

ELECTORAL GUIDELINES
155.

INFORMATION BOOKLET

**for international observers and
the representatives of the international media
attending the national referendum on
the 9th March 2008**



ELECTORAL GUIDELINES
155.

INFORMATION BOOKLET
for international observers and
the representatives of the international media
attending the national referendum on
the 9th of March 2008

Budapest, 2008

Editor of the series of „Electoral Guidelines”

EMÍLIA RYTKÓ
Head of the National Election Office

Compiled by:

Balázs Fügi

Revised by:

Emília Rytókó

Prepared for printing by:

Marianna Szabó-Ladik

ISSN: 1216-5530

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	7
I. The referendum system.....	9
I. 1. Direct democracy in Hungary	9
I. 2. Provisions of law regulating referenda.....	9
I. 3. When shall a national referendum be called?.....	10
I. 4. Who can participate in a referendum?.....	11
<i>I. 4.1. General conditions.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>I. 4.2. Voting in a foreign country.....</i>	<i>11</i>
I. 5. Election bodies at the referendum	11
<i>I. 5.1. The election committees.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>I. 5.2. Composition of the election committees</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>I. 5.3. The election offices</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>I. 5.4. Election Information Service (EIS).....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>I. 5.5. The National Election Centre</i>	<i>15</i>
I. 6. The voting process.....	15
<i>I. 6.1. Voting in Hungary.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>I. 6.2. Voting in a foreign country.....</i>	<i>16</i>
I. 7. Establishment of the result	17
I. 8. Legal remedy	18
<i>I. 8.1. General rules of legal remedy</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>I. 8.2. Legal remedy in national referenda.....</i>	<i>18</i>
II. IT SUPPORT TO THE 2008 NATIONAL REFERENDUM.....	20
II. 1. Generation of the register of voters and the notification tickets.....	20
II. 2. Information System.....	21
II. 3. Integrated Election Services System.....	21
II. 4. Election Management System.....	23
II. 5. Financial and Logistics System.....	23
II. 6. The menu structure of the Internet service	24
Appendices	26
National Election Committee	26
National Election Office	26
Regional Election Offices.....	27
Useful information	28

PREFACE

The President of the Republic of Hungary has posted a national decisive referendum on the 9th of March 2008 concerning the following questions:

- Do you agree that inpatient care should be exempt from daily hospital fees with effect from 1 January in the year after the referendum is held on the present issue?
- Do you agree that family doctor care, dentistry care and special outpatient care should be exempt from consultation fees with effect from 1 January in the year after the referendum is held on the present issue?
- Do you agree that students in state-subsidised higher education should be exempt from tuition fees?

As with the general elections, the transparency of the election process is extremely important in case of referenda as well. In order to ensure publicity and efficient information, the National Election Office supports the work of international election experts, observers, and the representatives of the media.

This publication has been issued in this spirit with the purpose of providing detailed information – in addition to that accessible on the Internet – also in the conventional way on the system and implementation of the national referendum. Besides a brief summary on the institution of referendum, our guidelines refer to the provisions of law as legal background, the description of the information (IT) system as well as the accessibility of information services.

We do hope that our publication provides assistance to the observers arriving in Hungary, and to the representatives of the international media.

Budapest, February 2008

Emília Rytók
Head of
the National Election Office

I. THE REFERENDUM SYSTEM

I. 1. Direct democracy in Hungary

The Constitution of the Republic of Hungary declares that the citizens of our country take part in the administration of the country's affairs primarily through their elected representatives, indirectly. It is also a part of democracy, however, that people can be involved directly in deciding or influencing particularly important issues of public interest. The recognized form of this in the Hungarian legislation is the **referendum**.

In a **national referendum**, decision of an issue falling within the jurisdiction of the National Assembly is made on the basis of direct voting of citizens eligible to vote.

Referendum can be called only if certain preconditions (referred to in the attached acts) are met. A national referendum may be **decisive (binding)** or to **express people's opinion (petition, non-binding)**. A decisive national referendum is conclusive solely on condition that more than half of the voters voting validly, but at least more than one-fourth of the whole electorate have given the same answer to the question(s) concerned.

I. 2. Provisions of law regulating referenda

The **Constitution** contains the fundamental provisions relating to the right of voting as a fundamental political right as well as basic provisions of national referenda.

The provisions of substantive law relating to national referenda are set forth in the **Act No. III of 1998** (referendum law) on national referenda and popular initiatives.

The procedural rules of national referenda are set forth in the **Act No. C of 1997** (election law) on the electoral process.

The tasks of the election offices and the procedure of the summarizing of votes are set forth in the **Decree No. 5/2008. (I. 22.) ÖTM** on implementation of the election law in a national referendum.

The dates of the referendum scheduled on the 9th of March 2008, its established deadlines in the calendar are set forth in the **Decree No. 6/2008. (I. 24.) ÖTM**, while its financial implementation is set forth in the **Decree No. 7/2008. (I. 24.) ÖTM**.

I. 3. When shall a national referendum be called?

In Hungary, there are two ways of calling a referendum:

- a) upon the initiative of at least 200,000 voters, the National Assembly is obliged to call a referendum. Such a referendum is always **decisive (binding)**, therefore its result is compulsory for the Parliament;
- b) in cases specified by law, the Parliament is only obliged to deliberate upon ordering a referendum; to weigh whether it should call a referendum or not, and this is a **facultative (optional)** referendum. A facultative referendum may express people's opinion or be decisive.

A facultative referendum can be called upon the initiative of the following entities:

- the electorate (*if more than 100,000 but less than 200,000 citizens entitled to vote support the initiative*),
- the President of the Republic,
- the Government,
- at least one third of the Members of Parliament.

When initiating a national referendum, both the question to be decided (substantial preconditions) and the supporting signature collection form (formal preconditions) should comply with the requirements specified by provisions of law.

a) substantial requirements

The entities have to draw up the question to be decided by referendum with the following criteria:

- the issue to be decided by referendum should fall within the jurisdiction of the National Assembly,
- a clear answer can be given to the question to be decided by the referendum,
- the question to be decided by the referendum must not fall within the scope of subjects forbidden by the Constitution (e.g. taxes, the state budget, dissolution of the National Assembly, international agreements etc.).

b) formal requirements

In a referendum procedure initiated by citizens eligible to vote, supporting signatures can be collected exclusively on forms complying with the sample specified by legislation. A national referendum shall be ordered by the National Assembly and scheduled by the President of the Republic.

I. 4. Who can participate in a referendum?

I. 4.1. General conditions

The individual eligible to vote pursuant to the Constitution has the right of voting in a referendum. The preconditions of suffrage:

- Hungarian citizenship
- legal age
- domicile or, if this is failing, a residence in Hungary.

A citizen deprived of the right to vote because of the following reasons must not vote:

- being under guardianship restricting or excluding his/her ability to act;
- being subject to a final judgment barring him/her from exercising public affairs;
- serving his/her sentence of imprisonment;
- being under compulsory therapy ordered in a criminal procedure.

I. 4.2. Voting in a foreign country

Since 2004, besides parliamentary elections and EP elections, Hungarian citizens staying away from their homeland can vote in a referendum at the foreign representations of the Republic of Hungary.

A prerequisite of voting in a foreign country is that the citizen complies with the requirements of suffrage as set forth above, and is included in the register of voters at the foreign representation concerned.

Inclusion in the register of the foreign representation shall be requested personally, through a proxy, or in registered letter from the local election office competent according to the voter's Hungarian home address **until the 22nd February 2008**. The citizen included in the register of the foreign representation shall be deleted from the register of his/her domicile (to avoid double voting).

I. 5. Election bodies at the referendum

The preparation and implementation of elections are carried out by ***election committees*** and ***election offices*** (together: election bodies).

I. 5.1. The election committees

The election committees are independent bodies of citizens eligible to vote, subordinated exclusively to law, the primary tasks of which are to establish the result of the election, to ensure the fairness and lawfulness of the election, the enforcement of impartiality, and the restoration of the statutory order if necessary.

During their acting period, the election committees function as authorities and their members as officials. The sessions of the election committees are open for the media and the public.

The committees function as bodies, their resolutions to be conclusive need the presence of the majority of members and the voting of the majority of members present. In the decision making procedure of the election committees, no abstention is allowed. The election committee is represented by the chairman.

The following election committees function during a national referendum:

- **The Ballot Counting Committee (BCC):** in nearly 11,000 polling stations, the BCC's provide for the lawful implementation of voting. In settlements having one polling district, the Local Election Committee carries out the tasks of the ballot counting committee.
- **The Regional Election Committee (REC):** the regional election committees of 19 counties and the capital city shall adjudge objections submitted against decisions falling within the competence of the ballot counting committees in their territory, and complaints concerning the violation of the election law. In the event of violation of law, the committee shall launch the corresponding procedure.
- **The National Election Committee (NEC):** The NEC is the highest level of election committees. It is the main body of safeguarding the fairness and lawfulness of elections. The NEC shall approve the information contents of the ballot papers of a national referendum. It shall establish and publish the results of the referendum consolidated at national level, or make the result null and void if it finds violation of law having substantially influenced the results. If the NEC has become aware of violation of law, it shall launch a procedure. It shall decide reserves and appeals falling within its jurisdiction.

I. 5.2. Composition of the election committees

The election committees consist of elected members on the one hand, and members delegated by those eligible for representation, on the other hand.

a) elected members

- The three members of the BCC and the required number of substitutes shall be elected by the representative body of the settlement government upon the suggestion of the head of the local election office.
- The three members of the REC and the required number of substitutes shall be elected by the metropolitan/county assembly upon the suggestion of the head of the regional election office.
- The five members of the NEC and the required number of substitutes shall be elected by the National Assembly upon the suggestion of the minister of local governments and regional development, with regard to the proposals of the parties.

The members of the BCC, the REC and the NEC shall be elected after having scheduled the general election of MPs, not later than on the 51st day preceding the ballot day. In this sense, the elected members of the committees have occupied their offices prior to the 2006 parliamentary elections.

b) delegated members

Although the committees comprise partly „permanent” (elected) members, opportunity for democratic control should be ensured to the entity having initiated the referendum and to the parliamentary parties as well. The latter may delegate members to the committees.

The entities having submitted the initiative can delegate one joint deputy by committees to the ballot counting committee, and the entities not involved in the submission of the initiative but having a group of representatives in the Parliament can delegate one deputy each **until 16.00 o'clock on 29 February 2008**. The function of delegated members shall lapse with the publication of the final results of the referendum.

I. 5.3. The election offices

The election offices are bodies carrying out the tasks of the state in relation with the preparation, organization and implementation of referenda, the impartial information of citizens entitled to vote, data management concerning the election, providing for the technical prerequisites and for the legal preconditions, and the controlling of compliance with the technical rules of ballot.

The following bodies shall function in Hungary in the course of a referendum:

- **Local Election Office** (LEO) at each settlement;
- **Election Offices of Parliamentary Single-Member Constituencies** (PSMCO);
- **Regional Election Office** (REO) in each county, and
- the **National Election Office** (NEC) at national level.

Except for the ballot counting committees, one election office shall function by each election committee.

One member of the local election office shall act as keeper of the minutes of the ballot counting committees.

The head of the LEO and the PSMCO is the settlement clerk, the head of the REO is the county clerk. The head and the members of the NEC shall be appointed by the Minister of Local Governments and Regional Development. The head of the office shall appoint the members of the local and the regional election offices. Members of the offices can be **public officials** and **public servants**.

The election offices shall:

- carry out the organization tasks relating to the preparation and implementation of the referendum;
- are involved in the summarizing of votes, in the establishment of the results of the referendum, and provide information;
- provide for the materials and technical prerequisites of the functioning of the election committees and of voting;
- perform the secretary tasks of the election committees;
- prepare the issues falling within the competence of the election committees for decision making;
- provide for the handling and safe filing of the referendum documents, their forwarding to the national archives and/or their destruction.

Information can be requested from the election offices in working hours about legal, administrative and technical issues in relation with the election. The election offices inform the public on the data supply opportunities in relation with elections as well.

I. 5.4. Election Information Service (EIS)

The main task of the EIS is to provide information to citizens, the media, the political parties, and to other entities showing interest in the technical issues of elections in Hungary and abroad.

Election information services are provided in the mayor's offices as well as in the office of the county/metropolitan assembly.

Entities showing interest may raise questions by telephone, fax, e-mail and through the post, and the staff of the EIS shall make efforts to answer their questions as soon as possible.

The „Electoral Guidelines” edited by the NEO to date are available free of charge at the information service of the National Election Office providing detailed information about the current referendum as well as on elections held earlier in the country. The accessibility of the information service can be found in the Appendix.

I. 5.5. The National Election Centre

The National Election Office shall open the National Election Centre in the Duna Palace **on 7 March 2008**. On the ballot day as well as on the days preceding and following the ballot day, the National Election Committee (NEC) and the National Election Office (NEO) shall accept here the representatives of the international and Hungarian media, the international election experts, and the Hungarian public (Budapest, V. Zrínyi 5.).

I. 6. The voting process

I. 6.1. Voting in Hungary

Citizens eligible to vote can cast their votes personally **from 06.00 to 19.00 o'clock on the 9th of March 2008** in the polling stations according to their home addresses.

Should an eligible citizen stay in Hungary but not at his/her domicile on the ballot day, he/she can vote with a special certificate in the assigned polling district of the settlement where he/she is staying. This certificate can be requested **by the 2nd day preceding the ballot day**.

In the polling station, the returning board shall establish the identity of the citizen turning up to vote, by means of the following documents:

- **certificate of identity** containing home address (the old format), or
- **home address card** AND
 - **personal identity card** or
 - **passport** or
 - **a drivers license issued after the 1st of January 2001 (card format).**

Then the ballot counting committee shall check whether the citizen is included in the register of voters. If the citizen's name has been found in the register, the committee shall stamp the ballot papers with the official stamp – in the presence of the citizen – and hand them over with an envelope to the voter.

The voter shall verify by signing the register of voters the acceptance of the ballot papers and complete them in the polling booth. Then he/she shall put the completed ballot papers in the envelope received for this purpose and drop it into the sealed ballot box.

I. 6.2. Voting in a foreign country

Hungarian citizens included in the register of voters at a foreign representation as per section I.4.2., can cast their votes between **06.00 and 19.00** o'clock local time (in Lisbon, London, Dublin and Rabat between 06.00 and 18.00 o'clock). Because of the time lag, votes can be cast in the American continent between 06.00 and 19.00 o'clock local time, but on the 8th of March.

The identity of citizens voting abroad shall not be checked by the ballot counting committee (as there are none abroad) but by the **election office of the foreign representation (FEO)**. Opposite to voting in Hungary, 2 envelopes and a statement shall be used for voting at foreign representations as follows:

1. The voter signs the register of voters and receives the ballot paper stamped – in the presence of the voter – and handed over by the FEO together with an inner envelope.
2. The voter shall put the completed ballot paper into the inner envelope and seal it.
3. The FEO shall fill in a voting statement while the voter stays in the booth.

4. When the voter turns back to the member of the FEO with the envelope containing his/her vote, the latter shall make the voter check the correctness of particulars in the voting statement and sign it, then authenticate the statement by his signature and the stamp of the FEO.
5. The voter shall hand over the sealed inner envelope containing the ballot paper to the FEO. The FEO shall put the sealed inner envelope and the voting statement into an outer envelope and seal it, then make the voter sign the envelope on the seal.
6. Then the FEO shall hand over the ballot document to the voter who shall drop it into the ballot box.

I. 7. Establishment of the result

a) domestic votes

After the completion of voting, the ballot counting committee shall open the ballot box and count the votes. The keeper of the minutes shall forward the result of the first counting to the National Election Centre for establishing the preliminary results for immediate information.

The ballot counting committee shall draw up the minutes on the polling district result of the referendum. The minutes shall be handed over to the head of the local election office for forwarding the same through the regional election office to the National Election Committee for establishing the results.

b) votes cast abroad

The result of the ballot will not be established at foreign representations upon the completion of voting but the sealed ballot box shall be sent back to Hungary immediately. The ballot boxes of the foreign representations should arrive at the National Election Office **by 24.00 o'clock on 13 March 2008**. The votes found in the ballot boxes shall be counted by the National Election Committee, then the result shall be recorded in the minutes.

c) final results

The National Election Committee shall establish the results of the referendum on the basis of the minutes drawn up by the ballot counting committees and of the minutes on the ballot results of foreign representations.

I. 8. Legal remedy

I. 8.1. General rules of legal remedy

Reserves with reference to the violation of provisions of law pertaining to elections or of the fundamental principles of election and the election procedure can be submitted by anybody. On the basis of the objection, the election committee shall adopt a resolution of first instance.

Appeal against a resolution of first instance of the election committee adjudging an objection or adopted within its own jurisdiction can be submitted by any eligible citizen and/or legal entity concerned by the issue. No appeal can be submitted against a resolution of second instance or against the resolution of the National Election Committee.

Petition of **judicial revision** as ultimate means of remedy can be submitted against the resolution of secondary instance of the election committee and against the resolution of the National Election Committee by any eligible citizen and/or legal entity concerned by the issue. In a judicial revision procedure, however – opposite to the above – the involvement of a lawyer is statutory.

Besides reference to the violation of provisions of law, the petition of legal remedy should contain the pertaining evidences as well as the name and address of the entity submitting the petition.

A petition of legal remedy should be submitted so that it is received not later than within three calendar days reckoned from the activity objected or from the adoption of the resolution. The election committee and/or the court shall decide the petition of legal remedy within three calendar days reckoned from reception.

I. 8.2. Legal remedy in national referenda

The following systems of legal remedy are applied in a national referendum:

- a) Appeal can be submitted against a resolution of first instance of the ballot counting committee (except for its decision establishing the polling district result) to the regional election committee. Petition of revision can be submitted against the decision of second instance of the regional election committee to the county court of justice.
- b) Reserves can be submitted against the functioning of the returning board or because of violation of law to the REC in the county concerned or in

the capital city. Appeal against the resolution of first instance of the REC can be submitted to the NEC. Petition of revision can be submitted against the resolution of secondary instance of the NEC to the Supreme Court.

- c) In the event of violation of law at national level or against the activity of the election office of a foreign representation, reserves can be submitted to the NEC. Petition of revision against the resolution of first instance of the NEC adjudging the reserve or adopted in its own jurisdiction shall be submitted to the Supreme Court.
- d) Special appeal can be submitted against the decisions of ballot counting committees establishing the polling station result, and this shall be adjudged by the NEC before the establishment of the result of the referendum. Petition of revision can be submitted against the decision of the NEC to the Supreme Court.
- e) Petition of revision can be submitted against the decision of the NEC establishing the result of the referendum to the Supreme Court.

II. IT SUPPORT TO THE 2008 NATIONAL REFERENDUM

In Hungary, the information technology (IT) systems developed for general elections have covered the whole election process since 1989 from compiling the electoral rolls up to the establishment of the final results.

The IT support of the 2008 national referendum (hereinafter: the referendum) has been developed on the basis of IT support for earlier elections. The election supporting systems use dominantly the existing infrastructure, including the network of document bureaus, the Birth and Marriage Registration System (hereinafter: the ASZA), and the resources of the Central Office for Public Administration and E-Services (hereinafter: the KEK KH).

By involving the infrastructure of the document bureaus and the ASZA, the high quality and safe recording of the large volume of information generated during the referendum process within a short time has become possible, and the systems and network facilities subject to continuous development provide a stable IT background to this.

With the simultaneous use of the infrastructure of the document bureaus and the ASZA, each local election office is enabled to take part in the IT processing of the ballot data in the course of the referendum.

The regional election offices carry out their supervisory, data recording and controlling tasks mainly by using the infrastructure of the regional public administration offices and their affiliates (hereinafter: the public administration offices). The generation of the register of voters and the notification tickets has been centralized at county level. Printing and server capacities for this task shall be provided in the public administration offices. In making preparations for the referendum, KEK KH shall provide for the replacement of RISC servers, the maintenance of printers, and the availability of toners.

You will find below the important functions of the main IT systems. In addition those described below, a number of smaller systems will function to meet demand for information, management and other special requests.

II. 1. Generation of the register of voters and the notification tickets

Prior to the referendum, the local election offices shall control and correct – as required – the allocation of the polling districts i.e. of the polling districts pertaining to constituencies.

Following the setting of the ballot date, the register of voters shall be compiled for the ballot counting committees on the basis of the Personal Data and Home Address Register (SZL) and of the register of citizens of age having no right of voting (NESZA). The public administration offices or the local governments (municipalities), and the KEK KH compile the register of voters and the notification tickets, and the local election offices shall update them continuously until the ballot day.

II. 2. Information System

In line with the earlier practice, the Information System provides orientation for election bodies, citizens, the media and the parties on the Internet and for the election offices through Intranet during the whole referendum process.

On the day before and after the referendum, the System provides opportunity for personal orientation for Hungarian and international individuals and for the representatives of the press and the parties in the National Election Centre, while the projected version of the Intranet/Internet Information System shall provide information.

The information put on the Internet by the National Election Office contains exclusively non-biased information free from political and party considerations. The information shall be available in Hungarian and with limited contents in English language.

The preliminary and the final results consolidated at country level shall be available by each question also in a blind-friendly format in the Information System.

II. 3. Integrated Election Services System

The Integrated Election Services System (hereinafter: the integrated master system) running on the architecture of the central document bureau supports the execution of administrative tasks by specific functionalities in the preparation and implementation period of the referendum. The integrated master system shall be used in the implementation of the referendum by the work stations of both the document bureaus and the Birth and Marriage Registration System (hereinafter: the ASZA) connected to the network.

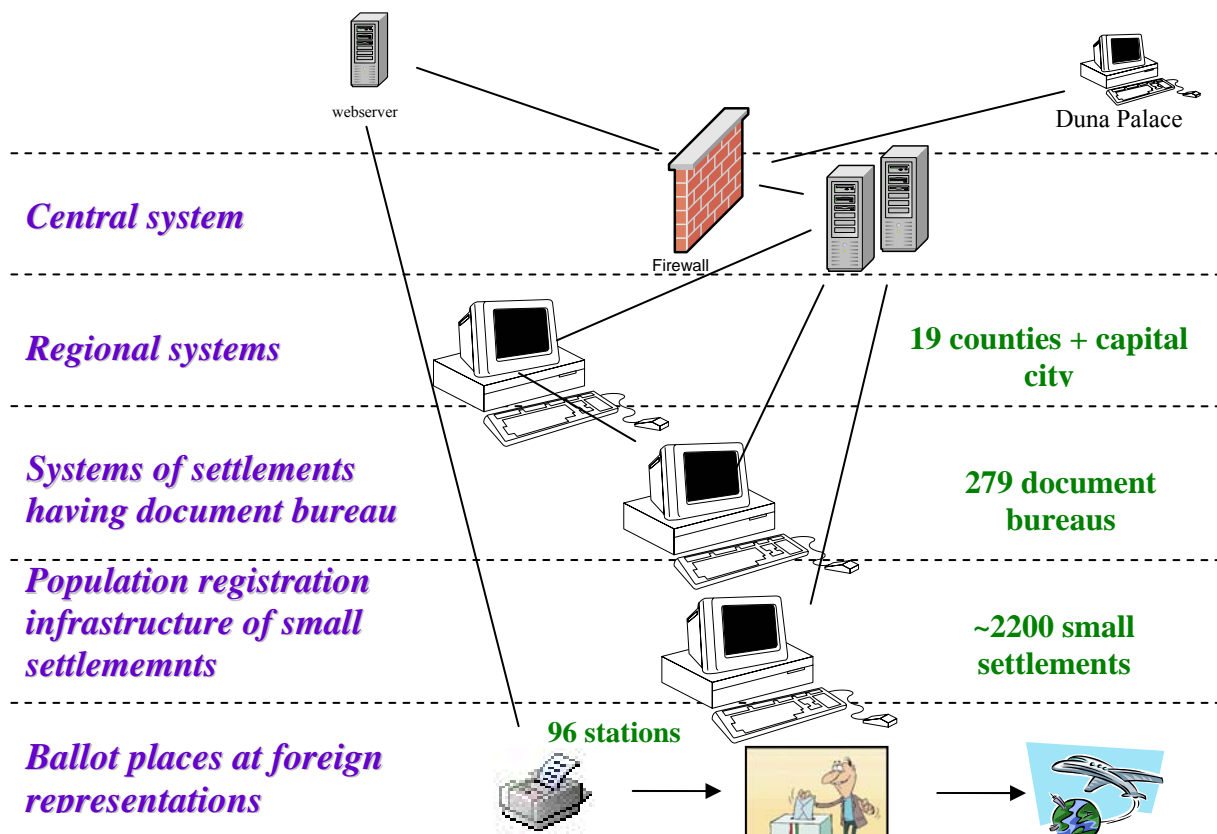
The integrated master system includes:

- programs providing IT support on the day preceding the ballot and on the ballot day,

- subsystem supporting the establishment of the final result, including the handling of legal remedy,
- programs for the handling of the register of voters cancelled and/or included on the basis of certificates issued,
- the subsystem supporting the tasks relating to keeping the register of voters at foreign representations,
- the NESZA query tool,
- the system supporting the central processing of ballot documents of foreign representations,
- the system indicating the probability of electoral fraud.

The integrated master system is built on the functions developed for the 2004 referendum, being an advanced version of that. In line with the earlier practice, a flash report shall be compiled from preliminary results including the facts provided by the integrated master system. The system works from datasheets and minutes alternatively, where the minutes cannot be overwritten by datasheets once the ward minutes have been entered.

The IT infrastructure of the referendum



II. 4. Election Management System

The Election Management System (EMS) serves for the implementation and organization of management tasks relating to the ballot, and for communication between the election bodies by using up-to-date IT resources as well as possibilities offered by the closed-loop computer network connecting the document bureaus. Conclusively, log in to the system and using it is allowed only for computers and users having entitlement.

The primary purpose of the system is the operation of an IT communication channel between the national, the regional and the local election bodies. This channel offers electronic mailing and forum opportunities for registered users, where the forum gives place for the opinion of the public and their request for help by topics, like a message board.

Besides, the system shall function as database containing the facts of the election offices sorted by regions and indicating the name, address, phone number, fax number and e-mail access of each member of the election office. Further facts can be found here from the archives generated since the commissioning of the system as well as a variety of other information pertaining to previous elections, e.g. digests of election results. The collection of legal documents includes statutory regulations important for users as well as other electronic materials concerning the management of the system or the electoral procedures. In the election calendar accessible in the system of procedures, concise information can be found on deadlines and time schedules as well as on other events, dates, and sites in relation with the elections.

Under Help Desk in the menu, the individuals in charge for various other systems, networks and projects engaged in the elections are at disposal to provide help in resolving the problems of the users of the system.

II. 5. Financial and Logistics System

Task of the Financial and Logistics System is to provide sufficient IT applications and related services as efficient support to the financial, accounting and logistic jobs of bodies involved in the implementation of the referendum.

It supports the following functions based on special budgetary regulations pertaining to the election tasks with regard to the envisaged IT support:

- planning of procurement and finances;
- regulation of financial and logistic (organizational) processes;
- proper handling of activities in due time, with high-standard IT support;
- harmonization of the work of bodies and professionals involved in the implementation.

The applications expanded by new functions and capabilities for each election and referendum, and continuously adjusted to legal requirements provide more and more efficient IT support to the work of staffs involved in the implementation as well as to the early information of the public.

II. 6. The menu structure of the Internet service

Country overview: This menu item offers a brief description of Hungary.

Law: Legal material having a statutory impact on the whole referendum process can be found here. The menu comprises the articles of the Constitution concerning the referendum, the act on national referendum as well as the prevailing provisions of the act No. C of 1997 regulating the referendum procedure.

Under the same menu item, you can find the relating ministerial decrees, the orders of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Hungary as well as the provisions of the head of the National Election Office.

National Election Committee: Under this menu item you can find the resolutions, comments and messages of the National Election Committee. Here you get information on the date of the next NEC session as well as the introduction of the members of the NEC.

Calendar: The tasks pertaining to the referendum can be found here along with their dates broken down by days.

Election district information: A menu item supporting the inquiries of voters where everyone can find the ward where he/she can vote, and the home addresses belonging to each polling district.

Referendum IT Information: It provides brief and general information on the IT solutions of the Referendum Information System.

Previous elections: Beginning with the NATO referendum in 1997, the homepages of each national election event can be found here along with all information pertaining to elections.

Election Information Services: It contains the accessibility, the addresses of election information services set up over the country.

Central EIS: Accessibility of the election information service of the National Election Office can be found under this menu item.

Information: The documents serving for the orientation of the population have been arranged here. Thus e.g. information supporting voting at foreign representations, forms for downloading, definitions and frequently asked questions and the related answers, election booklets, the election vocabulary, and last but not least the unhindered, blind-friendly version of information pertaining to the referendum.

APPENDICES

National Election Committee

ELECTED MEMBERS:

Dr. Péter Szigeti
chairman

Dr. Gábor Halmai
deputy chairman

Dr. Marianna Fazekas

Dr. Imre Ivancsics

Dr. Miklós Molnár

DELEGATED MEMBERS:

Dr. Tímea Balczyk– MDF

Dr. Vilmos Bordás– FIDESZ

Dr. Balázs Poczkodi– SZDSZ

Dr. György Szoboszlai– MSZP

Dr. Imre Vejkey– KDNP

National Election Office

HEAD OF THE OFFICE:

Emília Rytók

DEPUTIES:

Dr. Zsolt Berta (law)

Csaba Kis (finances)

Dr. Zsuzsanna Luczai (public administration)

István Tóth (information technology)

András Pál Zubor (organization, logistics)

Regional Election Offices

Heads of Election Offices

<i>Name</i>	<i>Seat</i>	<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Fax</i>
Dr. Ferenczi István	Bács–Kiskun County Assembly 6000 Kecskemét, Deák Ferenc tér 3.	76/513-830	76/513-831
Lászlóné Dr. Kovács Ilona	Baranya County Assembly 7621 Pécs, Széchenyi tér 9.	72/500-408	72/500-469
Dr. Biri István	Békés County Assembly 5600 Békéscsaba, Derkovits sor 2.	66/441-089	66/441-593
Dr. Kovács János	Borsod–Abaúj–Zemplén County Assembly 3525 Miskolc, Városház tér 1.	46/346-256	46/352-525
Dr. Tiba Zsolt	Budapest Lord Mayor's Office Főváros Főpolgármesteri Hivatal 1052 Budapest, Városház u. 9-11.	327-1030	327-1822
Dr. Csonkáné dr. Balda Ilona	Csongrád County Assembly 6722 Szeged, Rákóczi tér 1.	62/566-010	62/425-435
Dr. Varjú Mihály	Fejér County Assembly 8000 Székesfehérvár, Szent István tér 9.	22/522-516	22/312-144
Dr. Kovács Béla	Győr–Moson–Sopron County Assembly 9021 Győr, Árpád u. 32.	96/522-204	96/522-221
Vasas Lászlóné dr.	Hajdú–Bihar County Assembly 4024 Debrecen, Piac u. 54.	52/507-504	52/507-514
Dr. Benkár József	Heves County Assembly 3300 Eger, Kossuth Lajos u. 9.	36/410-359	36/411-106
Dr. Bozsó Péter	Jász–Nagykun–Szolnok County Assembly 5001 Szolnok, Kossuth Lajos u. 2.	56/505-201	56/505-388
Dr. Péntek Péter	Komárom–Esztergom County Assembly 2800 Tatabánya, Fő tér 4.	34/517-122	34/311-690
Dr. Barta László	Nógrád County Assembly 3100 Salgótarján, Rákóczi út 36.	32/620-126	32/620-152
Dr. Szép Tibor	Pest County Assembly 1052 Budapest, Városház u. 7.	317-6523	318-1946
Dr. Vörös Tamás	Somogy County Assembly 7400 Kaposvár, Csokonai u. 3.	82/508-109	82/320-420
Dr. Borbély Károly	Szabolcs–Szatmár–Bereg County Assembly 4400 Nyíregyháza, Hősök tere 5.	42/599-510	42/599-514
Dr. Bartos Georgina	Tolna County Assembly 7100 Szekszárd, Szent István tér 11-13.	74/505-604	74/505-611
Dr. Kun László	Vas County Assembly 9700 Szombathely, Berzsenyi Dániel tér 1.	94/515-710	94/515-717
Dr. Zsedenyi Imre	Veszprém County Assembly 8200 Veszprém, Megyeház tér 1.	88/545-021	88/545-012
Dr. Sifter Rózsa	Zala County Assembly 8900 Zalaegerszeg, Kosztolányi Dezső u. 10.	92/500-711	92/500-777

Useful information

The EIS is an election information service run by the National Election Office. Its fundamental task is to inform citizens entitled to vote and those interested in the referendum abroad and in Hungary, but it also provides information to citizens in any other issue in relation with elections.

In order to provide most efficient and broad orientation, the regional and the local election offices run election information services as well, accessible at the addresses of mayor's offices and the county government.

Accessibility of the National Election Office Election Information Service:

Personally:

Budapest, district V, Roosevelt tér 1.

Open for customers: Monday to Thursday: 08.30 – 16.00
Friday: 08.30 – 14.00

By mail:

National Election Office
1903 Budapest, P.O.B. 314

Telephone:

+(36-1) 44-11-999;
Blue number free of charge within Hungary:
(06-40) 200-717 (voice recorder)

Fax:

+(36 1) 44-11-617

E-mail:

visz@otm.gov.hu

Election Internet site

www.valasztas.hu
www.election.hu

Measure No. 3/2008. (II.11.) of the Head of the National Election Office
on the participation of international observers and the representatives of
the international media in the national referendum set on the
9th of March 2008

In my sphere of authority vested with by paragraph (2) article 39 of the act No. C of 1997, I issue the following measure concerning the participation of international observers and the international media in the national referendum scheduled on the 9th of March 2008:

1. For the sake of fair and transparent elections, Hungary offers the possibility of observing the elections and referenda held in the country by international organizations, partner states, and the international media. Therefore, all election offices should facilitate the lawful and successful implementation of the international monitoring of elections.

2. Concerning the reception of international observers and international press representatives, relevant electoral regulations should be consistently adhered to, which are decisive mainly in three respects:

- a) The functioning and activity of the electoral committees as well as the information available to them – with exceptions specified by law – are public. The publicity of the electoral process must not conflict with the secrecy of ballot as well as the rights connected to individuals and to the protection of personal information (paragraph (1) article 6 of the act No. C of 1997).
- b) Similarly to the representatives of the media, international observers can attend and monitor the work of the electoral committees – including that of the ballot counting committees – however, they must not disturb their activity or give instructions to them.
- c) The chairman of the ballot counting committee is responsible for the maintenance of order in the polling station and in its vicinity on the ballot day; his/her measures taken for the maintenance of order are mandatory for everyone – including the representatives of the media and the international observers – (paragraph (1) article 65 of the act No. C of 1997).

3. The person having made him-/herself registered as such with the National Election Office, and furnished with an accreditation card by the National Election Office, shall be considered international observer of the election. The accreditation card serves also for entering the National Election Centre (Duna Palace, Budapest, V., Zrínyi u. 5.). During performing their activities, international observers should pin on or show their accreditation cards.

4. Representatives of the international media acting in Hungary and intending to attend the elections can make themselves registered with the National Election Office. The National Election Office shall furnish each representative of the international media with an accreditation card. The accreditation card serves also for entering the National Election Centre (Duna Palace, Budapest, V., Zrínyi u. 5.).

- a) During performing their activities, representatives of the international media should pin on or show their accreditation cards, and duly verify their entitlement as journalists (by showing their press card or credentials).
- b) The representatives of the international media having no valid accreditation card can enter the polling station functioning at foreign representations upon verification of their identity and media entitlement.

Concerning issues not mentioned in this provision, the representatives of the international media are vested with the same entitlements in relation with the elections as international observers.

5. International observers and the representatives of the international media with the intention of visiting the polling stations functioning in Hungary and at its foreign representations should submit their applications for accreditation to the National Election Office not later than **by 29 February 2008**.

6. In the period preceding the ballot day, international observers and the representatives of the international media in practicing their relating activity:

- a) may attend the press conferences held for international observers and the representatives of the international media;
- b) may request information materials in Hungarian and foreign languages in relation with Hungary and the Hungarian electoral provisions of law;
- c) upon prior agreement, may orient themselves about the preparations of the election with the National Election Office and the electoral offices.

7. International observers on the ballot day:

- a) may study the starting and the process of voting on the site in any polling station of their choice – including those functioning at foreign representations – however, they should announce their intention of observation to the head of the ballot counting committee on site, or to the head of the election office of the foreign representation;
- b) can get information about any issue of public interest concerning the ballot;

- c) may attend the counting of votes and get verbal information on the result of the same.

Each ballot counting committee is obliged to ensure the possibilities set forth in paragraphs a)-c).

8. On the day following the ballot, international observers and the representatives of the international media can attend the press conference announcing the results of the election in the National Electoral Centre.

9. International observers are entitled to communicate their experience at press conferences organized for them by the National Election Office, in interviews given to the Hungarian and international media, and in any other form (e.g. by forwarding a copy of their findings written on their experience in relation with the election to the National Electoral Office).

10. The head of the county (or metropolitan) election office may receive international observers in his/her constituency under his/her own competence in line with clause 3., if the inviting party is a local government, party or another social organization functioning in his/her constituency.

The accreditation card issued by the Regional Election Office provides entitlement – specified in these provisions – for an international observer exclusively in the territory of the Regional Election Office concerned. The head of the Regional Election Office is responsible for the availability of any locally prepared publication to international observers and the representatives of the international media.

11. In his/her territory of competence, the head of the Regional Election Office:

- shall provide for the information of the heads of the local election offices and for the adequate preparation of the chairmen of the ballot counting committees,
- shall inform the National Election Office on the invitation of international observers, the number of participants and on the experience collected by them, in the report of the implementation of the elections.

Budapest, the 11th of February 2008



Emília Rytók

