

In-depth analysis

Summary

- **Following its mayoral election victory in an Gyöngyöspata, a village in Heves county that made headlines when in the spring anti-Roma paramilitary organizations “patrolled” its streets; Jobbik is guaranteed to make regular references to its election victory in Gyöngyöspata and see its policy of generating ethnic tensions in small communities justified.** The victory in Gyöngyöspata is not an indication that Jobbik is gathering force at the national level, but following the victory, Jobbik can gain momentum on the national level as well.
- **In the past few months, despite lingering internal conflicts Jobbik managed to close ranks and, turning up the volume of its anti-Roma and anti-Semitic rhetoric, it attracted renewed public attention. Moreover, aggravating conflicts in Gyöngyöspata, it scored a victory at the local level.**
- **Major political trends marking the coming period (the eroding support for the governing party, focused attention on Roma integration, continuing austerity measures) may create fertile ground for Jobbik to stabilise and consolidate its voter base.**

Since 2005, Political Capital has regularly monitored and analyzed the activities of domestic and foreign radical and extremist political forces, and studied public demand for radical solutions and ideologies. We first published our international comparative analysis extending to 32 countries looking at public demand for right-wing extremism (Demand for Right-Wing Extremism Index, DEREK) in 2010. In our future analysis of radical and extremist political trends we will continue to give top priority to populism, extremism, radicalism, ethno-centrism and prejudices (anti-Roma sentiment and anti-Semitism), as well the communication strategies of far right organizations.

Results of the Mayoral election on Gyöngyöspata (July 17, 2011).

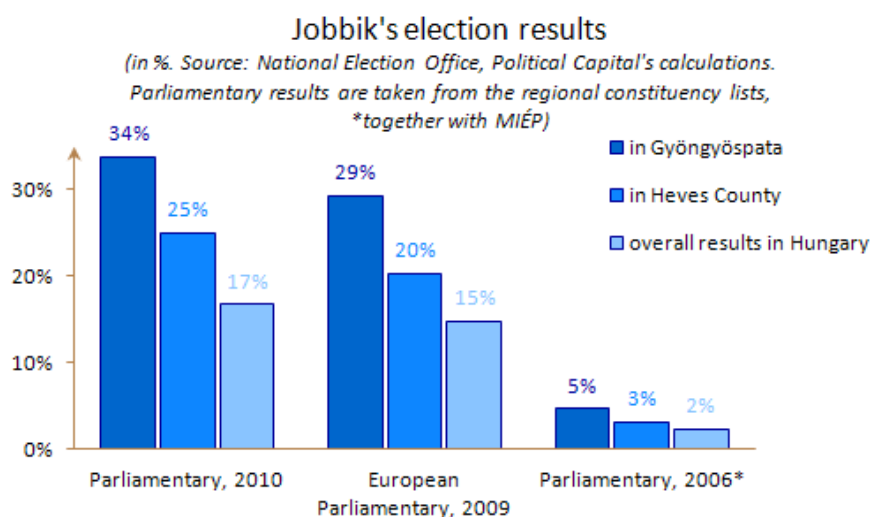
Candidate	Result
Oszkár Juhász (Jobbik, radical right party)	33,8 %
Ferencné Matalik (independent)*	26 %
Magdolna Bernáth (independent)	21,4 %
Tamás Eszes (Véderő – radical right paramilitary movement)	10,5 %
Barnabás Maka (Independent)	3,5 %
Károly Nádudvari (Independent)	2,9 %
István Simó (Independent)	2 %

turnout: 61% (1293 active/2132 registered voters)

* With the unofficial support of Fidesz

Gyöngyöspata: from last to first

- In our recent analysis¹ on developments in Gyöngyöspata we said: “Clearly, stoking ethnic tension is in the political interest of Jobbik and other far-right organizations with ties to the party”. The outcome of the local election (necessitated by the resignation of former independent mayor, László Tábi following the escalation of ethnic conflicts this April) has confirmed our conclusion. With one third of the votes, Jobbik candidate, Oszkár Juhász became the mayor, and even “Véderő” candidate, Tamás Eszes received 10.5%, which means that **close to 45% of the ballots were cast for far-right candidates**.
- In the 2010 parliamentary election Jobbik received 34% of the votes in Gyöngyöspata, a result the party managed to match at the recent mayoral election where **in less than one year Oszkár Juhász increased the number of his supporters by a factor of six** (in the autumn of 2010 he received 68 and this time 433 votes).
- As stated by Jobbik politicians at a press conference evaluating the election results, the party plans to pursue a pragmatic Roma-integration policy to alleviate conflicts in the village under its control. **After gaining a leading position, all political actors are forced to adopt pragmatic political solutions. It is yet to be seen whether in its pursuit for additional positions at the local and national level Jobbik will find other means than its shrill anti-Roma rhetoric in a social environment where there is a strong and explicit demand for such language.**
- **Guard-type succession organizations affiliated to Jobbik may be emboldened by the recent success**, while it is far from certain that Jobbik’s leadership will be able to keep the activities of these often unmanageable organizations in line with its own political objectives.



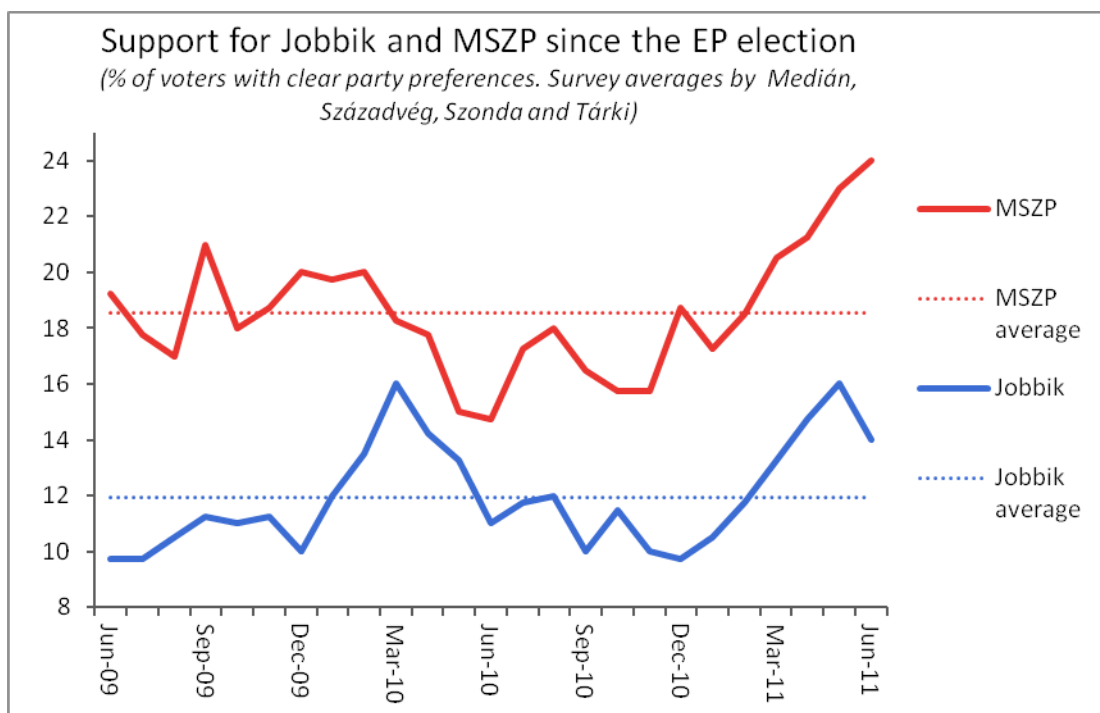
¹ The second season of patrolling in Hungary. http://www.riskandforecast.com/post/in-depth-analysis/the-second-season-of-patrolling-in-hungary_694.html

Jobbik's position nationwide and the challenge of governance

- **On the whole, in the past few months the party managed to recapture the level of support it enjoyed at the time of the 2010 general election.** This also has to do with the fact that from early 2011 the Jobbik leadership has publicly returned to radical politics and, by intensifying its more belligerent style, set out to recapture some of its voters lost at the general election. Reverting to street politics, stepping up anti-Roma and anti-Semitic rhetoric and standing by Guard-type organisations have been successful (at least in the short term).

Jobbik's victory in Gyöngyöspata represents a three-pronged challenge for the governing party

- 1) **Party politics:** It is patently clear that exploiting the tensions between the Roma and non-Roma populations Jobbik can count on scoring political victories. Radical right-wing parties are characterised by widely oscillating popular support (see diagram below²) and internal conflicts threatening a split. While Jobbik continues to be exposed to these risks, in theory the government's ongoing austerity measures may lend Jobbik the opportunity to stabilise or even increase its voter base in part by attracting disappointed Fidesz voters.



² An analysis of the relative spread of measured data (a ratio of data spread and their averages) is one of the methods of measuring the volatility of support for specific parties. Looking at the data in the voting-age population: the relative spread of support for MSZP comes to 5.5 percent, for Jobbik to 15 percent. The discrepancy between the spread figures is a clear indication that in the two years since the EP election Jobbik's camp is characterised by more volatility than that of the socialist party.

- 2) **Law and order:** Developments in Gyöngyöspata may lead to the resurgence of Guard-type organisations. The control of such organisations, often popular and well-established in small communities, may cause the government some headache (aggravated by a tense relationship between the police rank-and-file and the government).
- 3) **Roma integration:** In the autumn the government plans to introduce the national Roma strategy conforming to the EU Framework Strategy on Roma Inclusion. There are indications that proposals supported by professional and some political consensus will make it clear: Roma integration is a lengthy, complex and expensive process. This is precisely why it will be difficult to generate broad-based public support for such a program; clearly the public expects to see simple and quick 'solutions' with no cost to the taxpayers.

Is there a need for quarantine?

- In response to Fidesz' proposals for a reform of the election system, LMP (a green party) has come up with an initiative where the opposition parties (leftists MSZP, green LMP and Jobbik on the radical right) form a provisional election alliance. Through this "technical coalition" the parties would secure a two-thirds opposition victory in 2014 and "rebuild the constitutional order demolished by Fidesz". Thanks to LMP's proposal, the relationship with Jobbik will become one of the major issues of party politics.
- In professional discussions on the radical right it is a recurring and far from settled issue whether drawing a political quarantine (a "*cordon sanitaire*") around the radical right would isolate and weaken these organizations in all cases. For, when support for 'mainstream parties' and the political elite is at a low ebb 'quarantining' may in fact help populist and anti-establishment radical parties on the right in presenting themselves as a "new", "fresh" and "clean" force distinguished from all other political formations.
- **At the same time, even the idea of cooperating at the level of party politics with Jobbik, one of Europe's most radical parliamentary parties, may easily legitimize a kind of ethno-centric and prejudiced public discourse preferred by radicals.** In most cases, the formulation of common political objectives and cooperation lead to a narrowing of the ideological gap between parties. In other words, a potential 'pragmatic' left-wing collaboration with Jobbik (incidentally, with practically no chance to come about) could also easily legitimize the party's ideology and rhetoric, making future cooperation with Jobbik by any party all the more acceptable.

The enemies of Jobbik – "high up and down below"

In our 2008 study, *Diagnosis*, we reported on a trend experienced since 2006: public discourse built on prejudices (mainly anti-Roma and anti-Semitic) had gained strength and concurrently society's tolerance for such positions had significantly increased.

As political tools, anti-Semitism and anti-Roma ideologies are part and parcel of Jobbik's policy, although they can be easily distinguished as to their political functions, their "fan clubs" and affects. In Jobbik's policy anti-Semitism offers a kind of general framework for global explanations, while its anti-Roma program is a political action plan with references to specific measures.

The anti-Roma sentiment is a majority position in Hungarian society making a broad-based mobilization of the electorate possible. At the same time, Anti-Semitism in Hungary is primarily the "luxury" of urban intellectuals. Political anti-Semitism (these days often taking the form of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories) does not advance specific political objectives; instead, it has the function of explaining undesired developments (e.g., crises and past traumas) and offers the "national side" the opportunity for cultural and moral self-identification. The two perceived enemies can be combined in a single conspiracy theory where Jews may be identified as the ultimate cause for the Roma problem³. In the coming period, protracted economic, social and political turmoil may guarantee a steady demand for similar scapegoating explanations.

³ See our analysis on anti-Semitic conspiracy theories:

Jobbik needs Jews to run the world: http://www.budapesttimes.hu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19109&Itemid=220

Anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories:

http://www.riskandforecast.com/useruploads/files/anti_semitic_conspiracy_theories.pdf