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2012 Elections in Serbia: New Political Landscape in Belgrade, Reduction of Minority Hungarian Representation

Parliamentary, provincial, local, and early presidential elections were held on 6th May 2012 in Serbia. Boris Tadić (Democratic Party) had resigned nine months before the end of his presidential term and called for early presidential elections, because he expected a greater chance of being re-elected if all the elections were held on the same day. Moreover, Tadić hoped to improve his party's positions on the parliamentary, provincial and local level with his candidacy. Preliminary surveys had justified Tadić's belief on his chances, however, the final results of the presidential elections proved to be a bitter surprise for the former Serbian president. His rival, Tomislav Nikolić, nominee of the Serbian Progressive Party was elected president, and Nikolić's party turned out to be the winner of the parliamentary elections as well. Consequently, a significant transformation in the Serbian domestic scene is to be expected. This paper examines the results of the parliamentary elections; moreover, it will put more emphasis on the analysis of the results of the provincial and local elections in Vojvodina, since those results are more important concerning the situation of the Hungarian minority in Serbia.

Parliamentary elections (Republican level)

Single ballot parliamentary elections were held on 6th May 2012 for the Belgrade legislature. Voter turnout was 57,77%, which means that 3,911,136 out of 6,770,013 cast a ballot. Preliminary surveys predicted the victory of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), and this prognosis, unlike the one about the presidential elections, proved to be true. 24,04% voted for the Progressive Party, while the rival Democratic Party achieved 22,11%. Accordingly, SNS has 73 and Democrats have 67 mandates in the Parliament. The Socialist Party

(SPS) was backed by 14,53 % (44 mandates), the Democratic Party of Serbia (not identical with the Democratic Party!) gained 7% (21 mandates), ‘Turnover’, an alliance led by the Liberal Democrats obtained 6,52% (19 mandates), and the United Regions of Serbia reached 5,49% (16 mandates).

Party	Mandate
Serbian Progressive Party	73
Democratic Party	67
Socialist Party of Serbia*	44
Democratic Party of Serbia	21
Turnover**	19
United Regions of Serbia	16
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	5
Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak	2
All Together	1
None of the Above (Vlach Party)	1
Albanian Coalition from Preševo Valley	1

* Joint list of the Socialist Party of Serbia, Party of United Pensioners of Serbia, and United Serbia.

** Led by the Liberal Democratic Party.

Among the parties of minorities; the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians gained 1,77% resulting in 5 representatives in parliament, the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak obtained 0,69% (2 mandates), and both the list of ‘All Together’ (formed by Croatian, Hungarian, Bosniak, Slovak and Macedonian ethnic minority parties) and the Albanian Coalition from Preševo Valley acquired 1 mandate. Two Hungarian parties¹ joined the list of ‘All Together’; the Democratic Fellowship of Vojvodina Hungarians and the Hungarian Civic Alliance; however, the arrival position of the ‘All Together’ list was occupied by Emir Elfić, president of the Bosniak Democratic Union. Although 15 Hungarian candidates were nominated on the ‘All Together’ list (for example, Áron Csonka, president of Democratic Fellowship of Vojvodina

¹ Vojvodina-Hungarians are deeply divided politically; in 2012, 5 Hungarian parties contested for the votes of ethnic Hungarians. It is the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians that could register its lists for the presidential, parliamentary, provincial and local elections as well, the other four Hungarian parties mostly participated only in the local elections.

Hungarians on the 5th and László Rác Szabó, president of Hungarian Civic Alliance on the 15th place), there was no actual chance for the Hungarian candidates on the 'All Together' list to win parliamentary mandates. The remaining two Hungarian parties – Democratic Party of Vojvodina Hungarians and Hungarian Hope Movement – could not register their lists for the parliamentary elections. A curiosity among the minority lists was the Vlach party, whose list was named 'None of The Above'; the party recruiting its supporters on Facebook and could obtain one parliamentary mandate.

Serbian parliament after the 2012 elections²

The Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians had 4 Members of Parliament in the previous term, so in the 2012 elections it was able to expand its presence in parliament to 5 mandates. It is important to note, however, that this improvement was not due to the number of votes given to the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (AVH) but rather to the system of the Serbian parliamentary elections that, in this case, favored the Hungarian party. Nevertheless, the AVH doubted the correctness of the Serbian elections; according to István Pásztor, president of AVH, a significant number of votes was stolen from the party in the presidential, parliamentary, and provincial elections. It was not only the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians that criticized the transparency of the parliamentary elections; both the Serbian Progressive Party and the United Regions of Serbia expressed similar claims. Moreover, the Republican Electoral Commission reported electoral fraud as well. Some even claimed that the volume of the electoral fraud resembled that of the Milošević era (Tomislav Nikolić stated that the register of voters contained 5,000 non-existing or already dead persons), and although the elections had to be held repeatedly in several places because of the objections raised, the elections were not annulled by the Electoral Commission.

The process of government formation was delayed long after the elections. According to the first speculations, a Democratic–Socialist coalition was expected, possibly in alliance with the Party of United

² More information on the results of the elections available on the website of the Republican Electoral Commission http://www.rik.parlament.gov.rs/latinica/propisi_frames.htm

Pensioners of Serbia, United Serbia and the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians. This scenario, however, was soon abandoned, and many other alternatives came to the fore. Finally, the Socialist Party of Serbia was asked to form a government, but only after the second round of the presidential and provincial elections. The reason why it took so long to form the coalition is manifold – and here we have to refer at least to the anxiety surrounding the Progressive Party.

Tomislav Nikolić was vice-president of the Serbian Radical Party until 2008. The president of the party is Vojislav Šešelj, who is currently on trial for alleged war crimes and is suspected of being involved in crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague. The nationalist Radical Party was a coalition partner of Slobodan Milošević between 1998 and 2000, and is well-known for its anti-minority (Croatian, Albanian, Hungarian, etc.) declarations, anti-European politics, and its commitment to keep Kosovo under Serbian authority. In 2008, a fraction led by Tomislav Nikolić seceded from the Radical Party, and soon after they organized themselves into the Serbian Progressive Party. The reason for the break with Šešelj and his radical companions was their refusal to ratify of the Stabilization and Association Agreement signed with the EU, while Nikolić and his followers supported the ratification of the Agreement. We might say that standing for EU-integration was a surprising turnaround from the hitherto radical Nikolić; however, political analysts claim that the foundation of a new party was a realistic move on the part of Nikolić, since even the disappointed radical voters saw the only chance for the economic recovery in the European Union by 2008. Time has confirmed Nikolić's tactics, since the newly founded Serbian Progressive Party obtained the overwhelming majority of the Radical Party's voters already in 2008.³

Considering Nikolić's recent attitude towards the EU, it can be predicted with certainty that Serbia will not leave the path of European integration during his presidential term. However, we cannot neglect the public anxiety concerning the newly elected Serbian president, which are evoked by some of Nikolić's statements, or rather by the rhetoric that is a "heritage" of his former radical party. Soon

³ <http://www.mon.hu/hirek/frisshirek/cikk/visszaszorulo-radikalisok-szerbiaban/cn/haon-news-charlotteInform-20081116-0151397300>

after his election, Nikolić declared in a Montenegrin TV interview that what happened in Srebrenica in 1995 was not genocide but only a “grievous crime”. In the same interview did he express his view that Montenegro should not have to secede from Serbia, since he “cannot see any difference between the two nations”⁴. He did not succeed in establishing good neighborliness with Croatia either with his comment that Vukovar is not a Croatian town, so Croatian refugees do not have to return there. Both the American and European Union diplomacy disapproved of the abovementioned statements; moreover, neither the Croatian, nor the Bosnian, nor the Slovenian president attended in Nikolić’s presidential inauguration. Consequently, we might conclude that Nikolić’s presidency might not be completely conflictless.

Not only did the Serbian Progressive Party obtain the presidency but they gained a relative majority of the votes in the parliamentary elections as well, thus transforming the Serbian domestic scene. However, their possible coalition partners seemed to be unwilling to form an alliance with the “post-radical” party, even if the Progressives share very similar views with the former-governing Democrats on the major questions (e.g. EU-accession, non-recognition of Kosovo as an independent state). Finally, the Socialist Party of Serbia was asked to form a government, which party chose the Progressive Party and the United Regions of Serbia as partners. Considering the outcome of the coalition talks, namely that the Socialists turned to the Progressive party rather than to their former ally, the Democrats, one might conclude that the hesitation was not due to ideological differences but rather to political bargaining. Ivica Dačić, president of the Socialist Party, became prime minister, although this position should have been reserved for the most powerful party of the coalition, that is, for the Progressive Party. Supposedly, the Democratic Party would not have given up the prime minister’s position for the Socialists; therefore the prime minister’s position must have played a key role during the coalition talks. Moreover, the second round of the presidential elections with the victory of Tomislav Nikolić made the Progressive Party even more attractive as a coalition partner.

⁴ http://index.hu/kulfold/2012/06/01/nikolic_srebrenicaban_nem_volt_nepirtas/

As already mentioned, the final results of the presidential elections turned out to be a surprise, since surveys predicted a better chance for Boris Tadić, and the results of the first round further confirmed this suggestion (Tadić 25,31%, Nikolić 25,05%). 12 candidates raced in the first round of the presidential elections, among them István Pásztor, president of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians. Pásztor made it clear prior to the elections that his candidacy only serves the aim of having a better bargaining position; in case Pásztor would have withdrawn in the second round to support Tadić, and Tadić was reelected president, surely it would have been quite beneficial for the Hungarian party. However, after the first round of the elections, when the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians suspected significant electoral fraud, Pásztor declared that he would not back Tadić in the second run if it turns out that the Democratic Party was involved in the fraud. Finally, Pásztor kept to the original plan, and called the Hungarians to vote for Tadić in the second run, although he publically expressed his personal disappointment in the Democratic Party and in Serbian democracy as well.⁵

The results of the first round of the presidential elections were the following:

- Boris Tadić (Democratic Party) 25,31%;
- Tomislav Nikolić (Serbian Progressive Party) 25,05%;
- Ivica Dacic (Socialist Party of Serbia) 14,23%,
- Vojislav Kostunica (Democratic Party of Serbia) 7,44%,
- Zoran Stankovic (United Regions of Serbia) 6,58%,
- Cedomir Jovanovic (Liberal Democratic Party) 5,03%,
- Jadranka Seselj (Serbian Radical Party) 3,78%,
- Vladan Glisic (independent, supported by Dveri) 2,77%,
- Pásztor István (Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians) 1,62%,
- Zoran Dragisic (independent, supported by Movement of Workers and Peasants of Serbia) 1,54%,
- Muamer Zukorlic (independent, mufti of the Islamic Community of Serbia) 1,39%,
- Danica Grujicic (Social Democratic Alliance) 0,78%

⁵ http://www.magyarszo.com/fex.page:2012-05-17_Pasztor_Istvan_Az_elnokvalasz-tason_Boris_Tadicot.xhtml

The second round of the presidential elections brought about the victory of Tomislav Nikolić, who won 49,51% of the votes, while Tadić won 47,35%. According to analysts, the Progressive Party was successful in mobilizing its supporters, while the Democrats took the victory granted and therefore did not make enough efforts to mobilize their voters. Voter turnout confirms this supposition; while it was 57,7% in the first round, it fell back to 46,3% in the second round. It is worth mentioning that Boris Tadić “won” both rounds of the presidential elections in the territory of Vojvodina.

After having seen the success of the Serbian Progressive Party in the parliamentary and presidential elections, it is worth paying some attention to the campaign as well. As it is known, Serbia has taken steps to prove its commitment to European integration recently. A major stage on its way to the EU was completed in March 2012 by receiving full candidate status. The presidency of Boris Tadić played a crucial role for speeding up the process; he was able to fulfill the requirements set by the EU (judiciary reforms, improvement of democracy, human and minority rights, etc.), while at the same time consistently keeping to the principal of not recognizing Kosovo. It seems that Tadić’s achievements were not convincing enough for the Serbian citizens to reelect him, which was probably due to the current economic situation of the country rather than the low prestige of the EU-candidacy. Although Serbian citizens still favored EU-integration in 2012, actual crises management must have been more attractive than the advancement of EU-accession for a population hit by high rates of unemployment and financial difficulties. Consequently, it is not surprising that in this situation, a post-radical party with a populist campaign had greater chance than a party that – although it had achieved great results in the accession process, but – failed to manage the economic crises. Thus, principles and ideologies did not matter much in the 2012 elections in Serbia, which is supported by the fact that the Progressive Party is basically in agreement with the Democrats on issues like Kosovo or EU-accession. The only difference between them can be traced in the more nationalist rhetoric of the Progressives (see above the first utterances of Nikolić). Now let us turn our attention to the results of the provincial elections.

Provincial elections

The provincial legislature in Vojvodina was elected in two rounds; in the first round (6 May), 60 members (out of 120) were elected from party lists, while the second round (20 May) – since none of the individual candidates acquired the absolute majority of votes in the first round – decided on the remaining 60 seats by selecting individual candidates. The Democratic Party scored a victory in the provincial elections (remember that Tadić defeated Nikolić in Vojvodina in the presidential elections as well). The results were the following:

Party	Mandate
Democratic Party	58
Serbian Progressive Party	22
Socialist Party of Serbia	13
League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina	10
Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians	7
Serbian Radical Party	5
Democratic Party of Serbia	4
Turnover	1

As it is shown in the table, the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians was the only Hungarian party out of 5 which won seats in the provincial parliament. The Alliance had 9 members in the Novi Sad parliament in the previous term, therefore the 2012 results are not reassuring at all. A positive feature is, however, that István Pásztor, president of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians was elected president of the Provincial Assembly of Vojvodina.

The statutory meeting of the Provincial Assembly was held 22 June 2012. The government was formed by a coalition of the Democratic Party, the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians and the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina. Bojan Pajtić (Democratic Party) became president of the government (similarly to the previous term). The portfolio of education, governance and ethnic communities was given to Andor Deli, politician of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians; all other portfolios are led by the Democrats (except culture and youth, which are held by the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina).

Among the Hungarian parties, the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians and the Hungarian Hope Movement was able to register a list for

the provincial elections. Moreover, further ethnic Hungarian candidates were present on the list of the already mentioned ‘All Together’ group, since the Democratic Fellowship of Vojvodina Hungarians and the Hungarian Civic Alliance cooperated with other minority communities in order to constitute a joint minority list. However, mandates in the provincial parliament were only won by the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians.⁶ Although it did not succeed in registering a list for the provincial elections, one of the individual candidates of the Democratic Party of Vojvodina Hungarian, András Gusztony, (municipality: Temerin) did enter the second round of the elections. Unfortunately, he did not win the mandate. It is widely known that the Hungarian party structure in Vojvodina is the most fragmented one among the minority Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin; there were 5 Hungarian parties to choose from in 2012. Founded in 1989, the Democratic Fellowship of Vojvodina Hungarians (DFVH) succeeded in winning the overwhelming majority of Hungarian votes on the 1990 elections, however, the promising situation came to a halt with the first schism in 1994. A fraction seceded from the DFVH, and founded the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (AVH). Another schism followed the DFVH’s failure in the parliamentary elections in 1997⁷; Vice-president Sándor Páll initiated the dismissal of founding-president András Ágoston from the presidential position. Ágoston’s response was, however, secession and the foundation of a new party: the Democratic Party of Vojvodina Hungarians (DPVH). Following the year 2000, new formations emerged: the Hungarian Civic Alliance and the Hungarian Hope Movement. Despite this pluralism of Hungarian parties, the majority of Hungarian votes goes to the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (AVH) since 1996, therefore the AVH is the only Hungarian party that is able to represent the interests of Vojvodina Hungarians on every level of the Serbian politics, on the local, provincial and national (Belgrade parliament) levels.

In December 2011, the four Hungarian parties of the „opposition” (DFVH, DPVH Hungarian Hope Movement, and Hungarian Civic Alliance) decided to unite on a joint list named “Hungarian Turnover”

⁶ <http://www.pik.skupstinavojvodine.gov.rs/docs/2012izvestajUkupniRezultati.pdf>

⁷ The Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians obtained approx. twice as many votes as the DFVH in the 1997 elections.

in order to challenge the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians on every level of the 2012 elections, and by doing so, offering an alternative choice for the Hungarian voters. However, the idea of the Hungarian Turnover coalition died soon, since, - after Viktor Orbán's (prime minister of Hungary) visit to Vojvodina it became evident that the Hungarian government would support the campaign of AVH, - the DPVH declared its refrain from participating in the parliamentary elections. On the other hand, András Ágoston (president of DPVH) emphasized that on the local and provincial level they would weaken the chances of AVH. I believe that this statement describes well that the plurality of Hungarian parties in Vojvodina is rather based on personal conflicts than on ideological differences. Meanwhile, the minority parties of the 'All Together' list began negotiating with the Hungarian parties as well, and it soon turned out that the DFPVH and the Hungarian Civic Alliance would be willing to cooperate with other minority parties (Croatian, Slovak, Bosniak) in the frames of such a list in order to achieve better results. The Hungarian Hope Movement did not join the list of 'All Together' coalition, which can be explained with the radical nationalist ideology of the party⁸; since the Hungarian Hope Movement is only willing to stand for the interests of the Hungarian minority, they did not want to cooperate with other national minorities. The campaign of the Hungarian Hope Movement was organized and realized with the active contribution of Jobbik, a radical nationalist party in the Hungarian parliament. Although the Movement did not win any mandates in the Provincial Assembly, the sheer capability to register an electoral list for the provincial elections should be regarded as a great achievement from such a young party as the Hungarian Hope Movement (it was founded in 2009).

Four mandates of the AVH in the provincial parliament were obtained from the electoral list, and the remaining three mandates were acquired by individual candidates in the municipalities of Szabadka (Subotica), Magyarkanizsa (Kanjiža), and Topolya (Bačka Topola). After the second round of the provincial elections it seemed that the AVH would have one more mandate in the Assembly, because László Kormányos won the second round in the municipality

⁸ Basically, it is only the Hungarian Hope Movement that can be differentiated on an ideological basis from the other Hungarian parties.

of Csóka (Čoka), however, the elections were run again due to the objections raised on the basis of electoral fraud, and in the new round Kormányos did not succeed to win the mandate.

The results of the local elections are just as important as the provincial elections concerning the representation of the interests of the Hungarian community in Serbia. Generally speaking, the popularity of the Democratic Party is still very high in the Province of Vojvodina, which is evident not only from the provincial but from the local results as well. The Democratic Party won a relative majority of votes in the local elections in the following municipalities (all of them having a great number of Hungarians): Szabadka (Subotica), Újvidék (Novi Sad), Ada (Ada), Óbecse (Bečej). The Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians obtained the majority of votes in the following municipalities (again, all of them dispose of a great number of Hungarians): Magyarkanizsa (Kanjiža), Zenta (Senta), Topolya (Bačka Topola), Csóka (Čoka), Kishegyes (Mali Iđoš). In no other municipalities of Vojvodina was the relative majority of votes obtained by any of the Hungarian parties.

In Subotica, the cultural, educational and political center of Vojvodina Hungarians, the Democratic Party obtained 26,67%, the AVH 22,52%, the Serbian Progressive Party 10,8%, several Serbian parties finished between 10 and 3 %, while the Hungarian Hope Movement won 1,64%, the DPVH 1,63%, and the 'All Together' coalition 0,76%. As the data show, none of the Hungarian parties could achieve significant support in Szabadka apart from the AVH; the other four Hungarian parties gained 1-2% lagging well behind Serbian (and Bunevac) parties. The situation is similar in other municipalities where the AVH seems to be the dominant Hungarian party: in Zenta, the AVH obtained the relative majority of votes, it was followed by Serbian parties, the Hungarian Civic Alliance won 8,77% arriving on the fourth place, while the other Hungarian parties only won 1-2%, which was, obviously, not enough to gain mandates in the municipal assembly.

The four smaller Hungarian parties, not surprisingly, were dissatisfied with the results, since there were only a few municipalities where they could perform better than the AVH. Even in Temerin, which is considered as the historical headquarter of the Democratic Party of Vojvodina Hungarians (DPVH), the DPVH obtained the

same number of mandates as the AVH, and they received only 30 votes more than the AVH.

However, the performance of the Hungarian Hope Movement is worth mentioning. Seemingly, the HHM performed just as weakly as the other smaller Hungarian parties, but if we take into account that it was the first time the HHM has participated in elections (except for the 2010 elections of the Hungarian National Council), the results of this party are remarkable in some municipalities. In Subotica, for example, the Hungarian Hope Movement outperformed both the DFBVH and the 'All Together' coalition, and won one mandate in the assembly. In Óbecse, HHM landed in first place among the smaller Hungarian parties, overtaking both the DFBVH and the Hungarian Civic Alliance. In Magyarakanizsa, HHM was the only Hungarian party that could win a mandate apart from the AVH. Obviously, far-reaching conclusions cannot be deduced from only one performance, not only because we do not dispose of former results that could be compared with the ones of 2012, but also because the results of local elections do not necessarily show the real potential of a party. It is well-known that in the case of local elections, personal questions (that is, the personality of a candidate) do matter, sometimes even more than a party's ideology. Nevertheless, further performance of the Hungarian Hope Movement should be carefully followed, since it is not inconceivable that the party may spring up - at least in certain municipalities - as the only serious rival to the AVH.

When analyzing the results of the AVH in 2012 we cannot disregard the party's result in the previous elections. In 2008, the AVH, the DPVH and the DFBVH registered a joint list named "Hungarian Coalition", and in the frame of which the 3 Hungarian parties were able to win a strong majority in most of the municipalities inhabited by large numbers of Hungarians. Compared to the results of the Hungarian Coalition in 2008, the performance of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians in 2012 shows an obvious decrease. This decrease can be partly explained with the fact that the votes of ethnic Hungarians were split between two or more Hungarian parties in 2012 (instead of the joint Hungarian list in 2008). However, if we calculate the sum of votes given to Hungarian parties in 2012, the negative tendency of votes for Hungarian parties is evident.

	2008 Hungarian Coalition	2012 AVH	2012 DPVH	2012 DFVH	2012 HCA	2012 HHM	2012 Hungarian parties together	Notes
Ada (Ada)	26,60%	19,74%		3,21%	2,74%	1,15%	39,06%	An independent Hungarian list won further 12,22%
Csóka (Čoka)		30,74%					30,74%	
Kishegyes (Mali Idoš)	37,99%	26,23%					26,23%	
Magyarkanizsa (Kanjiža)	52,27%	32,59%				3,84%	36,43%	
Nagybecskerek (Zrenjanin)	3,18%	3,31%					3,31%	
Óbecse (Bečej)	30,28%	15,94%	2,44%	1,58%	1%	1,80%	21,76%	
Szabadka (Subotica)	27,42%	22,52%		1,63%		1,64%	26,55%	'All Together' list: 0,76%
Temerin (Temerin)	22,30%							
Topolya (Bačka Topola)	47,32%	29,60%	3,47%				39,45%	An independent Hungarian list won further 6,38%
Zenta (Senta)	33,40%	35,10%		2,31%	9,33%	2,01%	48,75%	

Comparative results of 2008 and 2012 (based on %)⁹

⁹ The comparative tables are based on the results published on the website of CeSid (<http://direktorijum.cesid.org/Izbori.aspx?godina=2008&izbori=Lokalni%202008> and <http://cesid.org/lt/articles/rezultati-izbora-2012/>)

	2008 Hungarian Coalition	2012 AVH	2012 DPVH	2012 DFVH	2012 HCA	2012 HHM	2012 Hungarian parties together	Notes
Ada (Ada)	2703	1767		288	246	103	3498	An independent Hungarian list won further 1094 votes
Csóka (Čoka)		1829					1829	
Kishegyes (Mali Idoš)	2367	1616					1616	
Magyarkanizsa (Kanjiža)	7913	4172				491	4663	
Nagybecskerek (Zrenjanin)	2087	1986					1986	
Óbecse (Bečej)	6366	3049	467	302	191	345	4354	
Szabadka (Subotica)	22300	15914		1149		1157	18760	'All Together' list: 540
Temerin (Temerin)	3540	1164	1197				2361	
Topolya (Bačka Topola)	9247	5324	625				7097	An independent Hungarian list won further 1148 votes
Zenta (Senta)	4444	3828		252	1018	220	5318	

Comparative results of 2008 and 2012 (based on the number of votes)

	2008 Hungarian Coalition	2012 AVH	2012 DPVH	2012 DFVH	2012 HCA	2012 HHM	Notes
Ada (Ada)	9	6		1			An independent Hungarian list won further 4 mandates
Csóka (Čoka)	8	9					
Kishegyes (Mali Idoš)	12	8					
Magyarkanizsa (Kanjiža)	19	11				1	
Nagybecskerek (Zrenjanin)	2	3					
Óbecse (Bečej)	13	8	1				
Szabadka (Subotica)	21	16		1		1	
Temerin (Temerin)	8	3	3	na.	na.	na.	
Topolya (Bačka Topola)	22	16					An independent Hungarian list won further 3 mandates
Zenta (Senta)	12	12			3		The Hungarian Civic Alliance (HCA) won 4 mandates in 2008

Comparative results of 2008 and 2012 (based on the number of mandates)

The tables show that the AVH performed worse in 2012 than the Hungarian Coalition in 2008 in the municipalities of Kishegyes, Magyarkanizsa, Óbecse, Szabadka, and Topolya, and the number of mandates won by Hungarian candidates shows a declining tendency as well. It is partially due to the large proportion of Hungarian votes given to Serbian parties, and partially to demographic reasons, that is, the continuous decrease of the Hungarian population in Vojvodina. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the Democratic Party disposed of many ethnic Hungarian candidates in the municipalities of Vojvodina (for example, in Zenta, out of 10 representatives of the Democratic Party 6 are ethnic Hungarians). The Democratic Party and the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians formed a coalition¹⁰

¹⁰ In some places, the AVH-DP coalition was strengthened with other parties.

in many municipalities, including Szabadka, Csóka, Topolya, or Magyarkanizsa.

The analysis of the performance of Hungarian parties in the 2012 local elections can be concluded with the following remarks. The asymmetry in the popularity of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians versus the smaller Hungarian parties has been confirmed with the 2012 elections; the AVH is still the only Hungarian party that is able to win mandates at every level (parliamentary, provincial, local) of the Serbian elections, and the four remaining Hungarian parties are forced back into certain municipal assemblies. Ethnic Hungarians in Serbia have tended to vote for Serbian parties for a long time; this phenomenon was perceptible in 2012 as well.

Since the Democratic Party, long-standing ally of AVH was not invited into the Belgrade coalition government, and therefore the AVH refused to participate in the coalition as well, we can assume that the new government term will be less productive in terms of minority- and human rights improvements than the former one was. Nevertheless, the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, having 5 representatives in the Belgrade parliament, may well exploit the opportunities hidden in the status of “constructive opposition”.

Education

