



# Weekly Briefing

**Hungary Political briefing:**  
**Hungarian Domestic Politics in the wake of the Sargentini-Report's**  
**Adoption**  
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## **Hungarian Domestic Politics in the wake of the Sargentini-Report's Adoption**

Recently the Hungarian politics has been dominated by the adoption of the Sargentini-report and its interpretation played a crucial role in the different party campaigns and initiatives, therefore this briefing looks at the events of the Hungarian politics after the report's adaption, but it also investigates survey data from September 2018. Based on the press reactions and some preliminary data, the Fidesz-KDNP is the political party who could gain most from the report's adoption and the opposition parties seem to be very inefficient in the implementation of their political strategies. The statement can be corroborated by the results of the interim elections and the latest survey data.

### **1. The outcome of the interim elections**

In the 15<sup>th</sup> district of Budapest, interim election was held the 30<sup>th</sup> September of 2018. The candidate of the left coalition won the election and became the major of the district. The coalition was formed by the MSZP, DK and the MLP. Despite this victory, there are two elements that shadow the picture significantly;

— firstly, the candidate of the left-coalition could win by 67 votes, showing that this was a very narrow victory;

— secondly, the candidate of the DK easily could win in the same constituency in the April 2018 parliamentary elections.

In our opinion, this change vividly demonstrates the worsening position of the opposition parties. Interim election was also held in another district of Budapest, the 10<sup>th</sup> district, where the candidate of the Fidesz-KDNP could come through and receive most votes. (53.5 percent) This candidate of the government party was running against a candidate of the Momentum (44.5 percent) who was

supported by almost all opposition parties. (Only the Workers' Party nominated its own candidate, who received 2 percent of the votes.)

Generally, it can be stated that the political support of political parties did not change significantly in the last weeks. In our opinion, significant changes in political support will be showed in October when effects of the Sargentini-report' can be quantified by data as well.

## **2. Survey data**

The small changes observed in the survey data suggest that the Fidesz-KDNP will capitalize most from this situation politically. The results of the latest pollster came from the Publicus Institute. The data were collected in the second and third week of September (September 12-19, 2018) and involved 1001 persons.

The trend based on these data is the growing hesitation of more and more former Jobbik supporters regarding their choice; the public support of the party dropped by 2 percentage points compared to the former survey data. At the same time, the number of those who are unsure of their party preferences, or don't want to answer to the questions, did shrink by 1 percentage point. The Fidesz-KDNP, the DK and the LMP were the parties in September, that took advantage of this situation, and attracted more supporters. All three parties could increase their share by 1 percent.

By and large it can be said, that the political power relations did not change significantly in September 2018. Based on the survey results regarding the part of the entire population that is eligible to vote, the Fidesz-KDNP dominates the political arena with its 26 percent, while the MSZP-Párbeszéd and the Jobbik would receive 9-9 percent of the votes. Neither the DK (3 percent) nor the LMP (3 percent) would gain the votes necessary to qualify for the Parliament if elections were held. In the group of the likely voters, a similar picture has emerged. The Fidesz-KDNP would receive the support of 53 percent of the

likely voters, while the MSZP-Párbeszéd and the Jobbik are the two strongest opposition forces with 15 and 14 percent. Based on this set of data, the DK and the LMP are on the threshold to qualify for the Parliament with their 5-5 percent of support.

If taking other surveys into account, power relations in the Hungarian politics are quite the same. In the following table, we only collected the support of the government party to show that polling institutes in Hungary very much agree on the strong support of the Fidesz-KDNP, in particular in the group of likely voters. It must be underlined, that this set of the date is closest to the results of a parliamentary elections.

Political support of the Fidesz-KDNP in September, August 2018			
	Entire population (eligible to vote)	Likely voters	Survey data are from
Publicus Institute	26 percent	54 percent	September, 2018
Századvég	36 percent	53 percent	September, 2018
Nézőpont	41 percent	54 percent	August, 2018
ZRI-Závecz	35 percent	56 percent	August, 2018

### **3. Growing political maneuverings room for Fidesz-KDNP**

It is very obvious that given this background (the results of the pollsters, and the interim elections) the scale and the scope of the room for maneuvering is available to the Fidesz-KDNP necessary to implement and carry out new policies and influence the topics of the political debates. The Sargentini report and its adoption by the European Parliament is a good occasion to steer the Hungarian political debate to topics that until now only the Fidesz-KDNP could capitalize on. The two DK members of the European Parliament voted in favor of the report's adoption, which can be easily taken by the Fidesz-KDNP as an example for the migration friendly policy of the DK.

This week, Mr. Simon, Fidesz-KDNP member of the Hungarian Parliament said in an interview, that the leader of the DK would like to make Hungary a migration target. He also added “Nobody can have doubts on it, Ferencz Gyurcsány would dismantle the fences on the southern borders and allow for migration quotas from the beginning.” In our opinion, it is very likely that the Fidesz-KDNP decisively wants to stand up to the DK’s more active policy, that started after the adoption of the report. The DK, the MSZP-Párbeszéd organized a demonstration in front of the Hungarian Parliament the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, 2018. Although there were only a few thousands gathering to the demonstration, the DK let the public know that it aims to organize a series of demonstrations. Later they specified their initiative and said that every day after 5 pm they would be waiting for those who wanted to topple the Orban-regime and whom the father country is important. Since then, this initiative collapsed showing the weak support of the opposition parties.

The Fidesz-KDNP aims to adopt a draft-resolution in the Hungarian Parliament that rejects the calumnies drafted in the Sargentini report. Clearly, the process of adaption would allow for the Fidesz-KDNP to profile itself as anti-migration party again, and more importantly it could attack parties that didn’t vote for the resolution.

#### **4. Side-effects of the Sargentini-report**

Even the scandals in the LMP can be linked to the adoption of the Sargentini report, though the report was only one of the triggering elements in the chain of events. The former minister president candidate of the party, Mrs. Szél left the party and the parliamentary faction as well this week. Despite the fact that the party achieved its ever best election results in April, problems started to emerge immediately after the elections. As we underlined in our earlier briefings, the Ethic Committee of the party condemned her for negotiating with other political parties without being authorized before and it banned her from party positions for three years. As a reaction she resigned from

her post as co-president of the party and fraction leader. The dispute culminated in leaving the party and the faction this week. Along with her, another LMP MEP also left the fraction, both continue as independent members of the Parliament.

Behind the personal strands of the story, it is worth underlining that her leaving the party was more about where to position the party in the political spectrum. Despite her results and her strong personal support among the voters, she did not succeed in keeping the party in the left-leaning political spectrum and profiling it as left-green party. Her political competitors in the party clearly want to create a right-leaning party which is more willing to cooperate with the Jobbik. The dividing lines also became clear when Mrs. Szél supported the adoption of the Sargentini-report while the party's leadership didn't endorse the report's adoption.

As we suggested in our former briefing on foreign affairs, everything in the Hungarian domestic politics will very likely evolve around the Sargentini report and its interpretation in the coming weeks. This is something that could be observed in the case of LMP, though only the triggering element was the question whether the party should endorse the adoption or reject it. Different political strategies of the present leadership and the former co-president, Mrs. Szél were the key elements in this story. Until now the governing party seems to be the party capitalize most on the events – as the small changes in the data show – and drive the opposition parties into a 'political corner' where again there is no much room for maneuvering left.