



ELTE
EÖTVÖS LORÁND
UNIVERSITY



Centre for Economic and
Regional Studies

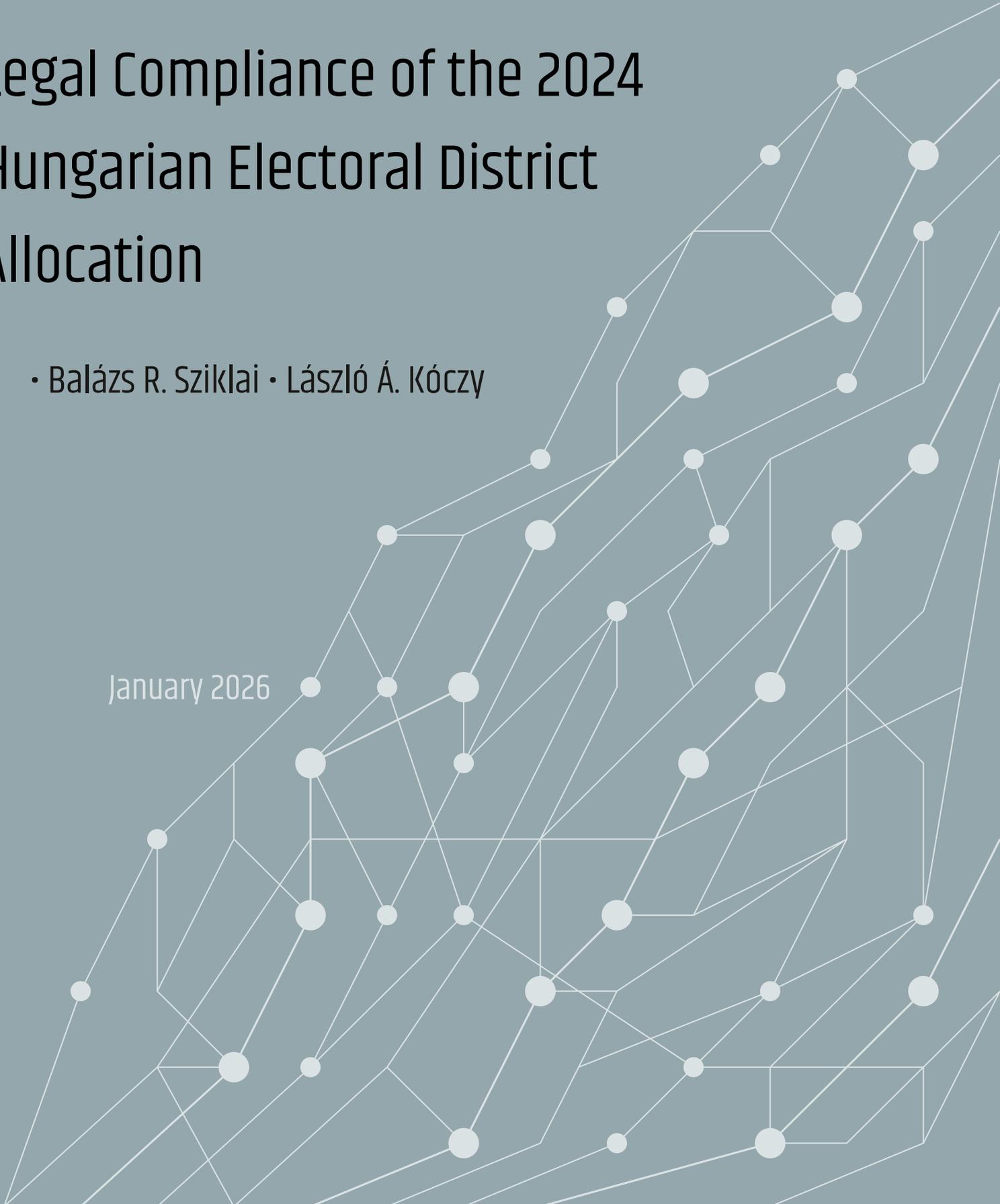
POLICY
BRIEF

Nº3

Legal Compliance of the 2024 Hungarian Electoral District Allocation

• Balázs R. Sziklai • László Á. Kóczy

January 2026



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Government legitimacy is ensured through fair and proportional elections. Varying demographic dynamics across regions necessitate regular review of electoral districts.

The 2024 Act LXXIX redistributed Hungary's 106 single-member constituencies among counties in response to population changes.

While the law's justification references the Venice Commission's recommendation and the electoral law's 20% deviation threshold, the new allocation **fails to comply with both international recommendations and domestic legislation**. Four electoral districts – including all three districts in Tolna county – deviate from the average district size by more than 20%.

However, a mathematically sound method (leximin) exists that would satisfy the 20% legal requirement and approach the Venice Commission's 15% recommendation. For transparency and legality, we recommend codifying a districting allocation algorithm in law.

PROBLEM

The legitimacy of a government is ensured by fair and proportional elections. This is achieved when the electoral law does not differentiate between voters in advance, so that, for example, the number of representatives a group of voters can elect does not depend on their place of residence. Consequently, each constituency should have approximately the same number of voters.

Legal Framework

Hungary's electoral law (Act CCIII of 2011) follows the Venice Commission's recommendation by stipulating that:

- Single-member constituency sizes may deviate from the average district size by **at most 15%** (only in special cases)
- If deviation **exceeds 20%**, the allocation must be revised
- Modifications cannot be made in the year preceding or during the election year

KEY FINDINGS

1. Problems with the New Allocation

The law that entered into force on December 31, 2024, reduced Budapest's districts by two but **failed to reduce Tolna county's districts from three to two**. The result:

- **4 electoral districts** deviate from the average by more than 20% (average: 72,040 voters)
- **All 3 districts in Tolna county** fall outside the legal threshold (56,698 - 57,468 voters, representing -21.3% to -20.2% deviation)
- One district in Somogy county also deviates by 20.25%
- Nearly **50% difference** in voting power between the largest and smallest districts

2. Opaque Methodology

The legislature does not disclose the method used to determine the allocation. The result matches the **Adams method**, though this may be coincidental. The application of the Adams method, while not specified in the law,

- **is inconsistent** both with prior apportionment practices and with the D'Hondt method used for party-list seat allocation,
- **does not minimize** distance from the average district size.

3. The Leximin Method as a Solution

Leximin is a mathematically rigorous district allocation method that:

- 1. Minimizes** the largest deviation from the average district
- 2.** Then minimizes the second-largest deviation, then the third, and so on
- 3. Guarantees the smallest possible maximum deviation**

4. Leximin's Proposed Allocation

The leximin method suggests the following changes:

COUNTRY	CURRENT	LEXIMIN	CHANGE
TOLNA	3	2	-1
SOMOGY	4	3	-1
BUDAPEST	16	17	+1
PEST	14	15	+1

With this allocation:

- Tolna's average deviation would decrease from -21.3% to -18.8%
- **Every district** would be at most 18.8% from the average
- The **legal 20% requirement** would be satisfied
- We would approach the **Venice Commission's 15% recommendation**

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Codify the Algorithm in Law

Similar to party-list seat allocation, **codify the district allocation algorithm in law.**

The proposed procedure:

Step I: Divide each county's voter count by the average district size and round in the direction that produces the smaller deviation.

Step II: If more/fewer seats were allocated than available, add or remove seats one by one from the county where this causes the **smallest increase in distance.**

This precisely implements the leximin method in a transparent and reproducible manner.

2. Transparency and Predictability

Benefits of a legally codified algorithm:

- **Predictable** which counties may be problematic in the future
- **Eliminates arbitrary decisions** and suspicion of political manipulation
- Ensures the 20% threshold is only breached when mathematically unavoidable
- Aligns with **democratic standards** and the rule of law

3. Long-term Considerations

Under current regulations, the flawed allocation **cannot be corrected in 2026**; revision can occur at the earliest after the elections. For the future, we recommend:

- Increasing the number of single-member constituencies to 130 to achieve the **15% threshold**
- Or maintaining the **20% threshold** with strict algorithmic methodology

CONCLUSION



The 2024 district allocation currently **fails to comply with both the Venice Commission's recommendation and domestic electoral law**. Four districts deviate from the average by more than the legally permitted 20%. This problem could have been avoided by applying the leximin method, which mathematically guarantees minimal deviations.

For democratic standards and legal certainty, **codifying the district allocation algorithm in law is essential**. This would ensure transparency, predictability, and that the principle of "one person, one vote" is realized to the greatest extent possible in Hungary's electoral system.

REFERENCES

- Balázs R. Sziklai, László Á. Kóczy (2025): On the Legal Compliance of the 2024 Electoral District Allocation. Research Report.
- Kóczy, L. Á., Biró, P. & Sziklai, B. R. (2017). US vs. European apportionment practices: The conflict between monotonicity and proportionality. In U. Endris (Ed.), Trends in Computational Social Choice (pp. 309–326). AI Access.
- Kóczy, L. Á. & Sziklai, B. R. (2018). Bounds on malapportionment. *Operations Research Letters*, 46(3), 324–328. > [Link](#)
- Venice Commission. (2002). Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters. CDL-AD, 23(190), 1–33.



ELTE
EÖTVÖS LORÁND
UNIVERSITY



Centre for Economic and
Regional Studies

The ELTE Centre for Economic and Regional Studies consists of three institutes, the Institute of Economics, the Institute for Regional Studies and the Institute of World Economics.

- Address: 1097 Budapest Tóth Kálmán u. 4.
- Postal address: 1097 Budapest Tóth Kálmán u. 4.
- Phone: (+36-1) 224 6700
- E-mail: titkarsag@krtk.elte.hu
- Web: www.krtk.elte.hu/en