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Hungary

Government punished

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Since 1990 Hungary's political landscape has been marked by a perfect balance. At each election the governing parties are punished and have to give way to the opposition. The specificity of the European election of 2004 is that it did not lead to a change of government.

Amid record abstention rates the election saw a clear victory for the nationalist right of the Alliance of Young Democrats - Hungarian Civic Party (FIDESz-MPP) of former Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Resorting when necessary to naked populism, Orban waged a campaign against price rises and for an end to privatization, with an anti-European tinge.

Inside the ruling coalition the dominant post-Stalinist Socialist Party (MSzP) was punished after presiding over a monetary crisis at the beginning of the year and imposing an austerity policy which reduced still further social expenditure, while its small liberal ally, the Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz) increased its score. The small far left party, Munkáspárt (which emerged from a split in the MSzP) was unable to appear as a credible alternative to the social liberal government.

The far right Hungarian Party for Justice and Life (MIEP), which elected 14 deputies in 1998, continued its decline, which was the good news of this election.

	parliamentary 2002	European 2004	seats in EP
abstention	29.57	61.53	
Munkáspárt (MP, far left)	2.16	1.83	0
MSzP (soc dem, government)	42.05	34.30	9
SzDSz (liberal, government)	5.54	7.74	2
FIDESz-MPP (nationalist right)	41.07	47.40	12
MDF and partners (Christian Democrat)	4.65	5.33	1
MIEP (far right)	4.37	2.35	0
MNSz (far right)	-	0.66	0