

Hungary

INDEX 2026	INDEX 2025
74 180 Score : 59.85	68 180 Score : 62.82
POLITICAL INDICATOR	128 33.89
ECONOMIC INDICATOR	70 44.98
LEGAL INDICATOR	72 63.84
SOCIAL INDICATOR	56 70.35
SECURITY INDICATOR	66 86.17
POLITICAL INDICATOR	124 37.14
ECONOMIC INDICATOR	64 48.07
LEGAL INDICATOR	64 67.96
SOCIAL INDICATOR	46 74.88
SECURITY INDICATOR	63 86.03

Péter Magyar's victory in the 2026 general election offers a unique opportunity – the first in 16 years – to break the deadlock on press freedom created by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who is classified as a press freedom predator by RSF.

Media landscape

The market is highly concentrated as the KESMA Foundation – built to serve Viktor Orbán's government, just like public media outlets – which holds around 500 national and local media outlets. However, independent media outlets maintain strong positions in other segments of the national market. They include the *RTL Klub* television network, the YouTube channel *Partizán*, the daily *Népszava*, the weekly *HVG*, and the news sites *24.hu*, *444.hu* and *Telex*.

Political context

During Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's 16-year-long rule, public broadcasting was turned into a propaganda machine and several private media outlets were taken over or silenced. As a result of political and economic manoeuvres and the buyout of media outlets by oligarchs with close ties to Fidesz, the former ruling party, this group now controls 80% of the country's media landscape.

Legal framework

Regulatory agencies – which were under total control of Fidesz – have absolved themselves of their responsibility to deal with the concentration of ownership of the private media and political control of the public media by claiming lack of jurisdiction. In 2021, the agencies arbitrarily banned the last major independent radio station, *Klubradio*, from the airwaves, which led to Hungary being condemned by the EU Court of Justice. The Sovereignty Protection Office, created by a law adopted in 2023, was a tool for smear campaigns against journalists.

Economic context

The midsize media market is not accustomed to monetising content and, during the Orbán years, the sustainable funding of independent media was threatened by the discriminatory allocation of state advertising in favour of pro-government outlets. The shrinking revenue of major news site *Index.hu* enabled a company close to Fidesz to take it over in 2020; the same company also bought the country's biggest newspaper, *Blikk*, in 2025.

Sociocultural context

Viktor Orbán's government regularly accused critical media outlets of spreading false information and of being financed by George Soros, the American billionaire of Hungarian and Jewish origin, a rhetoric echoed by pro-government media. Furthermore, conservative forces within the former government benefited from the weak legal framework to initiate proceedings against journalistic content deemed too liberal.

Safety

While Hungarian journalists are only rarely subject to physical assault or unjustified police interrogation, the Hungarian state is the only European Union member to have arbitrarily monitored journalists using Pegasus spyware. As smear campaigns against journalists have proliferated, those critical of Orbán's former government have been harassed online by supporters of Fidesz.

ABUSES IN REAL TIME IN HUNGARY

Killed since 1st January 2026

- 0 journalists
- 0 media workers

0

Detained as of today

- 0 journalists
- 0 media workers

0

ALL POSTS

All posts

VIOLENCE AGAINST JOURNALISTS NEWS
16.06.2026

Transnational Repression: RSF calls on the EU and its member states to join forces to protect journalists in exile

RSF welcomes the European Parliament's adoption of a resolution on Transnational Repression. It sends an important political signal. Nevertheless, protecting journalists in exile requires decisive action not only from the EU but also from member states



LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND JUSTICE SYSTEM NEWS
09.06.2026

"Authoritarianism doesn't end on election night": Journalist Szabolcs Panyi on how Hungary's new government must deliver media freedom reforms

Investigative journalist Szabolcs Panyi from the online outlet VSquare made waves when he broke a story on Hungary's coordination with Russia during the European Union summits shortly before the parliamentary election.



INDEPENDENCE AND PLURALISM MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY NEWS
12.05.2026

European media funding: AgoraEU programme's new focus on journalism is welcome news, ambitious financial support must now follow

The Council of Culture Ministers of the European Union (EU) has endorsed the creation of a dedicated "news and journalism" strand within the future AgoraEU programme. Now, the challenge will be to allocate substantial financial resources.



Show more posts

REGION

EUROPE - CENTRAL ASIA

Widespread decline as legal protections erode

Europe and Central Asia: Widespread decline as legal protections erode

Learn about the region

Support us

Your donations enable RSF to keep working. We depend on you in order to be able to monitor respect for press freedom and take action worldwide.

Make a donation

Become a member

Media freedom is a fundamental right, but nearly half of the world's population has no access to freely reported news and information. We need you. Join our organisation!

Join

Book of photos

You support our activities when you buy our books of photos: all of the profits go to Reporters Without Borders. Thanks to you, we remain independent."

Visit the shop