



**Matteo Mecacci**

Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Brussels, 18 January 2022

Dear Mr. Mecacci,

We are 62 Members of the European Parliament contacting you about the upcoming parliamentary elections in Hungary. We come from 5 political groups and from 19 different countries. But we all share the concern that the elections might not be held to the highest democratic standards.

That is why we would invite the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to carry out a *full-scale* election observation mission for this year's parliamentary election in Hungary.

Your Organisation has demonstrated its expertise and dedication to free and fair elections in over 150 election observations in the past decade. We are most grateful for your office's contribution to promoting democracy and human rights.

The final report of ODIHR's Limited Election Observation Mission of Hungary's latest parliamentary election in April 2018 concluded that "*intimidating campaign rhetoric limited space for substantive debate and diminished voters ability to make an informed choice*", and excessive spending by the government on public information campaigns "*significantly compromised the contestants ability to compete on an equal basis*". Furthermore, they attested an "*overall lack of transparency*" and media coverage that was "*highly polarised and lacking critical analysis*".<sup>1</sup> Following the 2018 elections, the European Parliament adopted a reasoned proposal in September 2018, calling on the Council to determine the existence of a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of EU values, pursuant to Art 7 (1) TEU. The proposal was based, among others, on concerns in relation to the functioning of the electoral system and threats to media freedom.<sup>2</sup>

In the run up to this year's elections, we observed further seriously worrying developments. In their joint opinion, the Venice Commission and ODIHR have already expressed their

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/9/385959.pdf>, page 2

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0340\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0340_EN.html), paragraph 1

concerns about the amendments to the Hungarian electoral legislation adopted in 2020 during a state of emergency, without public consultation. The amendment imposing further restrictions on the candidatures for the national constituency was identified as particularly concerning as “*the main effect of this reform would be to favour the incumbents*”<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, in November 2021, the government revised registration rules for permanent residence. As the revision eases the registration of fictitious addresses, it is widely feared that it will be instrumentalised by the ruling party to increase its voter base in particularly contested regions.<sup>4</sup>

Against this background, we think it to be crucial to follow all key aspects of the Hungarian electoral process: the legislative framework, candidate and voter registration, the campaign, the role of the media (including comprehensive media monitoring), the election administration, election dispute resolution, participation of women and national minorities, and the voting, counting and tabulation process on election day, as well as post-election complaints and appeals through a full-scale election observation mission.

Furthermore, in anticipation of such a mission it would be necessary to have the OSCE/ODIHR opinion with a full assessment of the electoral legislation of Hungary as it currently stands, including the amendments adopted after the Joint Opinion of the Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR on the 2020 amendments.

We are very much looking forward to your reply and remain at your disposal in case you might need anything from us as Members of the European Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Freund, Greens/EFA, Germany  
Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Rapporteur on Hungary, Greens/EFA, France  
Bettina Vollath, Shadow Rapporteur on Hungary, S&D, Germany  
Ramona Strugariu, Shadow Rapporteur on Hungary, Renew, Romania  
Malin Björk, Shadow Rapporteur on Hungary, The Left, Sweden  
Danuta Hübner, EPP, Poland  
Katalin Cseh, Renew, Hungary  
Anna Donath, Renew, Hungary  
Monika Vana, Greens/EFA, Austria  
Lara Wolters, S&D, The Netherlands  
Petri Sarvamaa, EPP, Finland  
Sophie In't Veld, Renew, The Netherlands  
Klemen Grošelj, Renew, Slovenia  
Katharina Barley, S&D, Germany  
Márton Gyöngyösi, NI, Hungary  
Tineke Strik, Greens/EFA, The Netherlands  
Karen Melchior, Renew, Denmark  
Engin Eroglu, Renew, Germany  
Moritz Körner, Renew, Germany  
Terry Reintke, Greens/EFA, Germany

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2021\)039-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2021)039-e), paragraph 32

<sup>4</sup> <https://hungarytoday.hu/hungary-registration-rules-election-amendment-press/>

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