



# HUNGARY'S POLITICAL COMPASS 2022

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In this research, we used a 28-question political compass to measure the degree to which different worldviews are represented in Hungarian society. We not only looked at how Hungarians feel about a wide range of issues after the 2022 elections, from taxation to abortion, but also at what has changed over the course of the last four years. By combining economic and social value categories, we also show how Hungarians can be classified into complex value groups.

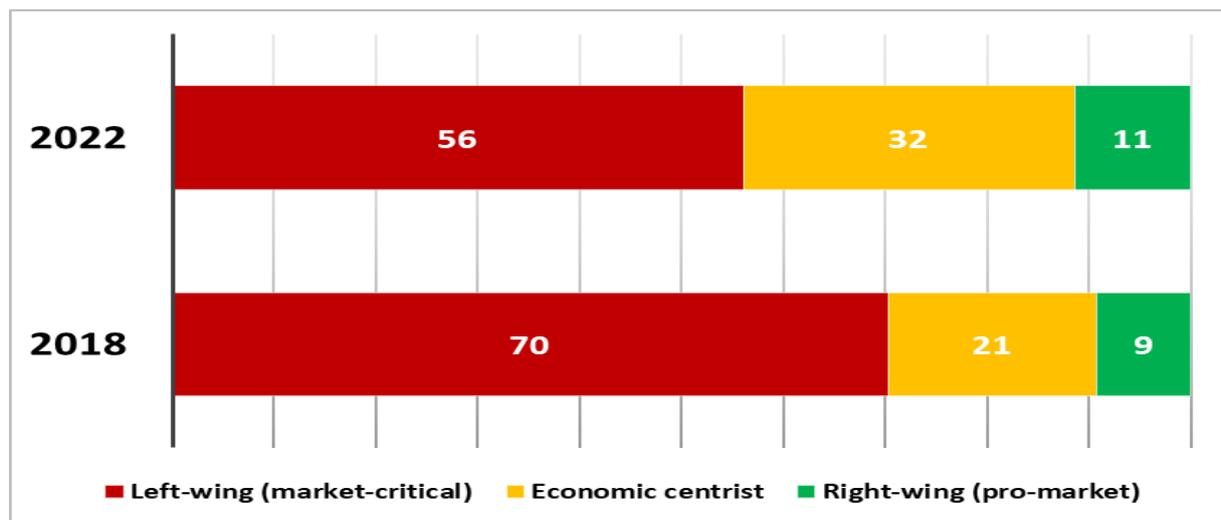
We used a survey conducted with the help of our partner, Závecz Research, between 25 April and 4 May 2022 as the basis for our analysis. The survey was based on personal interviews with 1,000 Hungarians who made up a representative sample of Hungarian society based on age, gender, educational attainment and the type of municipality they live in. This study was produced with the support of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Budapest.



## Hungarians' economic policy values: left-wing majority, but their share has declined

Based on economic left-right categories, the majority of Hungarians (56%) are left-leaning in 2022. One tenth of Hungarians (11%) have a right-wing economic policy orientation, while those with a centrist economic position (32%) make up one third of the population (Graph I).

Graph I. The values of Hungarian society on the economic left-right axis



Left-leaning views remain in the majority in Hungarian society, but the main trend shows a decrease in the proportion of those on the economic left and an increase in those leaning towards the centre. Meanwhile, economic right-wing, pro-market views have not become more popular. Since 2018, the share of left-wingers (market critics) in Hungarian society has decreased by 14 percentage points (from 70 to 56 percent). In contrast, the share of economic centrists has increased by 11 percentage points (from 21 to 32 percent), while the share of pro-market views has increased by only 2 percentage points (from 9 to 11 percent). In other words, the vast majority of Hungarian society remains pro-redistribution and market-critical, but the proportion of those on the economic left has fallen substantially.

## Half of Fidesz voters and 60% of opposition voters are economically left-wing

Half of pro-government voters (49%) hold left-wing economic values in 2022, but four years earlier, Fidesz voters were 15 percentage points more likely to be in this group (64%). Among Fidesz supporters, there are 16 percentage points more economic centrists in 2022 (38%) than there were in 2018 (22%). The proportion of economically right-wing Fidesz respondents did not change significantly (14% in 2018, 13% in 2022). Among opposition voters, there was a 14 percentage point decrease in the proportion of economically left-wing



respondents, a similar change as among the pro-government group. 75% of opposition respondents were left-wing in 2018, 61% in 2022. In this group, there has been a minimal increase in the number of pro-market respondents over the last four years (from 7 to 10 percent).

In 2018, supporters of left-liberal DK, green party LMP, as well as undecideds, did not differ significantly from Fidesz supporters in their economic worldview, but in 2022 these groups became significantly more left-wing than the government supporters. Four years earlier, radical right Jobbik voters were significantly more left-wing than Fidesz voters in economic terms, but in 2022 the two groups were no longer significantly different. In both periods, Socialist Party (MSZP) voters were significantly more left-wing than pro-government voters. Centrist-liberal Momentum supporters, on the other hand, were not significantly different from Fidesz voters in terms of their left-right position on economic policy in either period.

### **The shift in economic views did not occur in Budapest, but in smaller municipalities**

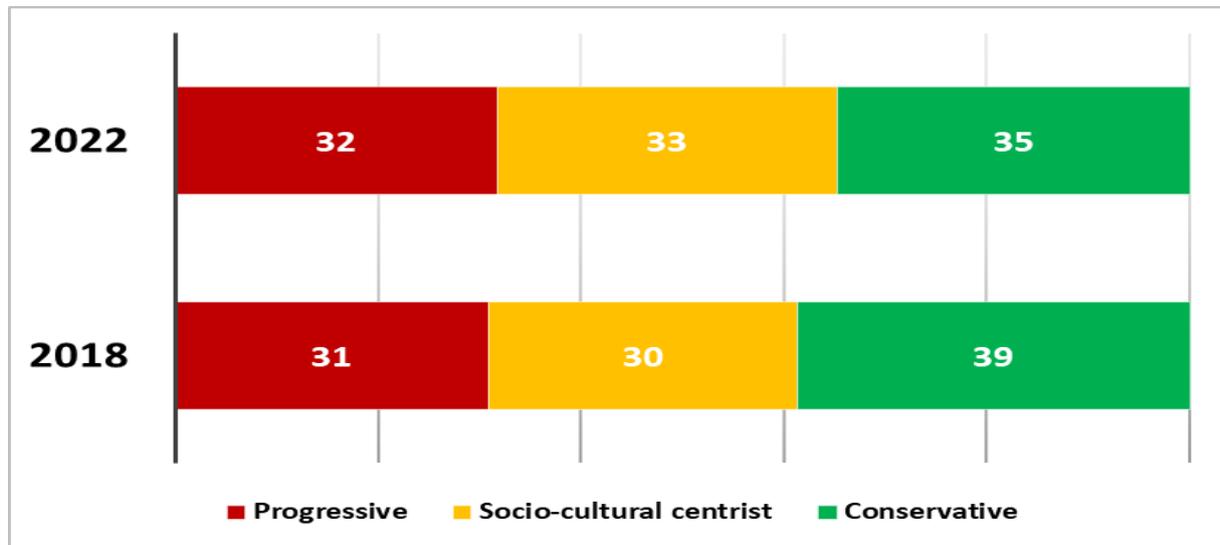
In Budapest, the share of each group varied within the margin of error. In the capital in 2022, seven out of ten respondents are market-critical (69%), nearly a quarter of respondents are centrist (23%) and only 8% are pro-market. In the county capitals, the share of economic leftists has decreased by 19 percentage points (54% in 2022), the share of economic centrists has increased by 11 percentage points (20%) and the share of right-wing (pro-market) respondents has increased by 8 percentage points (15%). In small towns, the change was even more marked: in 2022, only 48% of respondents were on the economic left (-24 percentage points), but in this residential category the share of centrists increased (39%, +21 percentage points), while the share of pro-market respondents did not change significantly (13%, +3 percentage points). In the villages, 59% of respondents are economically left-wing (-9 percentage points) - in this group, too, the share of centrists has increased (32%, +8 percentage points), while the share of pro-market respondents has remained practically the same (9%, +1 percentage point).

### **The socio-cultural values of Hungarians: a slight shift from conservative values towards the centre**

Between 2018 and 2022, the share of progressives on socio-cultural issues increased by 1 percentage point (from 31% to 32%) and the share of centrists increased by 3 percentage points (from 30% to 33%). The share of conservatives decreased by 4 percentage points (from 39% to 35%). In other words, in 2022 there is an equal share of progressive, centrist and conservative positions on socio-cultural issues (Graph 2). Despite the strong efforts of the Orbán government, Hungarian society has not become more conservative in four years, and there has been even a slight shift from conservative values towards the centre.



Graph 2. The values of Hungarian society on the socio-cultural progressive-conservative axis



42 percent of the Fidesz camp can be considered conservative on socio-cultural issues, and another 37 percent take a position close to the centre on these issues. One fifth of pro-government supporters is considered progressive on social issues. By contrast, almost half of opposition voters are clearly progressive on socio-cultural issues, and a further quarter can be classified as centrist. One in four opposition voters is culturally conservative. Among far-right Our Homeland voters, there are proportionally as many culturally conservative voters as among Fidesz voters, but more progressive voters than among Fidesz voters.

### **Widening progressive-conservative divide by place of residence and political preferences**

The widening of the urban vs. rural value gap is shown by the fact that the share of progressives in Budapest has increased by 13 percentage points in the last four years, while it has decreased by 8 percentage points in the villages. Moving towards smaller settlements, the share of progressives tends to decrease, while the share of conservatives increases. In Budapest, there are far more progressive than conservative respondents (51% vs. 21%), while the reverse is true in villages (25% vs. 42%).

The proportion of progressives increases and the proportion of conservatives decreases towards higher education groups. While the proportion of progressives is almost twice as high among graduates (44% vs. 25%), the opposite is true for those with at most a primary school degree (25% vs. 43%). Between 2018 and 2022, the proportion of conservatives in the lowest education group decreased by 9 percentage points and the proportion of those with a position close to the centre increased by the same amount. Among those with a vocational education, the share of conservatives decreased by 10 percentage points, the share of centrists increased by 6 percentage points, and the share of progressives increased

by 4 percentage points. The change in the proportions of each cultural group in the graduate categories is within the margin of error. The impact of education has therefore changed over the past four years. While the ideological polarisation on socio-cultural issues has increased on the "urban vs. rural" axis, these differences have decreased on the "higher educated vs. lower educated" axis.

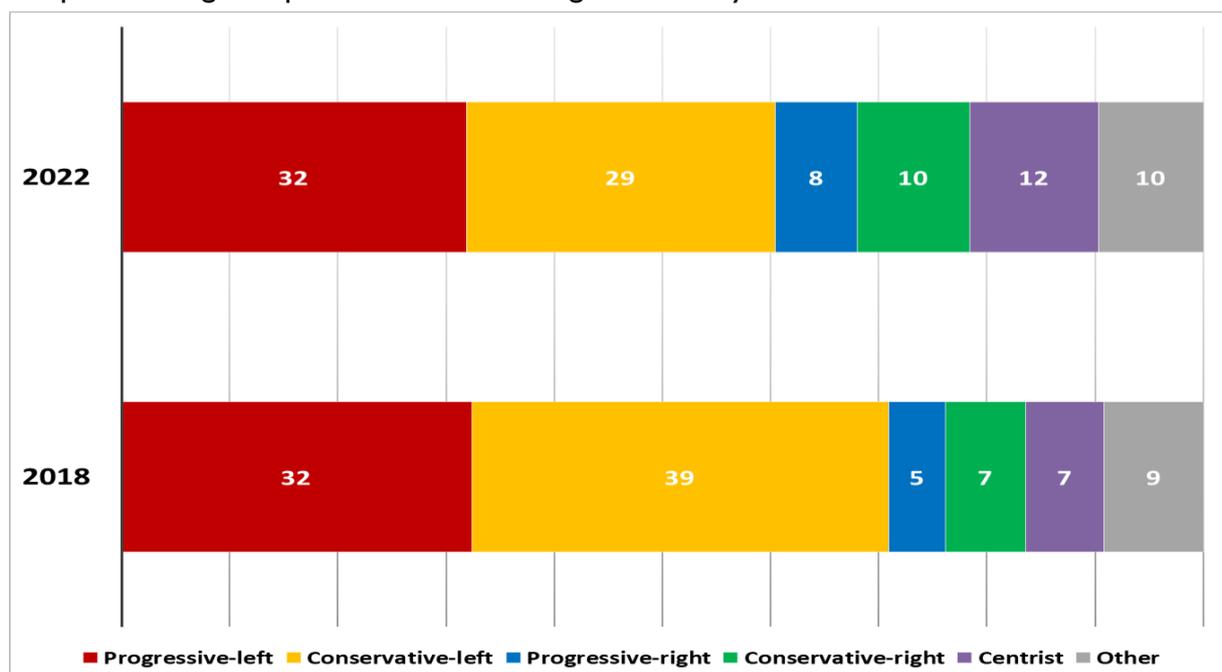
The female respondents were significantly more progressive than the male group in both 2018 and 2022. The over-50 age group was significantly more right-wing (in socio-cultural terms) than the under-30 age group in both 2018 and 2022.

Changes in the impact of party political preferences also show a picture of increasing polarisation. Over four years, all opposition groups have seen an increase in the cultural gap compared to the government: all opposition camps are now culturally farther away from Fidesz than in 2018.

### Complex value groups in Hungarian society

Based on our data for 2018 and 2022, we also examined economic and socio-cultural world views in a two-dimensional space (Graph 3). The proportion of progressive-left respondents has not changed over four years: one third of Hungarians (32%) fall into this category. The most significant change is the decrease in the number of conservative-left respondents: 39% in 2018 and 29% in 2022. This represents a drop of 10 percentage points, well beyond the margin of error. The share of progressive-right and conservative-right respondents has increased slightly (by 3-3 percentage points for both groups), with 8% of the population in the former category and 10% in the latter. The share of centrists has increased from 7% to 12% in four years.

Graph 3. Changes in political values in Hungarian society between 2018 and 2022

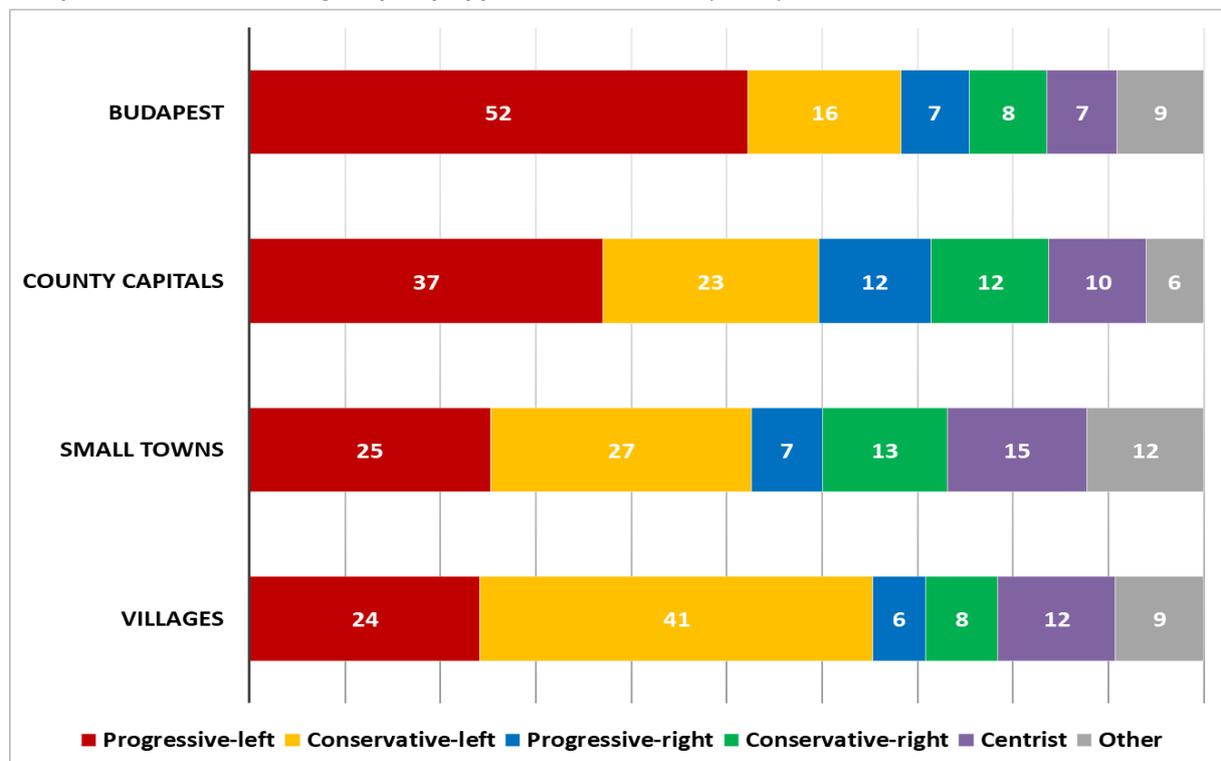




## Half of Budapest residents are progressive-left, 40 percent of those in the villages are conservative-left

There is a striking pattern in the breakdown of ideological value groups by settlement type (Graph 4). In Budapest, the share of progressive-left is 20 percentage points above the average (52%) and constitutes an absolute majority. The same proportion is 5 percentage points above the average in the county capitals (37%), while in the smaller municipalities it is 7-8 percentage points below the average (25% and 24%). The opposite trend is seen in the distribution of conservative-leftists by place of residence. This group is least represented in Budapest (16%), slightly more in the county capitals and small towns (23% and 27%) and particularly high in villages (41%). The proportion of the other groups does not differ significantly from the average.

Graph 4. Political value groups by type of settlement (2022)



The proportion of progressive-leftists is above average in the under-40 age groups (36% and 35%), while the proportion is significantly below average in the over-60 age groups (28%). The proportion of conservative-leftists is above average in the over-50 age groups (34% and 33%). By contrast, the same proportion is well below average in the under-40 age groups (21% and 25%).

The breakdown by educational level also reveals marked differences. The proportion of progressive-leftists in the groups without a high school degree is significantly lower by 9-18 percentage points (27% and 26%) than among those with high school graduation (36%) and among university graduates (44%). Conservative-leftists are most numerous among those

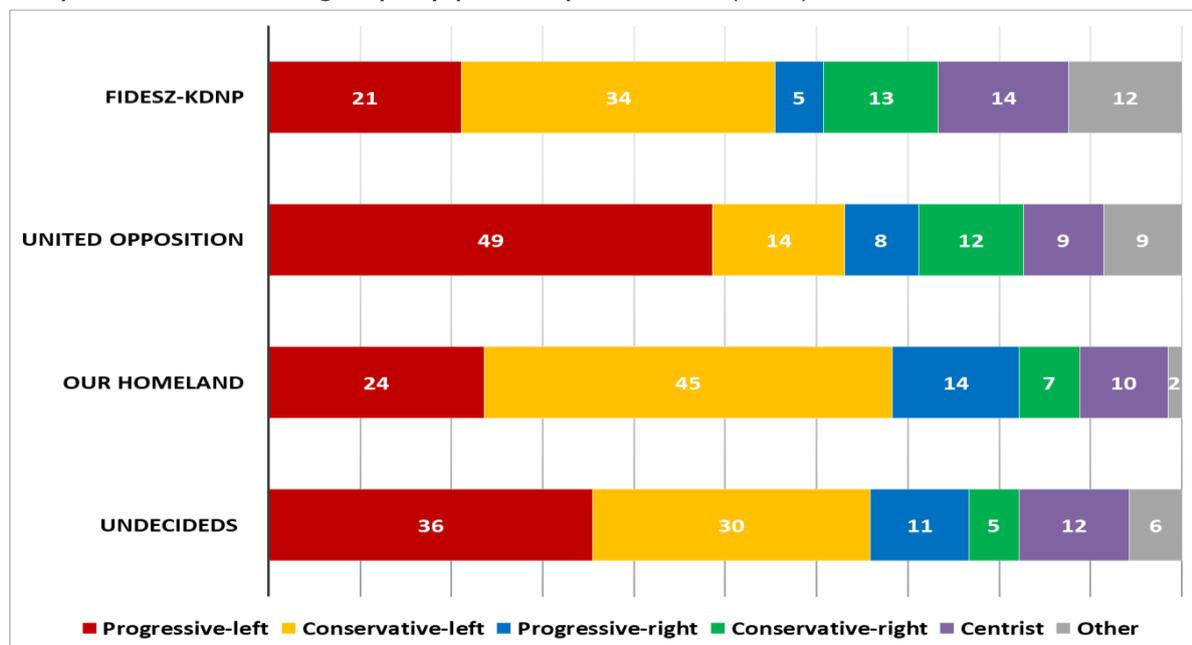
with at most a primary education (39%). The proportion is 11-17 percentage points lower in the groups with higher education (22-28%).

28% of men are progressive-left, while significantly more women fall into the same category (35%). By contrast, there are more conservative-left respondents among men (31%) than women (26%). There are slightly more progressive-right respondents among women than men (9% vs. 6%), but the proportion of conservative-right respondents is similar for both sexes (10% vs. 11%). Centrists account for one-tenth of both women and men.

### Among Fidesz and Our Homeland voters, the largest group is conservative-left, while among opposition voters it is progressive-left

We also examined the distribution of the complex value groups of Hungarian society in terms of political preferences (Graph 5). It is striking that half of the supporters of the joint opposition list belong to one group, the progressive-left (49%), while a good third of the undecideds (36%), a quarter of the supporters of Our Homeland (24%) and a fifth of Fidesz supporters (21%) belong to the same group. Conservative-left voters are the largest group among both Fidesz (34%) and Our Homeland (45%) voters. A third of the non-partisan voters belong to this group, while only 14% of opposition voters are conservative-left. The proportion of progressive-right is above average among Our Homeland supporters (14%) and among those without a party (11%), average among opposition supporters (8%) and below average among Fidesz voters (5%). Conservative-right supporters are more numerous among supporters of the two main political blocs (13% and 12%), while fewer among Our Homeland voters and those without a party (7% and 5%).

Graph 5. Political value groups by political preferences (2022)



## **Economic policy issues: demand for state intervention and reduction of social inequalities remains high, but empathy for the poor and unemployed is waning**

Of the 14 economic policy statements in the survey, the majority of Hungarians take a left-wing position on eight of them, while the majority of Hungarians take a right-wing position on six. In many cases, the left-wing majority is overwhelming, while the differences are generally smaller for those economic policy statements where the right-wing view predominates.

Hungarians are clearly left-wing in areas such as ensuring good quality and state-run universal health care (82% support), reducing social inequalities (also 82%), state support for the less well-off (78%), the need to regulate the market (78%), a progressive tax system (73%), or the right to strike (68%).

Society is more divided on the question of state funding of culture (48% of Hungarians expect state support for culture, while 47% prefer market-based operation), the incentive effect of large pay differences (51% say there is no incentive effect, while 48% say large pay differentials are acceptable), and the causes of poverty (50% say it is a matter of individual responsibility, while 47% say it is a more complex social phenomenon).

Hungarians tend to take a more right-wing position on economic policy in four areas. The strongest right-wing predominance can be observed on the causes of unemployment: two thirds of Hungarians (69%) believe that it is a matter of individual responsibility whether or not someone finds a job in Hungary today. Hungarian society also tends to have strong feelings against a general wealth tax (52% of Hungarians reject this idea), while negative feelings and experiences with the performance of the state are strongly reflected in the majority's view that private companies do more for people's well-being than the state (55% agree with this statement). Hungarians have a generally positive view of the world economic system (59%): the majority believe that all countries have an equal chance and opportunity to catch up in the existing global economic order.

Overall, there is still a high demand for a strong state, reducing social inequalities, guaranteeing workers' rights or for controlling private companies. However, in four years, there has been a drop of up to 10-20 percentage points in support for the left in several areas. There is a clear shift towards a right-wing position on economic policy in areas such as the question of state support for culture (18 percentage points down from 66% to 48%), the responsibility of poverty (16 percentage points down from 63% to 47%) and the causes of unemployment (11 percentage points down from 40% to 29%).

## **Socio-cultural issues: traditional family model and social homogeneity are popular, but Hungarians value individual freedom**

Of our 14 socio-cultural statements, eight received a majority for the conservative position and six for the progressive position. Conservative views are particularly popular when it comes to traditional family roles: 79 per cent of Hungarians think that teaching discipline and order is the primary goal of child-rearing, 67 per cent think the world is a good place when the man is the head of the family, and 58 per cent think that a slap is okay in child-rearing.

There is also a rejection of certain minorities. 72 percent of Hungarians do not believe in the integration of Roma people, and there is also a strong desire to maintain social homogeneity: 56 percent do not find it acceptable for people of other cultures to move to Hungary. In addition, the vast majority of Hungarians prefer quick and even unilateral decision-making in politics (59%).

In 2022, the most divisive socio-cultural issues are the question of reinstating the death penalty (50% of Hungarians would reinstate it, while 47% reject it) and the question of tolerance towards the LGBTQ community (49% would accept it, while 46% would be 'ashamed if a family member was gay').

A clear progressive stance on abortion remains the overwhelming majority in Hungary (80% would allow it). Many believe that all authority is questionable (76%) and a majority (55%) see the primary role of prison as rehabilitation of the convicted. The majority of Hungarians believe that goodness is a fundamental part of human nature (68%), and that the fact that the world is constantly changing is a fundamentally positive thing. Hungarian society thus shows progressive traits in the importance it attaches to individual freedom and independence (see for example the acceptance of abortion and the questioning of authority).

On socio-cultural issues, changes of more than 5 percentage points were measured in only four areas. On immigration, the negative stance has softened: while in 2018 two thirds of Hungarians (68%) rejected the idea of people from other cultures moving to Hungary, 4 years later this share is 12 percentage points lower (56%). In addition, 58% consider physical punishment during child-rearing acceptable, compared to almost two-thirds (64%) in 2018. However, Hungarians are even more determined to see quick and not necessarily consensus-based decision-making in politics (up 9 percentage points, 59%), and even more of them see the traditional family model (up 10 percentage points, 67%) as a model to follow.