

Debtor, pay!

Opinions on multiple-rate taxation

A REPUBLIKON INTÉZET ÉS A CONNECT EUROPE ELEMZÉSE



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INTRODUCTION

An appropriate tax policy is a basic condition for the functioning of any country. This is how the state creates the resources it needs to operate, and although the government would like to manage from as many sources as possible, it is also in its interest that citizens have money to spend, or that it strengthens its economy with a favourable tax policy. Everyone raises their heads when they hear a change in tax policy. Raising taxes can mend budget gaps, but an equally valuable resource, voter support, can be depleted as a result of the tax increase. Otherwise, a pre-election tax cut may bring votes, but it will make it more difficult for the government to manage its finances in the next cycle and may force the government to borrow. Although tax policy is vital for both governments and citizens, there is no perfect recipe; there are as many types of tax policies as there are countries, which are responsible for the delicate balance with varying degrees of success.

We probably don't need to describe Hungary's tax system, as our readers are very familiar with the system which has a profound impact on their own lives, but we'll illustrate it anyway: the Orbán government doesn't like to disappoint its voters – they are notorious distributors. The cornerstone of its tax policy is the flat-rate personal income tax, from which an ever-renewing stratum of voters is constantly exempted before the next parliamentary election. This is accompanied by the highest general sales tax in the European Union, which, together with foreign loans, helps to fill the state tills through inflation. The government's position is known, but it is worth talking about the voters' opinions on taxation. Although the word socialist is almost taboo in public discourse, the policy opinions of Hungarians often reflect left-wing values. Tax policy is a key issue in the 2026 election, with the Orbán government promising new concessions and redistribution, while Péter Magyar would reduce the personal income tax to 9 percent and tax the rich. In its latest research¹, Republikon asked respondents about multi-rate income tax and taxation of super wealth.

¹ The research was conducted by telephone among 1,000 people between July 23-29, 2025. The research is representative of the country's adult population in terms of gender, age, educational attainment and type of settlement. The margin of error is +/- 3.5%.

RESULTS

Over two-thirds of Hungarians believe that Hungary should switch to a multi-rate tax system. This would mean those earning higher wages people would pay a higher percentage of their income in taxes. 41 percent of respondents believe that the multi-rate tax, which the Orbán government replaced with a single-rate, universal system in 2011, is definitely necessary. Only 14 percent of respondents are vehemently against the measure.

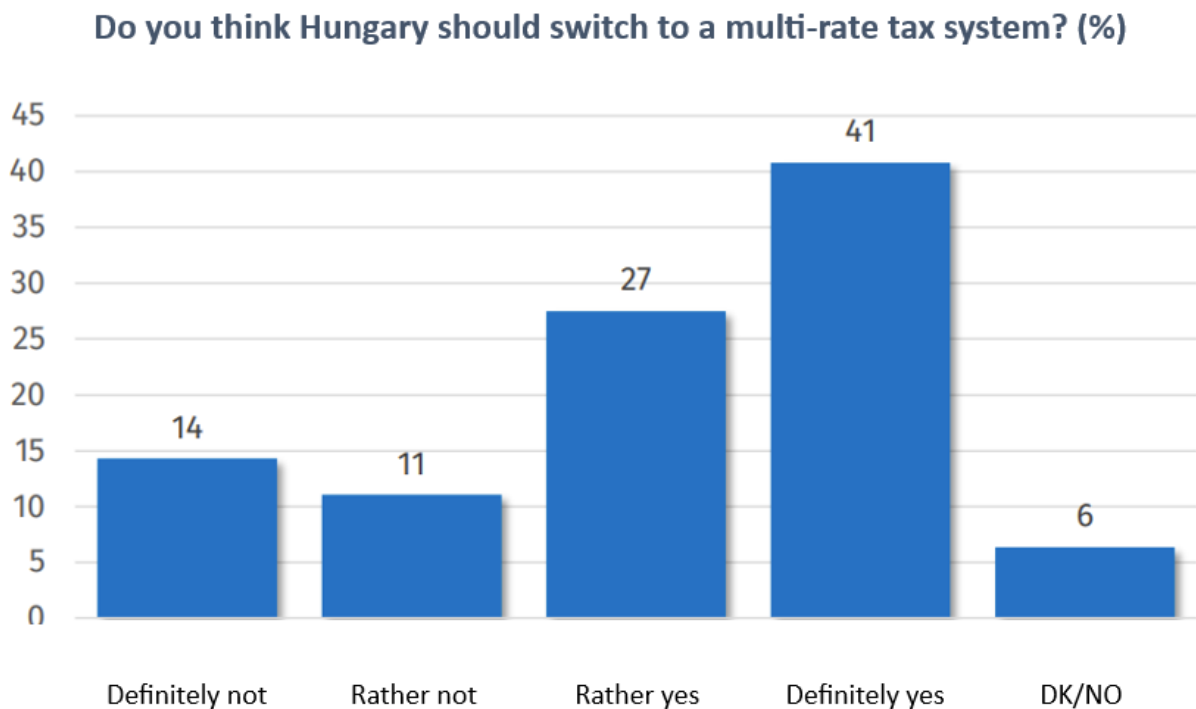


Figure 1: Opinions on the introduction of multiple-rate taxation (%).

Fidesz-KDNP voters are also divided on the issue, with 43 percent of them saying they would introduce a multi-rate tax, while 57 percent would keep the system established by Fidesz-KDNP. This is understandable, as voters of the ruling parties identify the measure with the Fidesz era, and the multi-rate tax system with left-wing governments, as the change was one of the first measures of the second Orbán government in 2011. However, it is important to note that the opinion of the ruling party camp is also divided, it is simply that they support the multi-rate tax the least.

Do you think Hungary should switch to a multi-rate tax system? (%)

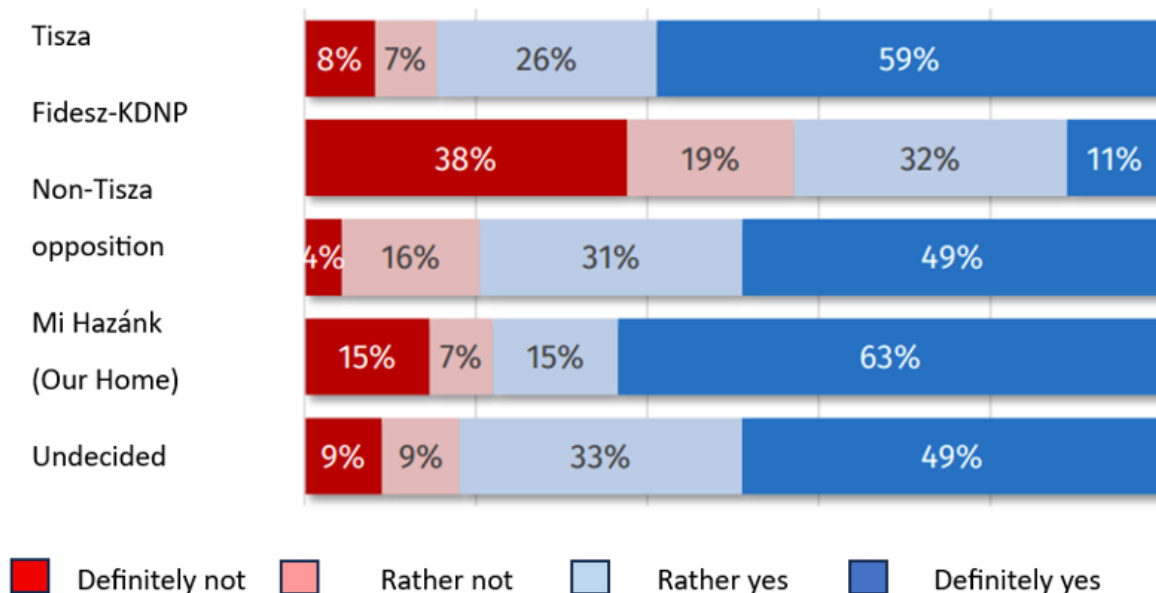


Figure 2: Opinions on multi-rate taxation by main voter groups (%).

In all other voter groups, the support for the multi-rate tax system is significant. 85 percent of Tisza voters would introduce it, 59 percent of whom would definitely do so. This is understandable, since the Tisza Party in the referendum on the nation's voice proposed a quasi-two-rate tax system, with the personal income tax reduced to 9 percent, and in return taxing the super-wealthy. Of course, a 9 percent personal income tax is not a typical left-wing approach, even if it is combined with taxing the extra-rich. 80 percent of the "non-Tisza" opposition would switch to the multi-rate tax system, meaning a fairly high degree of agreement between Tisza voters and other opposition parties. It is not only left-wing and liberal voters sharing this opinion – the opinion of Mi Hazánk (Our Home) voters on this issue essentially coincides with the majority of the opposition, not supporting the tax system preferred by their fellow fighters Fidesz-KDNP. Over three-quarters of Mi Hazánk (Our Home) voters want a multi-rate tax. The undecided are also inclined to this, 82 percent of them want a multi-rate tax system, meaning their opinion fits perfectly into the opposition camp.

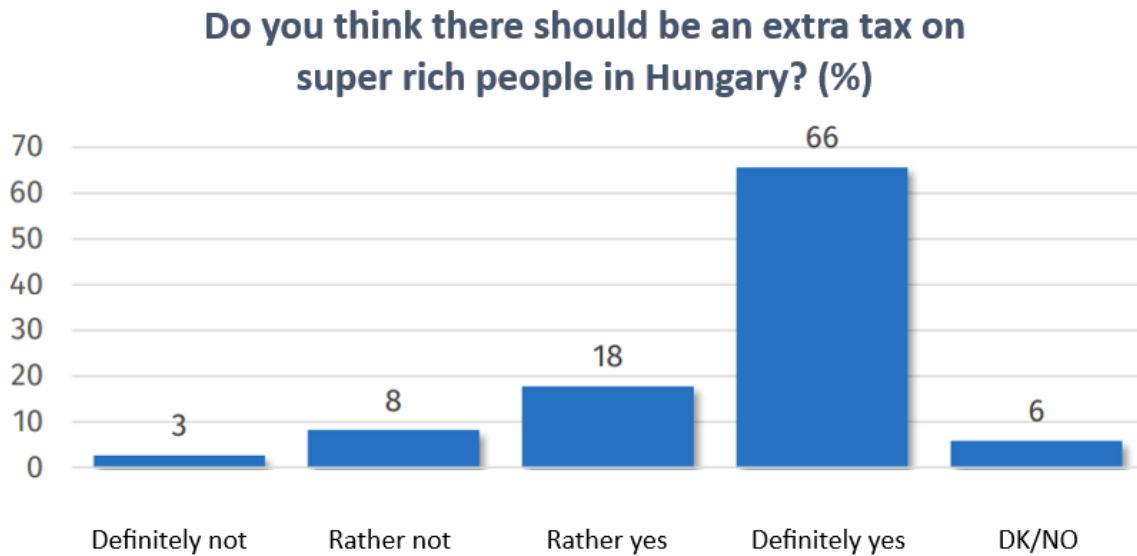


Figure 3: Opinions on the taxation of huge wealth (%).

Taxing the super-rich is a recurring campaign theme in the opposition space (see, for example, MSZP’s “Let the rich pay!” campaign from 2017), and most recently it was also mentioned in the Tisza Party’s “Voice of the Nation” poll. This is a fairly popular measure in Hungarian society, considered impoverished by European standards; many would undoubtedly support it even with a multi-rate personal income tax, as an extra “luxury tax”.

According to this research, 84 percent of Hungarians would support this measure, just like the multi-rate tax, however, here the proportion of those who would definitely like to introduce it is much higher. According to two-thirds of respondents, taxing the super-wealthy would definitely be necessary, while a further 18 percent said it would be more necessary than not. Only 3 percent of respondents are clearly opposed to taxing the super-wealthy, and a total of 11 percent indicated that they would not introduce it.

Do you think there should be an extra tax on super rich people in Hungary? (%)

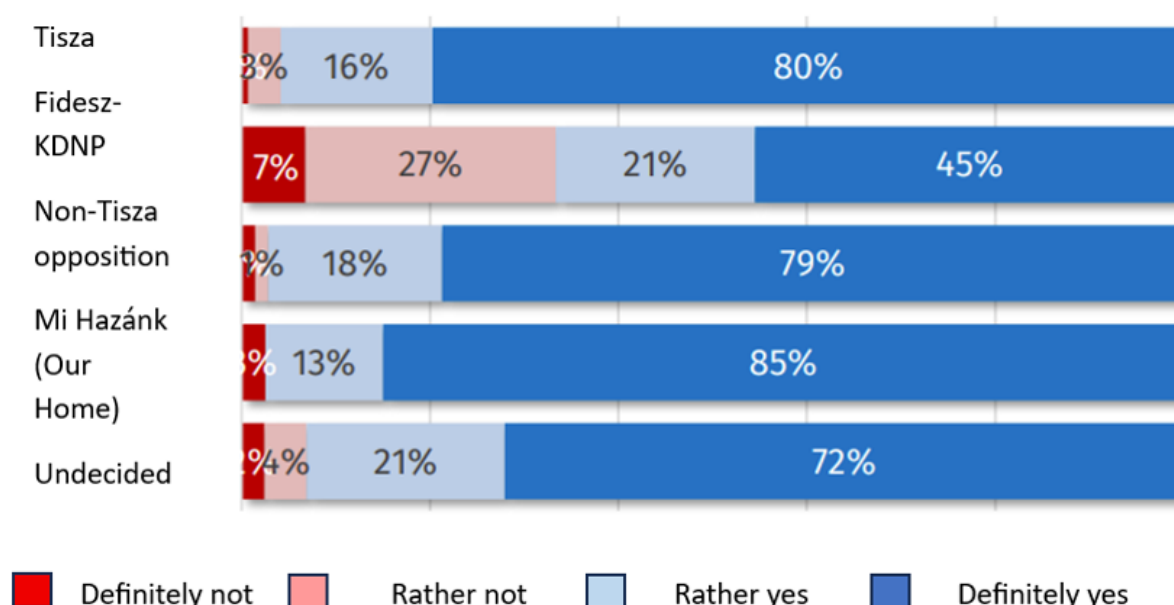


Figure 4: Opinions on the taxation of super-wealth by main voting groups (%).

The breakdown by party reflects similar tendencies as the issue of the multi-rate tax system. The Fidesz-KDNP voters clearly respond according to their party sympathies, as they are the only ones amongst who some oppose the taxation of huge wealth. While 96 percent of Tisza voters, 97 percent of “non-Tisza” opposition, 98 percent of Mi Hazánk (Our Home) voters, and 93 percent of undecided voters agree with the taxation of huge wealth, this is only 66 percent among Fidesz-KDNP supporters, of whom only 45 percent would definitely support the huge wealth tax. Of course, the overwhelming majority, two-thirds, of the government supporters would also agree with such a measure, but it does not come close to the almost complete support of the others. It is precisely the voters of the potential 2026 coalition partner, Mi Hazánk (Our Home), who are the most ardent supporters of the huge wealth tax. This signals that despite the parties' repeated cooperation, the voters of the two right-wing formations are still not in harmony.

Overall, it seems that, as a result of the continuous siege of oligarchs on the opposition and the independent press, some of the loyal Fidesz-KDNP voters have now also accepted the NER economic elite into their favour, and they see the

taxation of the rich as an attack on the Fidesz government or as a slogan of the socialist parties, against which they defend themselves as a principle. Of course, the opposition voter has also learned to identify the concept of huge wealth with the NER elite, which is why they clearly support their taxation. Notwithstanding this, the final word cannot be anything other than that in Hungary, both the multi-rate tax system and the tax on huge wealth enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of society. These could be political slogans that will have a serious cohesive force in the anti-elite opposition camp in the 2026 election campaign.