third of the districts, regardless of their category. As our previous analysis has shown, there is a great chance that in the event of the opposition's victory even LMP, the party with the least number of candidates, will be indispensable for maintaining a parliamentary majority. Even so, it is observed overall that DK made the most progress amongst opposition parties as Ferenc Gyurcsány's party was successful both on a ministerial and on a constituency candidate level. The other parties performed well in only one of these two races.

Among all candidates, the proportion of those with no political experience and non-partisans was quite high, but among all winners the proportion of party members or even party elites increased significantly. The proportion of women has also decreased amongst the chosen candidates, and a significant number of them will run in electoral districts projected to go for Fidesz-KDNP next year, so their proportion will be even lower.

The outcome of the second round is difficult to predict without a definite knowledge of the number of the prime minister candidates. If all three candidates run, Dobrev will likely win with an overwhelming majority. Pursuant to the previous consensus of analysts, the alliance of Gergely Karácsony and Péter Márki-Zay (supplemented by the supporters of András Fekete-Győr) has had far better chances since their total number of votes in the first round was significantly higher than that of Klára Dobrev. However, the second round also revolves around the issue of mobilisation, in which DK has already been proven to be the best in the first round. In addition, it is difficult to estimate the impact of the delayed negotiations between Karácsony and Márki-Zay but it will not be easy to bring a sufficient number of the receding candidates' supporters to the polls. If one of the mayors stepped down in favour of the other, we estimate that about half a million second round voters would be necessary for their victory.

An Overview of the Primary's Goals

The opposition could expect their primary to achieve 5 goals:

1. The process shall result in one candidate per district, with the candidate representing the whole opposition against Fidesz

The only way for this goal not to be achieved is if candidates refuse to accept the rules of the game or refuse to declare their defeat, and end up running in the general election. We are not aware of such a case, so the primary has fully achieved its main purpose.

2. The maintenance of the opposition's unity and cohesion

There was plenty of friction prior to the first round, but most of it focused on the electoral district candidates. Prior to the second round, however, hostility within the opposition increased - particularly as a result of the approach of Gergely Karácsony and Péter Márki-Zay -, and the targets of such hostilities are now predominantly the prime minister candidates². Nonetheless, at the time of writing, it seems unlikely that this resulted in an irreversible alienation or that the institution of the primary would be questioned. It is important to note though that there is a limit which the participants of this primary cannot cross if they want their supporters to line up behind the other, winning party's candidate. Crossing this border would be a bigger issue than the victory of the less integrative candidate.

3. The involvement of opposition voters

634 thousand participants - i.e. 8% of the electorate, and a third/fourth of all opposition voters - is not a low number, even from an [international perspective](#). This number is particularly high given that this was the first national primary organised in Hungary. It is also noteworthy that more than 100 thousand people could vote online.

² An illustrative example is the statement of Csaba Czeplédy (DK): "The extremely big faced Karácsony, who spent the most money on the campaign, and who wouldn't be able to find Szombathely without a driver, was disgracefully defeated in the countryside."

Another positive aspect for the opposition was that all 106 electoral districts were involved in the primary, with the overwhelming majority having substantive competition. The opposition was able to physically appear in nearly 800 settlements - among these were probably hundreds where this was the first time since 2010. However, the territorial pattern of participation was already somewhat uneven, with almost one in two opposition voters casting a vote in some district of the capital (up to more than 10,000 participants). Meanwhile, in the smaller settlements consisting of government majority, there were much fewer participants, not only in absolute numbers (2-3 thousands), but also in the proportion of opposition voters (less than 20%). The opposition made a lot of progress in their rural presence, but this pattern illustrates that they still have a long way to go for the victory.

4. Increasing the opposition's visibility and the candidates' publicity

This goal has certainly been achieved as media not financially dependent on the government have reported extensively on the events, and the millions of views on the debates of the prime minister candidates can also be considered a success. Even the publicity of András Fekete-Győr, who had no chances of winning, increased significantly. Local candidates have also enjoyed unprecedented visibility and gained some valuable experience during the debates and the campaign. Although their publicity remained low in most electoral districts, many voters still came across their name and without the primary, they would definitely be worse off in this respect.

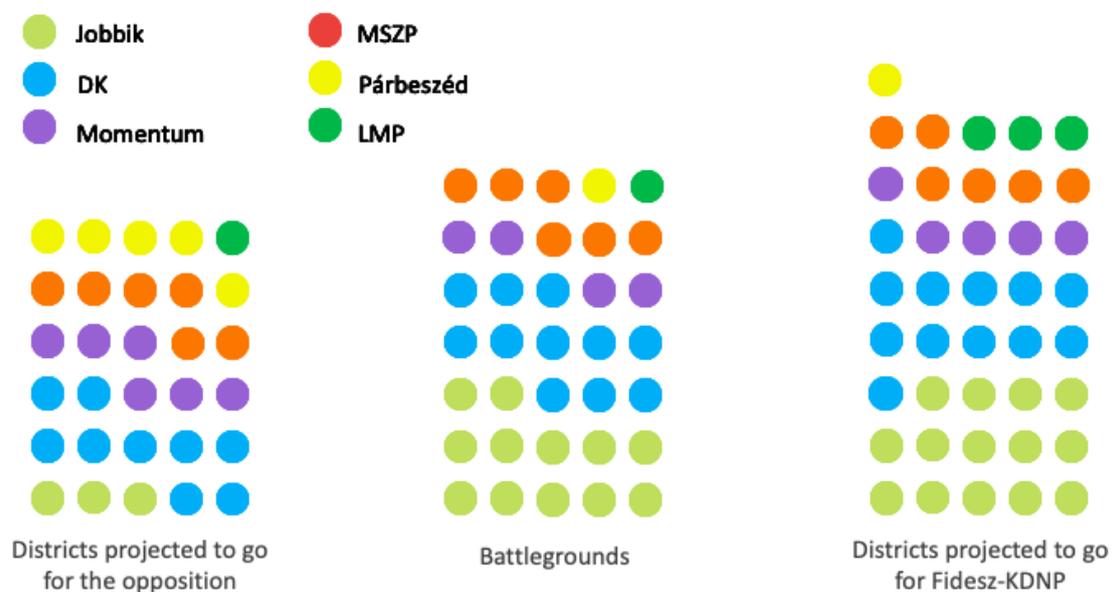
5. Healthy selection of candidates, so the process results in the victory of the candidate which is most likely to defeat Fidesz

Albeit it is difficult to estimate who is the most likely to defeat Fidesz, it was most certainly to the benefit of the whole opposition that several politicians - who were perceived as strong previously - were defeated after their affairs, actions and scandals have been all over the media. Examples include Judit Ráczné Földi (DK), Péter Barnabás Farkas (Jobbik), Zsolt Süle (Jobbik), József Király (MSZP), Csaba Tóth (MSZP) and Balázs Nemes (Momentum). Each of these politicians would have been easier for the Fidesz to attack than their eventually winning opponents.

Results of the Opposition Primary

Adhering to the typology employed in the previous analysis of 21 Research Center³, we illustrate the number of electoral districts won by each party.

Graph 1. The number of electoral districts won by each party (one dot represents one winning local candidate)



The Democratic Coalition won in most electoral districts of the primary, meaning that in 30% of these districts a candidate of DK will compete against the candidate of Fidesz in '22. Even if we only look at the district projected to go for the opposition, DK has won most districts.

Examining the results of all 106 constituencies, Jobbik has performed well in the primary, and, similarly to DK, their local candidates won almost 30% of all districts. However, out of 29 winning candidates only 3 ran in districts projected to go for the opposition, and 12 in battleground districts. Hence, in most battleground districts it will be the candidates of Jobbik challenging Fidesz in the general election.

MSZP won in 17% of all districts, so its candidates will face Fidesz's candidates in every fifth winnable district.

³ The political orientation of the different districts is categorized on the basis of the results of the 2019 European Parliament and local government elections, opinion polls and the publicity and media coverage of the candidates. A district can be projected to go for the opposition, be a battleground or go for Fidesz-KDNP.

Momentum can run the fourth most candidates - after DK, Jobbik and MSZP. Out of its 15 winning candidates, 6 will run as the candidate of the united opposition in districts projected to go for the opposition, 4 in battlegrounds, and 5 in those projected to go for Fidesz.

Párbeszéd won in 7% of all districts, even though opinion polls show that their national support is hovering around 1%. Most of the districts won are those projected to go for the opposition, so there is a good chance that these victories will convert to real mandates in 2022. Even if none of their candidates gets into the Parliament based on the votes cast on party lists, they could still form their independent faction with the 5 most likely winning local candidates.

Despite its low national support, LMP was able to win 4 districts. However, only 1 of these seems likely to go for the opposition in '22 (making Antal Csárdi their only surely winning candidate). Another candidate of LMP won in a battleground district, and the other three won in those projected to go for Fidesz-KDNP.

In essence, DK and Jobbik won the most constituencies, while Párbeszéd and LMP won the least. The distribution of opposition districts is even more balanced, with Jobbik being much weaker here, but almost all districts won by Párbeszéd are this type. As discussed in our previous analysis, Jobbik and DK will challenge Fidesz in most battleground districts. Hence, they would win the most with an overwhelming opposition success, but Jobbik is the least insured.

Single-district Candidates

Gender distribution: With the exception of DK (34% of winners, 32% of all candidates) and LMP (40% of winners, 22% of all candidates), it is observed that the proportion of women winning districts is less than the proportion of women running for districts. The real chances of female candidates is certainly determined by the category of their electoral district (i.e. whether they are districts projected to go for opposition, be battlegrounds, or go for Fidesz-KDNP). For several women were chosen to run in "unbeatable" pro-government districts, the proportion of female winning candidates can further decrease during next year's general elections.

Age distribution: With the exception of LMP, the average age of the winning candidates of each party is lower than or equal to the average age of all candidates. The biggest discrepancy is found in Párbeszéd, where the average age of the winners is 6 years lower than the age of all candidates, while at LMP they are on average 5 years older. The youngest winning candidates of the primary is Miklós Hajnal (Momentum) and Patrik Schwarcz-Kiefer (Jobbik) - both 26 years old -, while the oldest winner is Ottó Kertész (MSZP).

Political role: Our study found that previous political role could serve as an advantage for the candidates, in particular for those who participated in parliamentary representation and party presidency membership. The proportion of those with experience in either of these roles is higher amongst the winning candidates of Párbeszéd, Momentum, Jobbik, MSZP and LMP than

amongst all candidates of said parties. For instance, only 5% of all candidates of Momentum held similar positions before, but 53% of their winning candidates came out of candidates with previous political roles. We can thus deduce that the greater visibility derived from their positions may have improved their chances. The findings of our previous study are, however, perhaps even more important: these candidates enjoyed a significant proportion of the primary's resources, which further increased their advantages in mobilisation. In addition, it is noteworthy that the more well-known candidates of the opposition parties ran in districts which are projected to go for the opposition, thereby increasing their chances of winning (see, for example: Antal Csárdi (LMP) or Szabó Tímea (Párbeszéd)). DK is an exception to this overall trend, as the difference between their winning candidates and all candidates holding political positions previously is only 2%. Outstanding amongst the other opposition parties, 40% of their winning candidates have not held a political position before running. These numbers can be explained by DK's leading role in the primary for it may be due to the successful nationwide campaign and mobilization that their previously unknown political candidates had also won.

Independent candidates: An estimated one-fifth (17%) of the winning candidates is independent or civilian candidates, which is very close to the proportion amongst all candidates (20%). The party winning with the most independent candidates is Momentum, doubling the proportion of independent representatives compared to all of its candidates (33% from 16%), which is mainly thanks to the more well-known candidates on a national level, i.e. Bernadett Szél or Ákos Hadházy.

Local attachment: Nearly three-quarters of all winners own residential property within their electoral district. As a general trend, it can be observed that the proportion of those owning property within their district is higher amongst the winners than amongst all candidates, which could signal that local attachment (i.e. the possession of residential property in the voting district) contributes to the candidates' success.

Interpreting the Results

Jobbik: The biggest loss suffered by Jobbik during the primary election is the failure of Péter Jakab to win a podium spot in the prime ministers candidates' competition, with Péter Márki-Zay overtaking him. After DK, Jobbik managed to win the second highest number of constituencies, which aligns with the pre-primary expectations. However, in terms of absolute numbers, they scored five districts less than we estimated in our previous analysis. It should also be highlighted that few of these districts are actually winnable in the general election. As a result of their alliance with DK, Jobbik focused its resources on campaigning in the countryside and neglected its campaign in Budapest. The party's image could have been affected at the last minute by their Ózd candidate's scandal.

MSZP-P: Among the prime minister candidates, Karácsony started from the most favourable position, but he was unable to take advantage of this during the campaign. While he was

expected to finish first in the beginning of the campaign, he finished second after Klára Dobrev, lagging behind with almost 8%. MSZP is nevertheless the party winning the third most electoral districts, allowing them to run with 18 candidates in the '22 elections. Párbeszéd was able to win in many constituencies relative to its low national support. Many incumbent and well-known candidates were "lost" (i.e. László szakács, Gyula Molnár, Imre Komjáthi), with the most important one perhaps being Csaba Tóth (MSZP) for his knockout defeat is a significant symbolic loss to MSZP. However, it shall be noted that despite the low social support for MSZP-Párbeszéd (supplemented by LMP), it won almost as many electoral districts as Jobbik and DK, and they also have a real chance of winning the competition of the prime minister candidates.

LMP: Similarly to Párbeszéd, LMP won more constituencies than would follow from its party support. However, the defeat of Ungár against Czeglédy is an issue for the party, but the end result was quite close. They won one district projected to go for the opposition, Budapest 1., which was won by Antal Csárdi.

DK: The biggest winner of the opposition primary is DK. Dobrev won an overwhelming victory in the first round of the competition of the prime minister candidates, which can be attributed to the party's successful mobilisation and to Dobrev's touring of the countryside. It could also play a role in her success that Fidesz' smear campaign targeted Karácsony instead of Dobrev, tying him to Gyurcsány. The party also achieved success on the level of constituencies as they won the most districts out of all opposition parties. If Dobrev wins, they can continue on their path towards opposition dominance. However, this goal of theirs still hasn't been achieved as mentioned earlier.

Momentum: The biggest loss suffered by Momentum is clearly the performance of Fekete-Győr in the competition of prime minister candidates, where he finished last with 3,4%. The party has had many successes in local constituencies, winning a total of 15 districts, with an overwhelming majority in several places - i.e. Anna Orosz in Újbuda, or Ákos Hadházy in Zuglói. The latter could have improved the party's overall perception since, with its persistent campaign, Momentum managed to get the other opposition parties to discontinue their support of Csaba Tóth, whose alleged corruption cases were all over the media. Another positive development for Momentum concerns their ability to win the primary election against three well-known DK politicians in Buda.

Márki-Zay Péter: Márki-Zay finished third in the competition of the prime minister candidates, lagging behind Karácsony by only 7% and taking over Péter Jakab with more than 7%. The televised debates were of great importance for him as without the support of a party, he had a competitive disadvantage with respect to mobilisation, publicity and resources compared to the other candidates. Márki-Zay is one of the winners of the primary elections for he could "get on the map" without a party and its infrastructure supporting him. At the same time, him lacking the support of opposition parties could also serve as an advantage because it might have increased the voters' sympathy towards him, resulting in protest votes. He also deliberately built on this image, for example by regularly criticizing the opposition parties. On the level of local candidates, many winners were backed by the Mindenki Magyarországa Mozgalom (MMM), but the question remains as to whether these candidates are loyal to the movement or rather the faction hosting them (primarily Jobbik).

Prime Minister Candidates

The main focus of our previous and our present analysis is the struggles of the electoral districts, but the second round of the primary election will concentrate fully on prime minister candidates. The majority of analysts agreed that, if an alliance was established between Péter Márki-Zay and Gergely Karácsony, this alliance (supplemented by the supporters of András Fekete-Győr) would result in a majority against Klára Dobrev. However, the delayed negotiations between the two mayors worsened their positions. In addition, it shall be added that the second round will also revolve chiefly around mobilisation - a field in which the organisation of DK should not be underestimated. The two mayors would have had a hard time defeating Dobrev even if they agreed right away.

- At least as many supporters of Dobrev will probably vote this time as in the first round.
- The infrastructure behind Karácsony is less effective in terms of mobilisation, so it is questionable whether he can mobilise his supporters to vote for him again. Many voters are not even aware of the second round. Even though there are many enthusiastic activists behind the mayor of Hódmezővásárhely, due to their lack of resources we would not even consider them an infrastructure.
- While prior to the first round all opposition parties spun at maximum speed, with hundreds of activists, street campaigning, flyers, and social media advertisements, prior to the second round we did not experience a similar volume of publicly perceivable campaign activity.
- If Márki-Zay resigns to support Karácsony, some of his voters will most certainly vote for Karácsony, but the mayor of Hódmezővásárhely also received a lot of protest votes, which were partly in protest of Karácsony too, not only Dobrev. If Karácsony resigns in favour of Márki-Zay, then a section of the left-wing, mostly the elderly, may vote for Dobrev rather than Márki-Zay.
- Based on opinion polls, it is difficult to predict intent to participate and estimate voters' development of secondary preferences. The opinion polls found in the media are not suitable for this, and political decisions should not be based exclusively on studies anyways. It is nevertheless certain that the negotiations between the two mayors are taking too long, with each day without an answer increasing the chances of Dobrev.
- It is our estimation that DK will be able to mobilise the 220 thousand people behind Dobrev again, or even increase this base minimally. It, however, does not seem likely that this will result in a substantial increase. The mobilizing power of the two mayors' "alliance" is more difficult to estimate. Nonetheless, having more than half a million people vote in the second round would benefit this potential alliance, while less voters could help Dobrev. Of course, this is only relevant if one of the mayors steps down.
- If none of the mayors decide to step down, they will have a minimal chance of defeating Dobrev. In this scenario, Dobrev will likely win with an even greater advantage.