

---

## **HUNGARY'S ORBAN SCORES SWEEPING VICTORY, BOOSTING EU POPULISTS**

- 09.04.2018

---

EU Observer (9 April 2018)

Orban's Fidesz has likely won a two-third majority in parliament in Sunday's (8 April) general election, paving the way for amending the constitution, the electoral law, rules on local governments and the courts.

Hungarians voted in record numbers, but contrary to expectations, the large turnout favoured Orban's Fidesz, not the opposition.

Fidesz's campaign against migrants, NGOs and US billionaire George Soros attracted more voters to Orban.

During the campaign Fidesz, with the help of state and pro-government media, promoted a conspiracy theory that the Hungarian opposition, the UN, the EU, and Soros, had plotted to turn Hungary into an "immigrant country" threatening its security and national identity.

That seemed to have boosted Fidesz, which won with 48.5 percent compared to 44.9 percent four years ago.

Fidesz will have 133 seats in the 199-member parliament, the same number of seats it won in 2014, while the right-wing, nationalist Jobbik party will become the second largest with 26 seats. The Socialists came in third with 20 representatives.

Fidesz won a two-thirds majority in 2010 and 2014, but later lost it in by-elections in 2015.

Leaders of Jobbik, the Socialists and several smaller liberal parties resigned after the resounding defeat for the opposition.

Opposition parties failed to coordinate candidates on the national level to offset the built-in advantages Fidesz enjoys after rewriting the election law in 2011.

"Migration is indeed a winning card for Orban, it prevails against all other issues. Lack of proper opposition cooperation provides another two-thirds majority for Fidesz. This is the end of the opposition as we know it," Andras Biro-Nagy, an analyst with the Policy Solutions think tank tweeted on Sunday night.

"We have achieved a decisive victory," Orban told a cheering crowd on Sunday, adding that voters created an opportunity to "defend Hungary".

The sweeping victory will serve as an opportunity for Fidesz to approve the planned "Stop Soros"

legislation package targeting civil organisations that are funded by Soros's Open Society Foundations and which deal with migration.

Orban may also decide to further centralise government control, crack down on critical media, put courts under more political pressure, while using EU money to prop up his political allies.

"Despite all accusations, Hungarian democracy is fine," government spokesman Zoltan Kovacs said on Sunday night referring to the close to 70 percent turnout rate.

Asked about the Stop Soros plan, Kovacs warned that organisations meddling with politics will have to be shut down.

### **Far-right admirers**

Orban's election win will also boost his ambitions in Europe, and the strong mandate will embolden him in his fights within the EU.

Hungary's opposition to migration quotas is expected to harden even further.

Orban's self-styled illiberal model of governing, and his tough anti-Muslim stance will also continue to serve as a model for other leaders in Europe.

European far right chiefs were quick to congratulate the Hungarian leader on Sunday night.

France' National Front head, Marine Le Pen, said Orban's victory proved that "the inversion of values and mass immigration advocated by the EU are rejected again".

Beatrix von Storch, deputy leader of Germany's anti-immigration Alternative for Germany (AfD) party tweeted: "A bad day for the EU, a good one for Europe".

The Dutch anti-immigration, anti-Muslim politician Geert Wilders also congratulated Orban.

---

Kaynak/Source: