

## Green Chances in the New Hungarian Parliament

by Róbert László

**The next Hungarian parliament could include two green formations, one of which, Dialogue for Hungary (PM), will surely have some members in parliament, although very much open to question is whether it will have its own parliamentary group. At the moment, it is doubtful whether the other formation, Politics Can Be Different (LMP), will surpass the election threshold, but if it does an independent parliamentary group is guaranteed.**

The Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), Together 2014 (Együtt 2014), Dialogue for Hungary, the Democratic Coalition (DK) and the Hungarian Liberal Party (MLP) will contest the forthcoming parliamentary elections – scheduled for 6 April 2014 – with a joint list and common candidates. Apart from the far-right party Jobbik, only the green party Politics Can Be Different will contest the elections independently from the ruling parties and the left-of-centre Alliance. Many smaller formations running for election stand basically no chance of overcoming the 5% parliamentary threshold.

The new electoral system benefits the relative winner even more than before, which is one of the key reasons why the divided left was forced to form an alliance. The other one is that support for Together 2014, the formation led by former Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai and reinforced by the representatives of PM who left LMP a year ago, was dangerously nearing the election threshold of 5%, while the formerly mere 1-2% support for DK rose to almost the same heights. This dynamic undermined the previous electoral agreement between the Socialists and Together 2014-PM, which envisaged the parties presenting their own candidate lists. Had the signatories adhered to the agreement, they would have run the risk of Together 2014-PM falling short of the parliamentary threshold. More saliently, leaving the Democratic Coalition out of the agreement would have seriously damaged the prospects of the common candidates presented by the Socialists and Together 2014-PM in individual districts. These two factors led to the reopening of negotiations and the quick conclusion of a new broader agreement that includes the Democratic Coalition on 14 January 2014.

The joint list managed to eliminate the risk of losing precious votes. However, it is questionable whether the broadened left-of-centre Alliance will be able to attract undecided voters dissatisfied with the government and rejecting at the same time Jobbik. The joint list includes many politicians who are potentially repulsive for this voter group. If they vote at all, undecided voters may prefer LMP or perhaps one of the underdog small parties over the Alliance. In the end, the result of the elections will be decided by these voters.

Thus, LMP – coping with internal conflicts and written off last year – could benefit from the new scenario. It might be the most logical choice between the two bigger camps for moderate and disillusioned voters – as it was in 2010. If so, surpassing the 5% election threshold seems to be a realistic prospect, which could mean obtaining 5-7 seats in the new 199-seat parliament. Although there is no chance to obtain individual mandates, a result above 5% would enable LMP to form its own parliamentary group.

It is much more difficult to predict the expected number of mandates for PM – a green left formation split off from LMP a year ago. Its chances of forming its own parliamentary group are low, since according to the new procedural rules this requires at least 5 seats if a party does not use its own party list to obtain mandates. From the joint national list of the Alliance, co-president Tímea Szabó will surely be elected, and Gábor Scheiring and Gergely Karácsony could make it too in case of a strong showing on behalf of the Alliance. The latter two will stand for election in individual districts as well – with Karácsony having better and Scheiring having worse chances of winning. Three other

PM candidates (Dávid Dorosz, Ágnes Somfai and Rebeka Szabó) have a chance of winning their individual districts. If only two of the mentioned five individual candidates win in their respective districts, PM could still hope that many of their peers high on the joint list win as well, which would in turn boost the chances of Scheiring and Karácsony securing a seat from the joint left-of-centre party list. The table below illustrates that a reasonably large number of candidates on the joint left-of-centre list will stand for election in constituencies as well, and therefore it is difficult to estimate the last place on the list that will still yield a seat. (N.B.: 106 MPs will be elected from individual districts and 93 from the party lists.) All we can say at the moment is that the most likely scenario is that PM will be forced to join Together 2014's parliamentary group after the elections.

The first 70 candidates of the left-of-centre Alliance are as follows (names of candidates standing for election in individual districts are in bold):

1	Attila Mesterházy	MSZP	36	Viktor Szigetvári	Együtt
2	Gordon Bajnai	Együtt	37	Gábor Szűcs	MSZP
3	Ferenc Gyurcsány	DK	38	<b>András Nemény</b>	MSZP
4	Gábor Fodor	MLP	39	<b>László Varju</b>	DK
5	Tímea Szabó	PM	40	<b>József Király</b>	MSZP
6	László Botka	MSZP	41	<b>András Horváth</b>	MSZP
7	József Tóbiás	MSZP	42	<b>Csaba Tóth</b>	MSZP
8	Nándor Gúr	MSZP	43	László Puch	MSZP
9	<b>Tamás Harangozó</b>	MSZP	44	<b>Zoltán Gögös</b>	MSZP
10	Zsolt Molnár	MSZP	45	<b>Péter Niedermüller</b>	DK
11	<b>Zoltán Lukács</b>	MSZP	46	<b>Ferenc Baja</b>	MSZP
12	<b>István Hiller</b>	MSZP	47	<b>Imre Iváncsik</b>	MSZP
13	<b>Ágnes Kunhalmi</b>	MSZP	48	<b>Gábor Scheiring</b>	PM
14	Árpád Velez	MSZP	49	Levente Pápa	Együtt
15	<b>László Szakács</b>	MSZP	50	<b>Ferenc Juhász</b>	MSZP
16	Péter Kónya	Együtt	51	<b>József Halmi</b>	MSZP
17	<b>Lajos Korózs</b>	MSZP	52	<b>István Nyakó</b>	MSZP
18	<b>Zsolt Legény</b>	MSZP	53	<b>Zsuzsanna Szelényi</b>	Együtt
19	Csaba Molnár	DK	54	József Gulyás	Együtt
20	<b>Ildikó Borbély Bangóné</b>	MSZP	55	<b>Gergely Karácsony</b>	PM
21	<b>László Varga</b>	MSZP	56	András Boruzs	MLP
22	<b>Bertalan Tóth</b>	MSZP	57	<b>Tamás Bauer</b>	DK
23	Márta Demeter	MSZP	58	Anett Bósz	MLP
24	<b>Gábor Harangozó</b>	MSZP	59	<b>Tamás Sós</b>	MSZP
25	<b>Anita Heringes</b>	MSZP	60	<b>Zoltán Varga</b>	MSZP
26	<b>Ágnes Vadai</b>	DK	61	<b>László Boldvai</b>	MSZP
27	<b>István Józsa</b>	MSZP	62	<b>Ildikó Juhász Kathiné</b>	MSZP
28	István Tukacs	MSZP	63	Csaba Fodor	MSZP
29	Gergely Bárándy	MSZP	64	<b>Eszter Móricz</b>	MSZP
30	László Teleki	MSZP	65	<b>Diána Laskovics</b>	MSZP
31	<b>Tímea Müller Szabóné</b>	MSZP	66	Mária Magdolna Dániel	MSZP
32	<b>László Kránitz</b>	MSZP	67	<b>Szabolcs Kerék-Bárczy</b>	DK
33	<b>Zsolt Török</b>	MSZP	68	Sándor Székely	Együtt
34	<b>Roland Márton</b>	MSZP	69	<b>Imre Szekeres</b>	MSZP

The first 10 candidates of the LMP party list are as follows (all of them are standing for election in individual districts):

1	András Schiffer
2	Bernadett Szél
3	István Ikotity
4	Róbert Benedek Sallai
5	Erzsébet Schmuck
6	László Lóránt Keresztes
7	Ferenc Gerstmár
8	Szilvia Lengyel
9	Ákos Csarnó
10	László Moldován

Below, we calculate how many mandates the joint list could yield depending on how the balance of power shifts between Fidesz and the left-of-centre Alliance, under certain assumptions.

*Assumptions:*

- Domestic voter turnout: 4.8 million people (60%);
- Voter turnout abroad: 300,000 people, Fidesz gets 100% of votes (we intentionally consider a worst-case scenario for the left in order to find out which joint list places are sure to yield a seat);
- We set the support for Jobbik at 15%.

*Scenario #1: LMP surpasses the threshold*

- LMP: 5.5%
- Other small parties failing to surpass the threshold: 3.5%

Proportion of votes		Mandates for Alliance from joint party list
Fidesz	Alliance	
56-61%	15-20%	15-21
51-56%	20-25%	21-27
46-51%	25-30%	27-31
41-46%	30-35%	31-33
36-41%	35-40%	33-34
31-36%	40-45%	34-36
26-31%	45-50%	36-40
21-26%	50-55%	40-47

*Scenario #2: LMP fails to surpass the threshold*

- Other small parties failing to pass the threshold (including LMP): 7%

Proportion of votes		Mandates for Alliance from joint party list
Fidesz	Alliance	
58-63%	15-20%	16-22
53-58%	20-25%	22-28
48-53%	25-30%	28-32
43-48%	30-35%	32-35
38-43%	35-40%	35-37
33-38%	40-45%	37-38
28-33%	45-50%	38-41
23-28%	50-55%	41-48

In the calculation, we took into account individual district victories and their effect on the number of seats obtained from the joint list. We used our own [Mandate Calculator](#) for the calculation.

Like Together 2014, the Democratic Coalition will most likely have its own parliamentary group as well (and apart from relying on individual district victories, it may even obtain the required 5 seats from the joint list). From the Hungarian Liberal Party, only Gábor Fodor – who is 4<sup>th</sup> on the list – is likely to obtain a seat, since his fellow party members (ranked 56<sup>th</sup>, 58<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup>) only stand a chance in the event of a landslide opposition victory (or extremely fortunate overlaps between the individual district results and the party list rankings). In other words, there will surely be no independent liberal group in parliament.

Altogether, the framework of cooperation may be new, but the challenge remains the same. The main question is whether the left-of-centre opposition, which for such a long time was mainly preoccupied with internal competition between its heterogeneous elements, can persuade about one million new voters in the next 5 weeks that Hungary would perform better in its hands.

With the help of our calculator, we also analysed the conditions for another two-thirds parliamentary majority win for Fidesz. As the extremely complex electoral system is influenced by a myriad of factors, our results only represent the magnitude of the situation. Once again we set the domestic voter turnout, the voter turnout abroad and the support for Jobbik just as we did for the above scenarios.

If LMP fails to pass the threshold and increases the share of “lost” votes to 7%, then Fidesz only needs to gain 13.6 percentage points more than the left-of-centre Alliance to secure another supermajority (Fidesz: 45.8%, Alliance: 32.2%).

LMP passing the threshold only makes this prospect marginally more difficult. If LMP receives 5.5% of the votes, then Fidesz would need a 14.4 percentage-point advantage over the left-of-centre Alliance (Fidesz: 45.2%, Alliance: 30.8%) to secure a supermajority.

For reference, here are the 2010 party list results with which Fidesz secured 68.13% of parliamentary seats – Fidesz: 52.73%; MSZP: 19.3%; Jobbik: 16.67%; LMP: 7.48%.