

A state without women

Proportion of women politicians in government and parliament

ANALYSIS OF THE REPUBLIKON INSTITUTION



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SUMMARY

- In our analysis, we looked at the proportion of women politicians in government and parliament in Hungary, as well as in parliamentary party factions, in comparison with the European Union.
- Our analysis is based in large part on data from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), which show that Hungary is at the bottom of the league in terms of the proportion of women in government and parliament among EU Member States.
- Hungary ranks second to last in the EU in the EIGE gender equality ranking, but even worse, it came last in the survey on women's power and representation.
- Uniquely in the EU, there is not a single female member of the Hungarian government at the ministerial level. UNECE data also shows that the 13% of women in the Hungarian parliament is far below the EU average of 31%.
- Looking at the parliamentary groups of the parliamentary parties, in general, the right-wing parties (Fidesz, KDNP, Mi Hazánk and Jobbik) perform worse in terms of the proportion of women, but the left/liberal parties also have a significant predominance of male MPs.
- With the resignation and stand down of Katalin Novak and Judit Varga, two of the most prominent female politicians of the past decade and a half have fallen from public life, who, especially in the case of the President of the Republic, played an important role in compensating for the lack of women politicians at the level of government and state leadership. So far, there is no sign that Fidesz-KDNP is making any effort to put women politicians in such high positions.
- In the context of this analysis, the Republikon Institute held a conference on 29 February 2024 entitled Women in Politics, Women in Public Life, the recording of which is available at the following link.
 - **Political panel:**
<https://youtu.be/XlxrfWVlvKE?si=W6o1nCTlpxCDbgkb>
 - **Social life panel:**
<https://youtu.be/UTrOKyi-nlg?si=-igExbv3ltoiHPTz>

INTRODUCTION

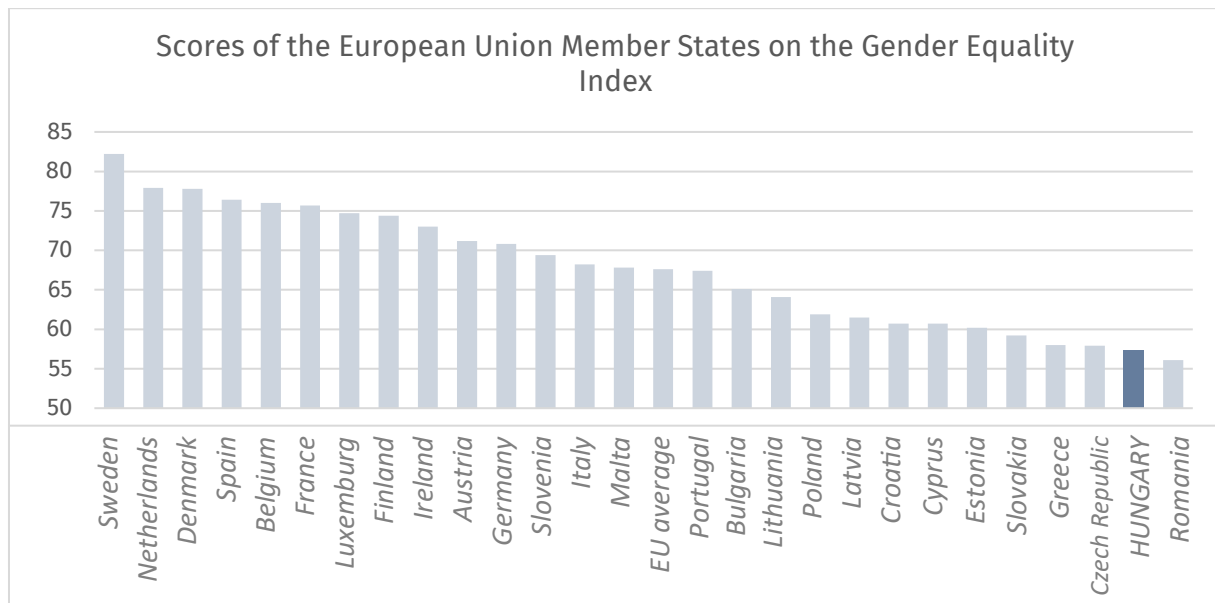
The scandal surrounding the presidential pardon granted to Endre K. and its consequences have dominated Hungarian public life in recent weeks. This is understandable, as the affair led to a public outcry unprecedented in the last decade, and - largely because of it - to the resignation of the President of the Republic and the withdrawal of Fidesz's former Justice Minister and planned European Parliament list leader. However, the scandal's many consequences (the election of a new president; concerns about the transparency of the presidential pardon system; problems with the child protection system; etc.) seem to have overshadowed one significant aspect: the fall of Katalin Novak and Judit Varga, two of the country's most successful women politicians, who had certainly reached the highest positions, have fallen from public life. The proportion of women in Hungarian politics is very low, and it is unlikely that we will see women politicians in a leading role like Novak or even Varga in Hungary any time soon - the head of state post and the Fidesz European Parliament list leader role have already been taken over by two men, Tamas Sulyok and Tamas Deutsch.

Of course, the vast majority of public policy areas affect both men and women: both sexes participate in education, use health services, build houses, travel, shop, and so on. However, this does not necessarily mean that men and women do all these things with the same factors in mind, and the female perspective is systematically marginalised at the government level in Hungary. Equally important is the issue of visibility and invisibility: the lack of high-ranking female government officials and female civil servants is a negative signal for young, ambitious women.

Orbán governments have never had an abundance of women in government, and this is increasingly bucking European - and global - trends. At present, the Hungarian government has no women members, but the proportion of women in parliament is also glaringly low. In this analysis, we look at how these figures compare with governments and parliaments in other EU Member States, and whether there is a correlation between the number of women in government and the gender equality ranking of the EU Member State in the European Institute for Gender Equality's gender equality index.

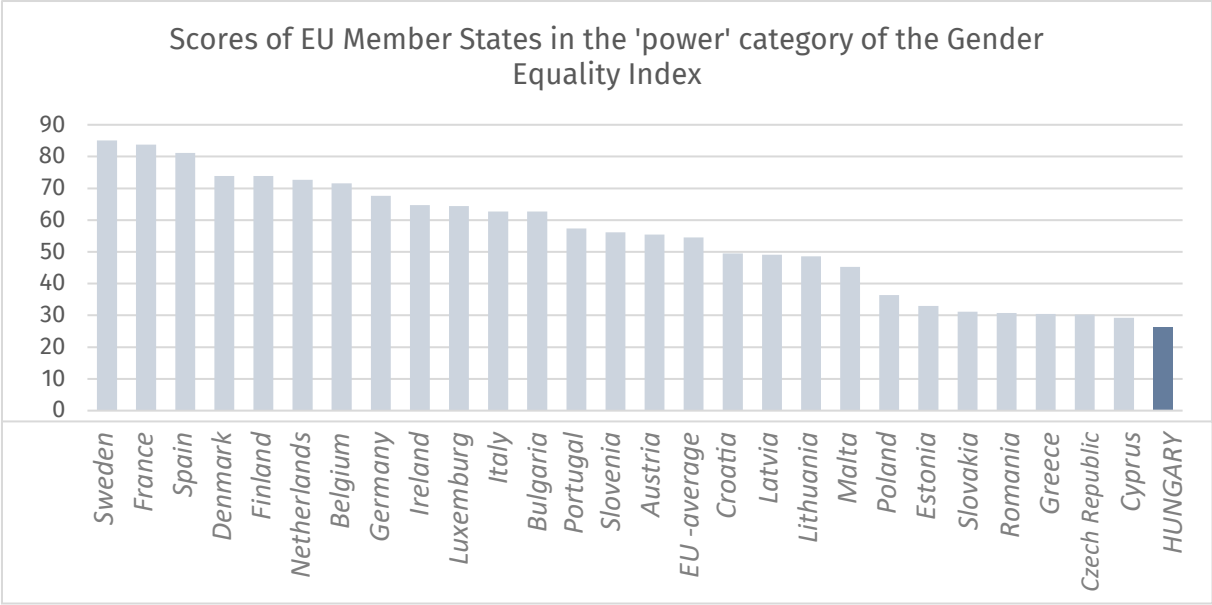
RESULTS

Every year, the European Institute for Gender Equality assesses the state of equality between men and women in the countries of the European Union on a scale of 1 to 100, based on a complex set of criteria, with 100 representing full equality between the two sexes. The complex assessment is based on six main aspects (health - health status; money - financial status; knowledge - education; work - employment; time - leisure/household/care responsibilities; power/advocacy) that fundamentally determine gender equality in society. Hungary's aggregate score puts it at the bottom of the EU list, with a score of 57.3, ahead of only Romania.



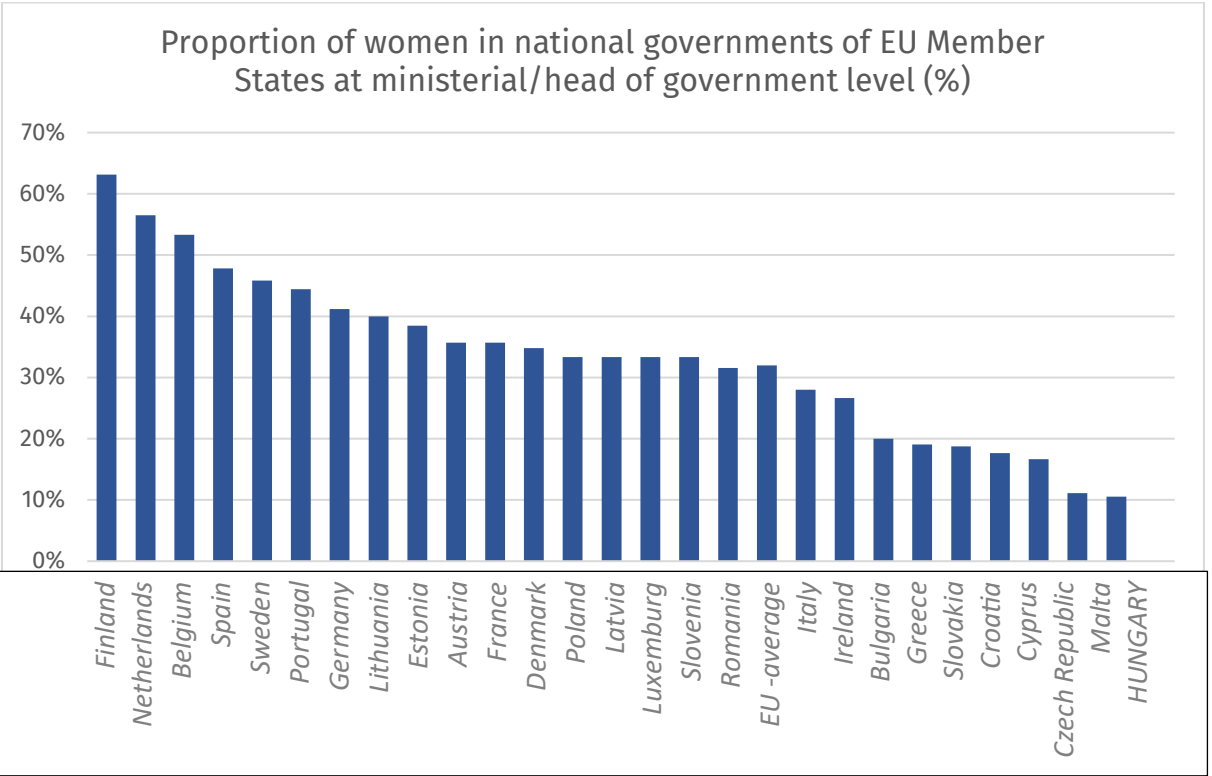
Source: EIGE Gender Equality Index, 2023

Scores of the EU Most importantly for our analysis, and even more revealing in terms of the problem at hand, if we look only at the 'power' category, Hungary ranks last in the EU ranking with 26.2 points, far below the EU average of 59.1. The score for this category is made up of several factors, including the proportion of women and men on the boards of the largest listed companies and national banks; the proportion of women and men in local (municipal, county, etc.) government; and of course, the proportion of women and men in national parliaments and national governments.



Source: EIGE Gender Equality Index, 2023

Currently, there is not a single female member of the Hungarian cabinet at the ministerial level (Alexandra Szentkirályi is a spokesperson in the government), and in this respect, Hungary is alone in the European Union. Although the predominance of men in national governments is also prevalent at the EU level, the inequality in Hungary is unprecedented.

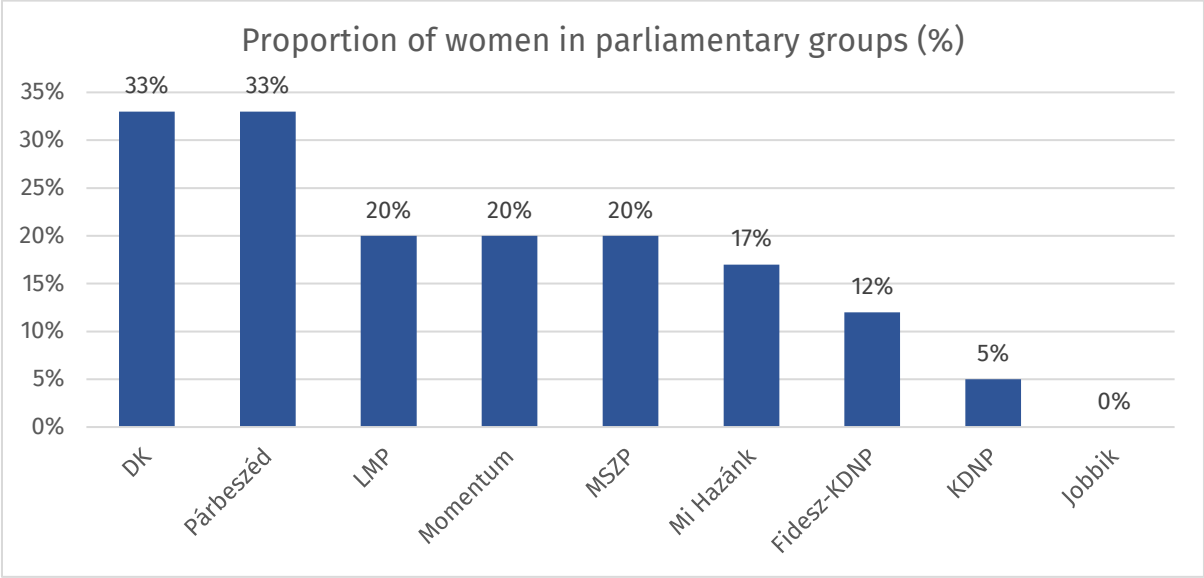


Republikon Institute, 2024.03.

Since 2010, a total of four women have reached the ministerial rank in Hungary (including the non-departmental ministers): in the 2010-14 cycle, Laszlóné Németh

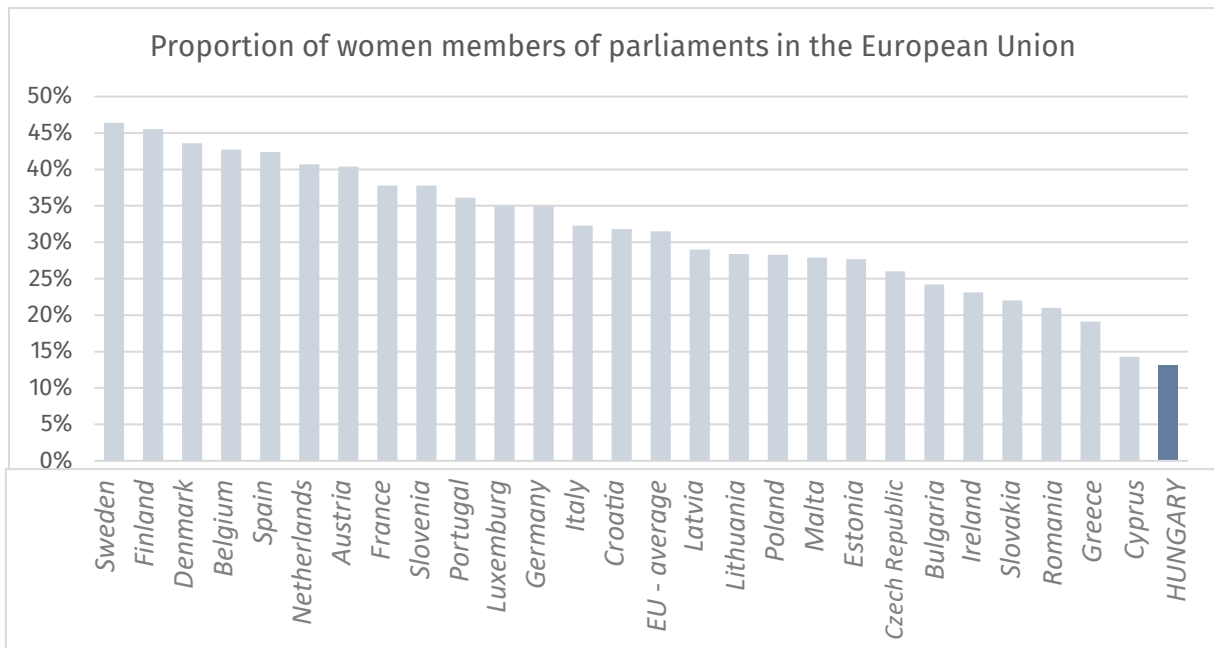
as Minister for National Development; in the 2018-22 cycle, Judit Varga as Minister for Justice, Andrea Mager as Non-departmental Minister for National Property Management and Katain Novák as Non-departmental Minister for Family Affairs; and since 2022, only Judit Varga has been a woman minister until her resignation last summer.

If we look at the composition of the parliamentary groups of the parties with parliamentary groups, we can see that the governing parties are not only not rich in women politicians in the cabinet, but also not in the legislature. Although Jobbik is in last place in terms of the number of women MPs, as it is represented in parliament by men only, Jobbik has only 8 seats, while the KDNP has 19 MPs, only one of whom is a woman, and Fidesz has only 14 women MPs (or 15, but with the resignation of Judit Varga, one seat in the larger government party's parliamentary group became vacant) for 115 seats



Republikon Institute, 2024.03.

However, it should also be noted that although the opposition parties (with the exception of Jobbik, of course) do better in terms of gender representation, there is still a huge male predominance in the opposition benches; the Democratic Coalition and Párbeszéd have 33% female MPs, far above the others, but well below 50%. Of course, proportional representation does not necessarily imply equality in numerical terms (especially in the case of a small parliamentary group, as the Párbeszéd would reach 50% if it had just one more woman in its six-member group), but the current figures show that the proportion of women MPs in Hungary is critically low at only 13%, which is striking by EU standards.



source: UNECE, 2023

As President of the Republic, one of Katalin Novak's important roles - even if not explicitly - was to compensate to some extent for the under-representation of women in Hungarian public life. This was also of great importance in the international arena, since, as the above figures show, the absence of women politicians is striking, especially in comparison with other states. If she had not been forced to step down and had ended up leading Fidesz's European Parliamentary list, Judit Varga could have played a less significant but similar role (in addition to her primary political duties, of course) in shaping the domestic and international image of the governing party. It has already emerged that with the election of Tamas Sulyok as President of the Republic and the nomination of Tamas Deutsch to the head of the Fidesz EP list, the two vacant positions have been taken over by men. An important question, however, is whether Fidesz-KDNP will feel the need to find and build up female politicians who can occupy similarly high positions in the future - there are no signs of this so far.