

# Electoral perception of corruption

ANALYSES BY REPUBLIKON INSTITUTE



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## SUMMARY

- The electoral perception of corruption is related to the fact whether the respondent supports the party-list of Fidesz-KDNP or Egységben Magyarországért.
- For opposition voters, corruption is not the most important issue either, they prioritise livelihood and wage problems, however, it is ahead of the concerns about the state of democracy as well as healthcare, education, and environmental issues.
- Only 2% of the supporters of the government parties identified corruption as the most serious issue in Hungary, while for opposition supporters this rate is 17%, which is the third most frequently mentioned problem.
- Those voting for the party-list of Fidesz-KDNP also tend to agree that those entrepreneurs who have benefited from the corruption cases of the last years must be prosecuted.
- In terms of perception of corruption, uncertain voters are closer to opposition voters.
- Opposition, pro-government as well as uncertain voters are either impartial or agree about the fact that there are more serious issues than corruption in Hungary.
- Both uncertain voters and opposition supporters tend to agree that corruption is more prevalent in the Fidesz governance than it was in previous periods. Government supporters rather disagree with this statement.
- Uncertain voters as well as the voters of Egységben Magyarországért have a neutral opinion about whether the results of the Fidesz government balance out corruption.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most common critiques about the governance of Fidesz-KDNP is corruption. Despite the fact that there has been a visible accumulation of wealth associated with certain people close to the prime minister, the support of the government parties seems to be stable since the 2015 refugee crisis. One possible explanation of this phenomenon might be that corruption causes less outrage among Hungarian voters than back in the 1990s. Another reason can be that corruption as a topic has a negative effect not only on the ruling politicians but on the perception of the political class as a whole. Finally, it is also possible that some voters tend to ignore corruption if it is affiliated with the political party or the politician they are voting for.

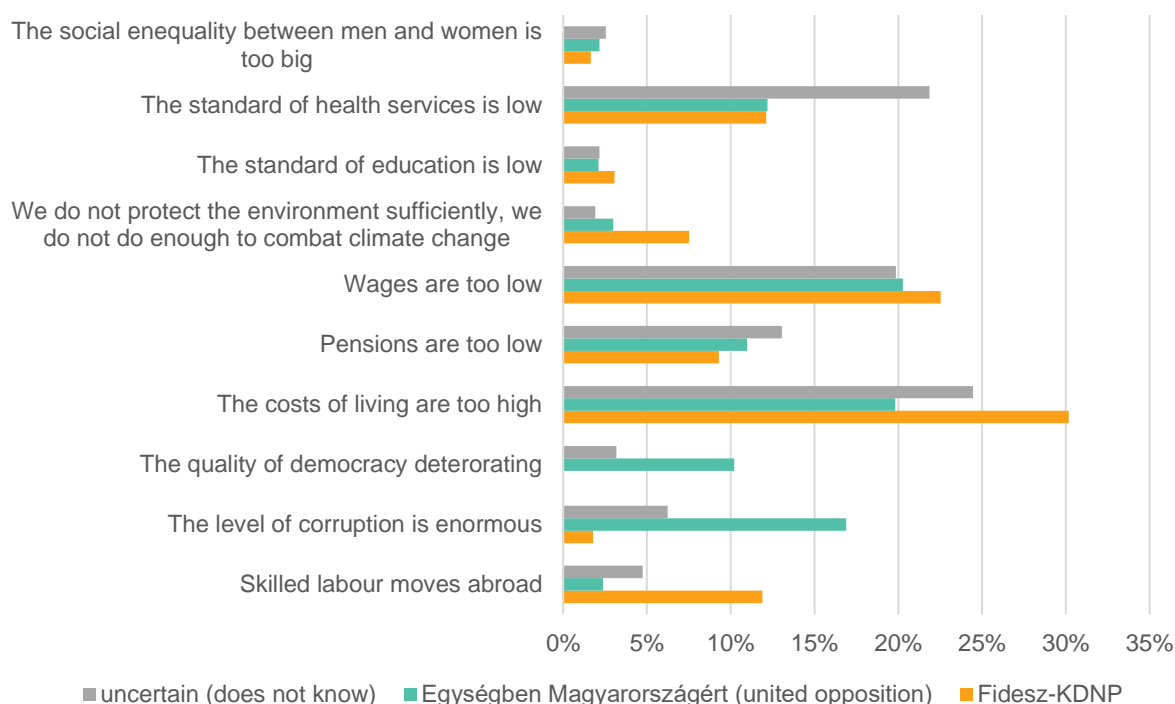
In the following analysis of Republikon Institute, we examine the opinions connected to corruption based on the party affiliation of the respondent. We were interested in whether the perception of corruption differs significantly according to whether the respondent supports the government or the united opposition. We also examined the opinions of uncertain voters whether they are more lenient or more critical about corruption. In the course of our analysis, we examined the average of each opinion on a five-point scale according to the willingness to vote for the party-list of Fidesz-KDNP and Egységben Magyarországért. Uncertain voters are the respondents who could not answer which party-list would they vote for.

The data collection, providing the basis for this analysis was conducted through telephone interviews of 1200 people by Závecz Research Institute during November 2021. The research is representative of the adult population of the country by gender, age, education, and type of settlement.

## FINDINGS

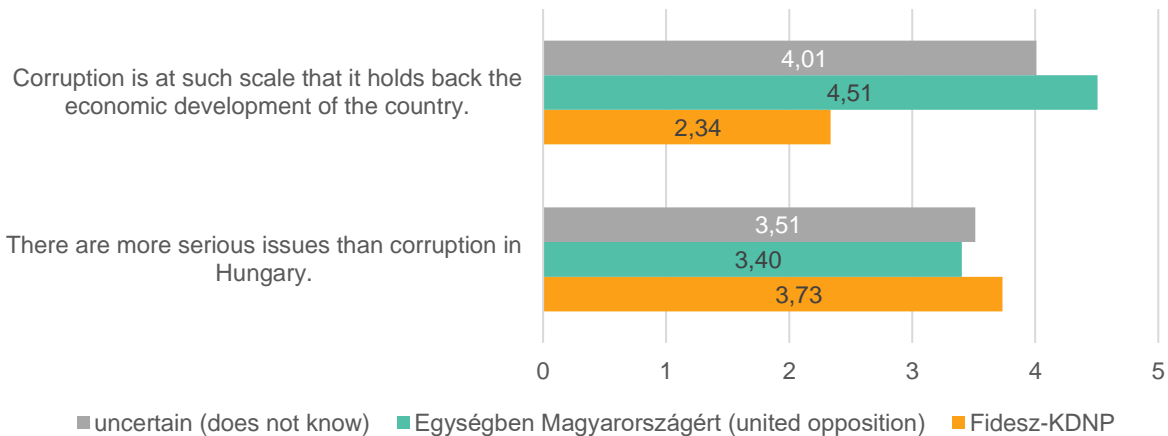
According to the results, while only 2% of the pro-government voters identifies corruption as the most serious issue in Hungary, in the case of the voters of the united opposition this rate was 17%, thus being the third most frequently mentioned issue after low wages and high costs of living. (Table 1). As for uncertain voters, corruption is at the 5<sup>th</sup> place, after wages, costs of living as well as pensions and the quality of health care.

Table 1: Which of the following do you consider to be the most serious issue in Hungary?



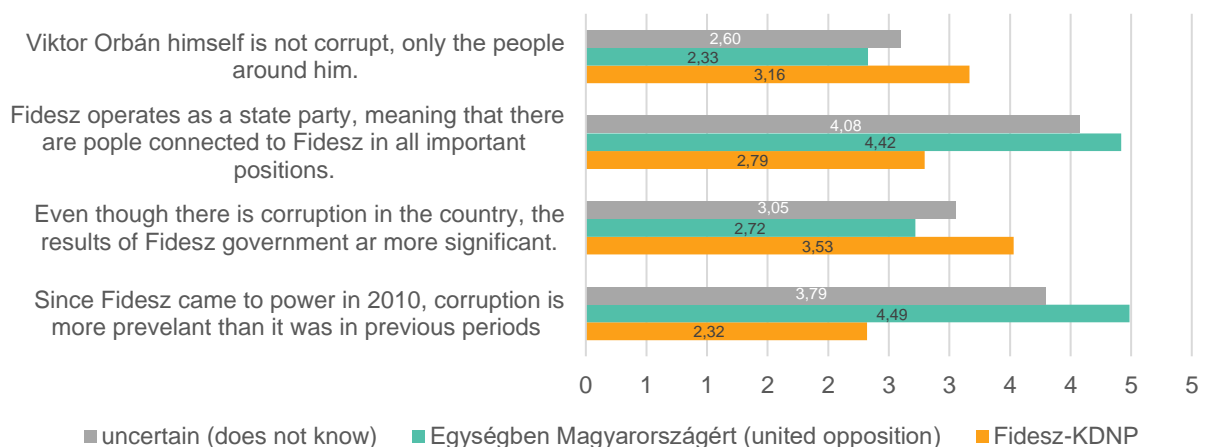
Although evaluating the seriousness of the issue of corruption, almost all pro-government, opposition and uncertain voter agreed that there are more serious problems than corruption in Hungary. In this regard, the opinion of all three groups stands somewhere between the neutral and the agreeing position. (Table 2) Based on party affiliation, the difference is more significant about the consequences of corruption. The average of the opinions shows, that opposition supporters completely agree that corruption is at such a scale that holds back economic development. Uncertain voters tend to agree with this statement, while Fidesz-KDNP voters tend to disagree with it.

Table 2: The general perception of corruption  
(1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)



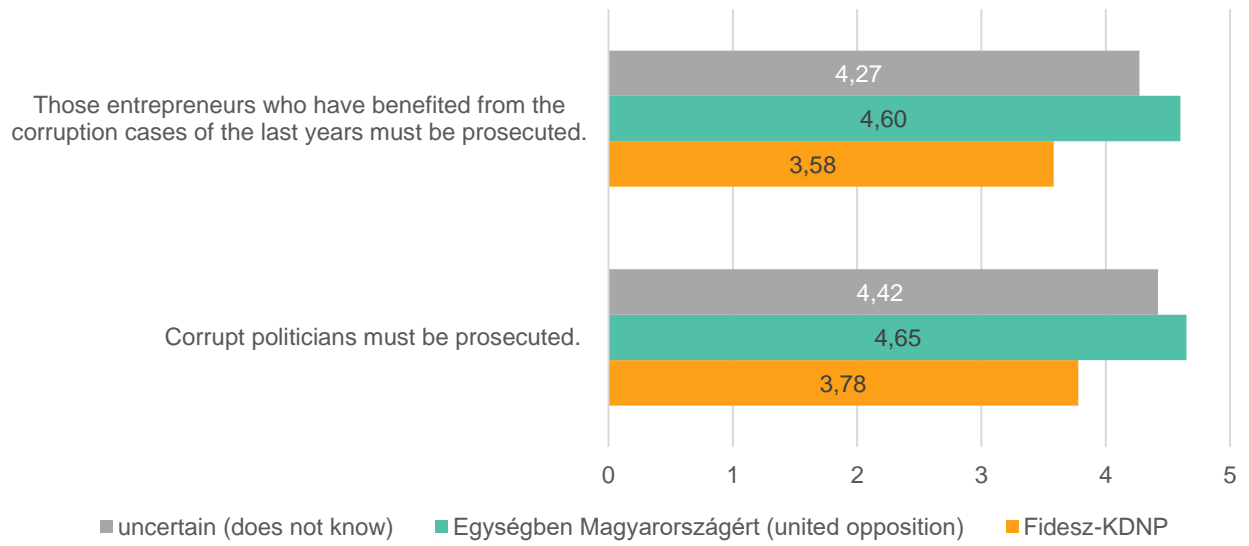
The research found significant difference in the opinions that corruption is more prevalent in the governance of Fidesz than it was in previous periods. (Table 3) Both uncertain and opposition voters tend to agree with the statement, while pro-government voters, obviously tend to disagree with it. It is interesting that when it come to the comparison of corruption and the results of the Fidesz government, opinions are less divided. As the average of opinions shows, uncertain voters as well as supporters of Egységben Magyarországért take a neutral position in the question. However, Fidesz supporters rather tend to agree that the results of the government counterbalance corruption. A further surprising finding is that pro-government voters do not reject the view that Fidesz functions as a de facto sole ruling party. Uncertain voters have a similar opinion to opposition voters in this regard too, since both groups agree about Fidesz’s function as a sole ruling party. There is no significant support from Fidesz voters for the statement that while the people around Viktor Orbán are corrupt, the prime minister himself is not.

Table 3: Corruption and Fidesz  
(1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)



Finally, we also examined the opinion of each electoral grouping about accountability with regards to corruption. (Table 4) Overall, on this matter the opinions of all three groups are closer to each other, although the views of Fidesz-KDNP voters are more moderate about whether those who have benefited from the corruption of the last years must be prosecuted.

Table 4: Corruption and prosecution  
(1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)



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