

Youth'25

Report on Youth Affairs



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Editors: Georgina Kiss-Kozma, Gergely Réti

Peer-Reviewers: Péter Pillók, Krisztián Tóth

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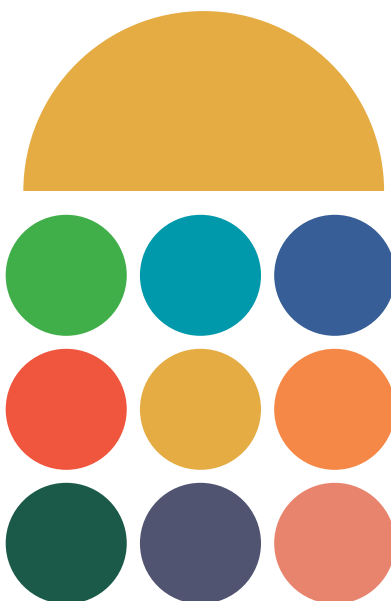
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HOT5 – Highlights of 2025



HOT5 – Highlights of 2025

Georgina Kiss-Kozma, Levente Székely

Since 2023, the Youth Research Institute has published an annual youth policy report prepared by a range of experts, offering a comprehensive overview of the most significant decisions, developments, and events shaping the youth sector each year. Youth'25 – Report on Youth Affairs examines the major issues affecting young people during the reference year. The report focuses on key thematic areas, such as the international environment, Hungarian youth living beyond the country's borders, demographic trends, young people and their relationship to their homeland, youth policy measures, education, interest representation, and youth participation in public life. The opening chapter addresses the most pressing issues of 2025, while the concluding chapter looks ahead to future prospects.

In addition to the detailed analysis of these thematic areas, the report also provides a concise overview of issues whose impact on the lives of young people in Hungary was particularly significant during the year under review.

1. New Start-of-Life Support Measures

Hungarian family policy, which already supports families through more than 30 distinct measures, has been outstanding in international comparisons. In response to new challenges emerging in the 2020s, the Hungarian government introduced additional measures in 2025 and further developed several existing ones. Previously, the government decided to double the family tax allowance in two steps and, from 1 January 2026, to remove its linkage to the average wage. This grants mothers under 30 full personal income tax exemption on their entire income. As a part of the New Economic Policy Action Plan, young employees under the age of 35 were eligible to receive a monthly housing support of HUF 150,000 provided by their employer in 2025. In addition, the Workers' Loan, targeting young people in employment, became available.

Launched in September 2025, the Otthon Start programme aims to provide young people with an additional opportunity to become homeowners. The state-subsidised housing loan, designed to encourage first-time home ownership, offers a fixed interest rate of 3% and is also available to young people are yet to start a family. Interest in this opportunity has been high: according to recent research by the Youth Research Institute, 90% of

The majority of Hungarian society supports limiting mobile phone use in schools, particularly parents emphasising child protection and older age groups, although uncertainty remains regarding the measure's effectiveness and specific details.

individuals aged 15–39 consider it important to own their home.

2. Experiences from the First Mobile-Free School Year

From the 2024/2025 academic year, schools in Hungary have restricted students' use of mobile phones during teaching hours in accordance with Government Decree 245/2024 (VIII. 8.). Under the regulation, mobile phones, tablets, and other smart devices may only be used with the explicit permission of the school principal or the teacher. The measure aims to protect children, reduce digital bullying, and limit access to inappropriate content. According to a representative survey conducted by the Kopp Mária Institute for Demography and Families, awareness and support for the measure are high: 96% of respondents had heard of it, and 66% supported the restriction.

Overall, the majority of Hungarian society supports limiting mobile phone use in schools, particularly parents emphasising child protection and older age groups, although uncertainty remains regarding the measure’s effectiveness and specific details.

Hungary’s stricter regulation of screen use is not without precedent. Other countries have also sought to regulate the role of screens and social media in the lives of children and young people. In Australia, a law came into force on 10 December 2025 prohibiting access to social media for young people under the age of 16. Several European Union countries are also addressing this issue; for example, Greece and Denmark have announced measures to protect young people from the harmful effects of social media and are preparing relevant legislation. On 26 November 2025, the European Parliament approved a report on the protection of minors, which would legally prohibit social media use for children under 16, restrict “loot boxes” in video games, and limit young people’s access to artificial intelligence tools.

3. The Waning of Generational Parties

In the summer of 2025, the Momentum Movement political party decided not to contest the 2026 parliamentary elections. Founded in 2017, Momentum first gained national prominence through its campaign against Budapest’s Olympic bid, which was followed by a period of rapid growth and subsequent loss of political ground. Its withdrawal from the forthcoming parliamentary elections effectively marks the end of the political organisation. At the time of its emergence, Momentum was widely identified as a representative of a new generation, similarly to the Jobbik Youth Community—later known simply as Jobbik—which primarily mobilised university students and was founded as a party in 2003.

Jobbik was undoubtedly a more successful political organisation than Momentum; however, according to recent opinion polls, their current levels of public support are comparable. Although Jobbik intends to run in the 2026 parliamentary elections, the likelihood of surpassing the 5% electoral threshold appears to be particularly low. The marginalisation of both Jobbik and Momentum illustrates the

episodic success—and long-term fragility—of generational political movements that emerged in Hungary after the turn of the millennium.

4. Youth Policy Strategy

The National Youth Strategy, adopted in 2009 and entering into force through Parliamentary Resolution No. 88/2009 (X. 29.), expired in 2024. As a result, the Ministry of Culture and Innovation launched the development of a new strategy with broad civil society involvement. As part of this process, the nationwide roadshow “What Do You Think” was launched on 3 June 2025, with the aim of fostering direct dialogue between young people, professionals, and decision-makers, and of channelling young people’s opinions and proposals into the strategic framework.

Instead of the originally planned 20 locations, the roadshow ultimately reached 27 settlements, including 5 cities beyond Hungary’s borders, and further expanded its outreach to young people by incorporating festival venues. In addition to the National Youth Council, several civil organisations participated in the organisation of the events, including the National Association of Doctoral Students (DOSZ), the National Conference of Students’ Unions (HÖÖK), and the National Association of Non-State Higher Education Institutions (NÁFIORE).

The workshops were structured around four main thematic areas: home and housing; mental health and sustainability; education and the world of work; and a dedicated workshop for youth professionals. Young participants raised questions concerning housing affordability, access to support schemes, the availability of dormitory and student accommodation places, mobility constraints, and the challenges of leaving the parental home. In relation to mental health, issues such as academic and university workload, examination stress, bullying, and the lack of supportive communities were brought to the fore. Within the fields of education and the labour market, particular emphasis was placed on teacher shortages, the social recognition of educators, opportunities for young people in rural areas, as well as the use of artificial intelligence, and challenges

related to digitalisation. The feedback provided by young people is being processed by experts and incorporated into the renewed National Youth Strategy.

5. International Recognition: Involving Young People in the Shaping of Public Affairs

In 2025, both the Council of Europe and the European Union reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that the younger generation is not merely a consulted target group, but an active and decisive shaper of Europe's future policies.

In October 2025, at their conference, the Council of Europe's ministers responsible for youth affairs emphasised that in democratic societies young people must not only be beneficiaries of change but also active agents of it. The conference highlighted the pivotal role of the younger generation in democratic renewal, the protection of human rights, and the maintenance of the rule of law. In addition, ministers underlined the importance of youth in shaping the future trajectories of

digitalisation, demographic developments, and environmental processes. Representatives of the participating countries agreed that young people's perspectives and needs must be consistently integrated into political decision-making, as youth-centred governance strengthens the resilience of European democracies.

Furthermore, in 2025 the European Union initiated a broad-based public dialogue with young people. This process enabled interested young citizens to engage directly with members of the European Commission on issues including climate change, the future of employment, and social inclusion. The series of discussions involved 26 EU Commissioners, with more than 400 young people sharing their views on topics such as public security, competitiveness, democracy, social policy, and the EU's global role. The Commission committed to ensuring that young people's feedback occupies a prominent place in decision-making processes and that these principles will be incorporated into the post-2027 EU youth strategy.



International Outlook



International Outlook

László Bálint Tóth – Fanni Radnai

Changing patterns of young people’s political participation are posing new challenges for legislators and decision-makers worldwide. Although those under the age of 30 continue to be less active in traditional forms of democratic participation, they are playing an increasingly prominent role in protests and online expression. The global crises of 2025 have underscored the key role of youth in democratic renewal. In Europe, the involvement of young people in decision-making has increasingly become a priority, particularly in the fields of education, employment, and mental health. The following section summarises these challenges and opportunities.

1. Situation Overview: General Political Apathy

In line with trends observed over recent decades, young people worldwide tend to remain distanced from various forms of political expression. In OECD countries, the electoral participation rate of adults aged 18–29 in legislative elections is, on average, 21 percentage points lower than that of their counterparts aged over 50. Moreover, although individuals aged 20–39 constitute approximately 34% of the voting-age population, only 22% of members of national parliaments in OECD countries are aged 40 or younger, and merely 8% of government members fall into this age group. At the same time, younger cohorts are more likely to participate in protests and are more active in online political expression (OECD, 2025a).

Within the European Union, 39% of young people aged 16–30 have participated in local, national, or European parliamentary elections; 26% have signed a petition; one fifth have engaged in political volunteering; and 19% have expressed their views on public affairs online. Political content primarily reaches young people in the EU via Instagram (47%), TikTok (39%), YouTube (37%), Facebook (27%), and X (21%), highlighting the dominant role of social media in shaping the democratic engagement of new voters (EU for Children, 2025).

At present, young people aged 16–30 in the EU identify rising living costs and increasing economic pressure as the most significant challenges facing the Union. Armed conflicts and political instability are also sources of concern

Young people aged 16–30 in the EU identify rising living costs and increasing economic pressure as the most significant challenges facing the Union.

for young citizens across Member States. Many young people furthermore perceive the erosion of democratic values as a threat to the future of the Union (Eurobarometer, 2025).

In 2025, acts of political activism among younger generations were also observed. So-called “Generation Z protests” directly affected societies in Togo, Morocco, and Nepal. In the former two countries, demonstrators demanded job creation, improved working conditions, and greater transparency in social services, while in the Asian state large-scale protests were organised against the corruption of the political elite and the banning of social media platforms.

2. Solution: New Channels for Youth Engagement

At their conference in October 2025, the Council of Europe’s ministers responsible for youth affairs



made it clear that young people must not merely be beneficiaries of change, but should become central actors and initiators of it (CoE, 2025). The meeting highlighted the key role of youth in democratic renewal, the protection of human rights, the preservation of the rule of law, and the shaping of digital, demographic, and environmental processes. Ministers encouraged the systematic integration of young people's perspectives, needs, and opinions into political decision-making across the 46 Member States of the Council of Europe. At the event, delegates referred to the establishment of youth-centred decision-making as a primary guarantee of the resilience of European democracies (COE Malta, 2025).

Similarly, within the framework of the European Union's public dialogues, interested participants were able to engage directly with members of the European Commission on issues related to climate change, employment, and social inclusion (European Commission, 2025). A total of 26 EU Commissioners took part in the youth policy dialogue, and more than 400 young people shared their views on public security, competitiveness, democracy, social policy measures, and the EU's global presence (Citizens, 2025; Youth Europa, 2025). The Commission has committed to assigning a central role to young people's views in EU decision-making and to embedding this practice in its post-2027 youth strategy (European Commission, 2025).

3. Toolkit: Learning, Employment, Health

The March 2025 progress report on the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 highlighted the importance of mainstreaming youth considerations in policy design, monitoring, and impact assessment. Accordingly, the European Commission introduced the “youth check” mechanism, under which the institution is required to systematically assess the expected impact of all legislative and implementation activities on young people. The Commission also encouraged Member States to integrate youth perspectives into legislative processes, with particular emphasis on education, employment, and health policy (EUR-Lex, 2025).

These three areas of action were also identified at the global level as the issues of greatest concern to young people in 2025. Currently, in OECD member states, 54% of individuals aged 18–24 are enrolled in formal education. However, the proportion of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs), at 14%, continues to represent a significant social challenge (OECD, 2025b)¹. Globally, 12.6% of those aged 15–24 are unemployed, and in response the G20 agreed in July 2025 to reduce the share of NEET youth by a further 5 percentage points by 2030 compared to the 2024 level (ILO, 2025; G20, 2025).²

With regard to the third area, one of the most pressing challenges of our time is the protection of young people's mental health in the digital environment. The World Health Organization and national governments have identified as a top priority the creation of safer online spaces and hybrid learning environments, alongside strengthening users' skills to identify and manage digital risks (WHO/Europe, 2025). The increasingly widespread use of technology and social media is associated with deteriorating mental health outcomes, with young people demonstrably being the most vulnerable in this respect (WHO/Europe, 2025).

Intense debates are taking place worldwide concerning young people's digital rights, the protection of their online presence, and algorithmic bias in artificial intelligence systems. While digital platforms constitute key arenas for social interaction among emerging generations, they simultaneously pose risks related to radicalisation, misinformation, and various forms of exploitation (AP, 2025)

4. Concluding Thoughts

Developments observed in 2025 have made it clear that involving young people in decision-making processes poses a challenge within existing rule-of-law frameworks: when politics fails to respond, young people seek to advance their demands outside institutionalised channels. While they remain underrepresented in traditional forms of participation, those under the age of 30 are expressing their views with increasing

determination in online spaces and through mass demonstrations. These dynamics draw attention to long-standing problems related to education, unemployment, social exclusion, and adverse demographic trends, while simultaneously compelling decision-makers to take youth policy seriously.

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¹ According to OECD data from 2025 covering 38 member countries, approximately 55% of women in the given age group are actively engaged in education, compared with 49% of men. At the same time, employment rates are higher among men (36%) than among women (28%) (OECD, 2025b).

² The G20, established in 1999, is an international forum comprising 19 countries as well as the European Union and the African Union, and serves as a platform for discussing global economic, financial, and development issues.



Demography



Demography

Georgina Kiss-Kozma

Over the past decades, Europe has faced numerous challenges, among which the demographic crisis has emerged as one of the most significant in the long term. Europe's demographic transformation is characterised by fertility rates that consistently remain below the critical threshold required for population replacement.

Changes in demographic processes are strongly shaped by the altered life circumstances and family-formation strategies of younger generations: childbearing is increasingly postponed to later stages of life, while relationship and housing insecurity have become defining features of young people's lives over the past two decades. Rising living costs and the pervasive sense of uncertainty shaping the generational experience of youth have been further intensified by the pandemic and the close proximity of the war in Ukraine. Taken together, these factors have contributed to the fact that family formation is no longer a natural or self-evident part of the youth life stage.

Supporting the life circumstances of young people has therefore become not merely an individual concern but increasingly a broader social and economic issue. In this transformed context, the role of family policy extends beyond classical welfare measures; it must provide young people with a predictable life course and existential security in order to facilitate the realisation of childbearing plans. Accordingly, the family policy framework developed by the Hungarian government after 2010 goes beyond the mere incentivisation of childbearing. The measures presented below—particularly those related to taxation, housing, and the labour market—can primarily be interpreted as responses to the life situations of young people.

One of the most notable developments in 2025 is the Hungarian government's announcement of a family-friendly "tax revolution."

1. The demographic situation

Hungarian family policy, which supports Hungarian families through more than thirty different measures, has already been outstanding in international comparison, and today it allocates nominally four times as much funding to families

One of the most notable developments in 2025 is the Hungarian government's announcement of a family-friendly "tax revolution".

as it did in 2010. According to current plans, the 2026 state budget will earmark HUF 4,800 billion for family support programmes, corresponding to 5% of GDP.

The effects of these measures are also reflected in fertility indicators. The fertility rate increased from its record low of 1.23 in 2011 to 1.61 by 2021, and whereas Hungary ranked last in the European Union in terms of birth rates in 2011, by 2023 it had risen to third place. In 2024, the total fertility rate stood at 1.39, which remains higher than the historical low recorded in 2011. According to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH), the decline in the number of births has been strongly influenced by the long-term decrease in the number of women of childbearing age (15–49 years), whose population fell by 42,000 in 2024 alone. Although the number of births in 2024 was lower than the previous low point observed in 2011, fertility nevertheless exceeded the level of thirteen years earlier by 12%. Had the fertility level of 2011 persisted, only 68,300 children would have been born in 2024, which is 9,200 fewer than the actual figure.

An important change can be observed in the fact that childbearing is increasingly disappearing from



among the key milestones of the youth life stage. More than half of all children were born to women aged 30 or over, that is, to women who have left the traditionally defined period of youth (ages 15–29). At the time of the political transition, more than half of all newborns were born to women under the age of 25; however, since then, the average age of women at the birth of their first child has increased from 23.0 to 29.4 years. In other words, women today begin family formation and childbearing at an age at which, three decades ago, these processes had largely already been completed.

Between 2010 and 2024, Hungary recorded the largest increase in the number of marriages within the European Union. Compared to 2010, the number of couples formally entering into marriage rose from 35,500 to 46,500 by 2024. Following the peak reached in 2021, a declining trend has again become observable; nevertheless, among young people aged 20–29, the number of individuals living in registered partnerships increased slightly for both sexes compared with the previous year. With regard to the proportion of children born within marriage, the 76% recorded in 2024 represents the highest value in twenty-eight years.

The number of divorces continues to show a downward trend: in 2014, for the first time in fifty years, fewer than 20,000 divorces were registered.

16,900 marriages were dissolved in 2024, which is 0.5% more than one year earlier. The number of foetal losses (including pregnancy terminations and foetal deaths) has been declining steadily for an extended period. 33,200 foetal losses were recorded in 2024, representing a decrease of 4.5% compared with the previous year, while the number of pregnancy terminations fell by 4.2% relative to the year before (KSH, 2024).

In recent years, however, the war in Ukraine and the associated economic challenges have shaken Hungarian families' sense of security, and this has been reflected in several key fertility indicators. For this reason, the family-friendly approach and the sustained prioritisation of family policy continue to occupy a prominent place in the Hungarian government's political agenda.

Pillar I: Family-friendly “tax revolution”

Demographic processes can never be regarded as complete, as each new generation faces problems and challenges that differ from those of previous cohorts. For this reason, Hungarian family policy cannot be considered finalised either, even though more than 30 family-support measures have been





introduced over the past 15 years. The year 2025 presents different difficulties and challenges for young people and families than those experienced during the 2010s. In response, the government has announced a family-friendly “tax revolution” aimed at supporting Hungarian families.

Within this framework, the family tax allowance is being doubled in two steps. From 1 July 2025, the infant care allowance (CSED), the child care allowance (GYED), and the adoption allowance (ÖFD) became fully personal income tax exempt. From October 2025, a personal income tax exemption was introduced for mothers of three children, and from January 2026 this exemption will be extended to mothers of two children as well. According to estimates, this means that from 2026 onwards approximately half a million, and from 2029 onwards around one million mothers, will become exempt from personal income tax.

From 2025, the amount of the family tax allowance has increased in two stages. As a first step, from 1 July 2025 the monthly family tax allowance rose by 50%, with the second step taking effect on 1 January 2026. This measure affects approximately

one million parents in 2025.

From 1 January 2023, mothers under the age of 30 have been granted personal income tax exemption up to the level of tax payable on the average wage, applicable until they reach the age of 30. In 2025, a decision was taken to abolish the linkage to the average wage from 1 January 2026, thereby extending full personal income tax exemption to the total income of mothers until they reach the age of 30. This change will be particularly advantageous for mothers of one, as mothers of four or more children have already been exempt from personal income tax, while mothers of two or three children will also become exempt from January 2026. In addition, mothers under the age of 30 whose children were born before 1 January 2023 are also entitled to this exemption.

From 1 October 2025, all mothers with three children will be entitled to personal income tax exemption, regardless of the age of the children or the mother. The exemption applies to the entire amount of earned income, with no upper limit. This legislative amendment affects approximately 200,000–250,000 mothers of three children. The



introduction of personal income tax exemption for mothers of two children will take place gradually: from 2026 for mothers under 40, from 2027 for those aged 40–50, from 2028 for those aged 50–60, and from 2029 for mothers over 60. The exemption is granted for life and is independent of income level.

From 1 July 2025, the infant care allowance (CSED) and the child care allowance (GYED) will also be exempt from personal income tax. The CSED, which for approximately six months following the birth of a child equals the parent's previous wage, and the GYED, which is paid from the child's age of 6 to 24 months, will be fully tax-exempt. This tax exemption also applies to graduate, foster-parent, and grandparental childcare benefits.

Pillar II: Provision of housing

The measures of Hungarian family policy are fundamentally structured around three pillars. In addition to financial stability, providing adequate housing and promoting a balance between work and private life are also of key importance. Launched in September 2025, the Otthon Start programme aims to provide young people with a new opportunity to acquire their own home. The state-subsidised housing loan, designed to encourage first-time home ownership, offers a fixed interest rate of 3%, a maturity of up to 25 years, and requires a down payment of 10%. It is also available to young people who have not yet started a family.

The Rural Home Renovation Programme was launched on 1 January 2025 with the aim of supporting rural enterprises, improving employment conditions, and enhancing the living circumstances of the rural population, with particular attention to small settlements with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants. The basic conditions of the programme are largely identical to those of the previous scheme implemented in 2021–2022: a maximum of HUF 3 million in non-repayable state grant may be applied for. Applications may be submitted to the Hungarian State Treasury from 1 January 2025. The government has significantly expanded the circle of eligible beneficiaries, allowing pensioners as well to apply for up to HUF 3 million for home renovation.

In addition to the non-repayable grant, an interest-subsidised home renovation loan has been available since 1 February 2025. This preferential loan is intended to assist those who lack sufficient resources to finance home renovation costs. The home renovation loan is a state-subsidised, mortgage-backed scheme with a maximum amount of HUF 6 million. Its interest rate follows market rates, while the level of state interest subsidy is set at 3%.

Pillar III: Work–family balance

The third pillar of Hungarian family policy aims to support a better balance between work and family life. In this context, the Hungarian government has taken further steps to strengthen women's employment. From 1 July 2025, the CSED Extra programme allows mothers to take up employment from the time their child reaches 3 months of age without having to forgo the infant care allowance (CSED). Mothers may engage in paid work while retaining 70% of the CSED. This measure primarily supports those mothers for whom an early return to work is important in order to maintain their client base, while ensuring that they do not lose the childcare benefit to which they are entitled.

The nursery care system provides particularly important support for mothers' return to the labour market. From June 2025, under a scheme supporting workplace nursery places, the state provides non-repayable funding—co-financed by the European Union and national sources—for the development of childcare services offered by employers. The objective of this support is to create a family-friendly environment and to facilitate the labour market reintegration of parents with young children, particularly mothers.

2. Measures supporting family formation among young people

One of the most popular family support measures, the Baby Expecting Loan, was also modified in 2025. The maximum amount of credit was increased from HUF 10 million to HUF 11 million, and it can now be claimed by women up to the age of 35. It is an international trend that women are postponing

the birth of their first child to increasingly later stages of life, and the challenges of recent years—war, economic difficulties, inflation, and the energy crisis—have also placed families in a difficult position. Therefore, for those families who applied for the Baby Expecting Loan between 2019 and July 2021, the five-year deadline set for the birth of the first child has been extended until 2026.

From 1 January 2025, the Workers' Loan has been available, targeting young people in employment. It can be accessed by individuals aged 17-25 who are not eligible for student loans and who are employed for at least 20 hours per week or are self-employed. The interest-free, freely usable loan may amount to up to HUF 4 million and has a maturity of 10 years. The loan is linked to childbearing

incentives: following the birth of the first child after the loan agreement is concluded, repayment is suspended for 2 years; after the second child, in addition to a further two-year moratorium, half of the outstanding debt is forgiven; and after the third child, the entire debt is written off.

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Young People and the Homeland



Young People and the Homeland

András Igari - Vilmos Török - András Csité

For a substantial proportion of Hungarian young people, the question arises: to leave or to stay? In Hungary, similarly to other countries in the region, emigration is significant; at the same time, it takes many forms, is driven by diverse motivations, and varies in duration. Return migration is also an important issue, as the return of young people living abroad entails considerable potential. By 2024, more Hungarians were living abroad than at any point since the period following the democratic transition, and trends point towards further growth. In this chapter, in addition to outlining the main trends, we present the motivations for emigration and return, as well as existing public policy responses.

1. Introduction

In this study, we examine the relationship between young people and the homeland in the context of emigration and return from abroad. Although the decline in the number of young people can partly be attributed to demographic processes, emigration also plays an important role; compared to other age groups, young people are relatively more likely to consider moving abroad (Kiss-Kozma – Ruff 2022). Accession to the European Union and the Schengen Area opened up new opportunities and at the same time generated new patterns of population movement. Migration processes have also been shaped by the major events of the 2020s—Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian–Ukrainian war, and stagflation—adding further impetus to the study of emigration from Hungary and return migration.

2. Measuring Migration Processes and Their Difficulties

Data on international migration are difficult to handle. The main reason for this is that emigrants typically do not report whether they are leaving a country on a long-term or permanent basis (T. Nagy et al. 2023). This is due, on the one hand, to the absence of legal consequences for non-reporting, and on the other, to the persistence of

A significant share of emigrants retain domestic ties and registered addresses to reduce potential bureaucratic barriers associated with return migration, administrative procedures, or access to public services.

ties connecting emigrants to their homeland. A significant share of emigrants retain domestic ties and registered addresses to reduce potential bureaucratic barriers associated with return migration, administrative procedures, or access to public services. This naturally also complicates the monitoring of return migrants (Hárs 2020; Hárs – Simon 2025).

At the same time, in most countries relatively accurate information is available on the number of immigrants—those applying for residence and work permits. This allows for the use of so-called mirror statistics, whereby immigration statistics of potential destination countries are examined. Although these generally provide adequate information on the number of Hungarians living in a given country, they are typically characterised by data gaps and a lack of detail (T. Nagy et al. 2023).

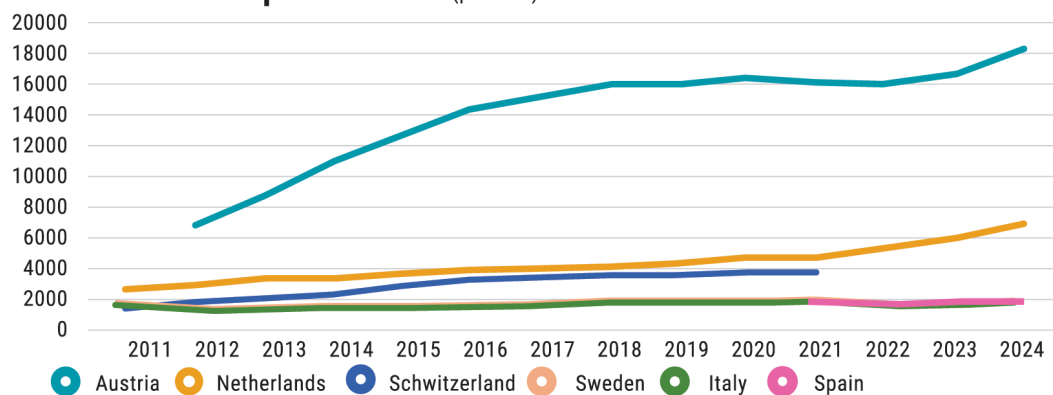
Eurostat annually aggregates data on residents in individual European countries, disaggregated by country of birth, sex, and age. When drawing conclusions, however, caution is required, as the statistics contained in the database are highly incomplete. Where adequate data were not available (for example in the cases of Germany and Spain, or from 2022 onwards for Switzerland and from 2020 onwards for the United Kingdom), national statistical sources of these countries were used. Our primary focus was on examining how many individuals aged 15–29 who were born in Hungary lived in individual European countries between 2011 and 2024. Due to the characteristics of the data, we were unable to include Hungarian citizens born abroad,

nor Hungarians living beyond the borders who subsequently emigrated from those regions.

3. The Growing Number of Hungarian Young People Living Abroad

Among individuals born in Hungary, the largest numbers reside in Germany (202,000 persons in 2024), the United Kingdom (104,000 persons according to the 2021–2022 censuses), and Austria (95,000 persons in 2024). In addition, sizeable Hungarian communities (exceeding 10,000 persons) can be found in Switzerland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, France, Spain, and Slovakia. Overall, the number of people born in Hungary but currently living in another European country is estimated at between 550,000 and 600,000 (Hárs 2025).

Change in the number of 15–29-year-olds born in Hungary living in selected European 2011–2024 (persons)



Source: Eurostat

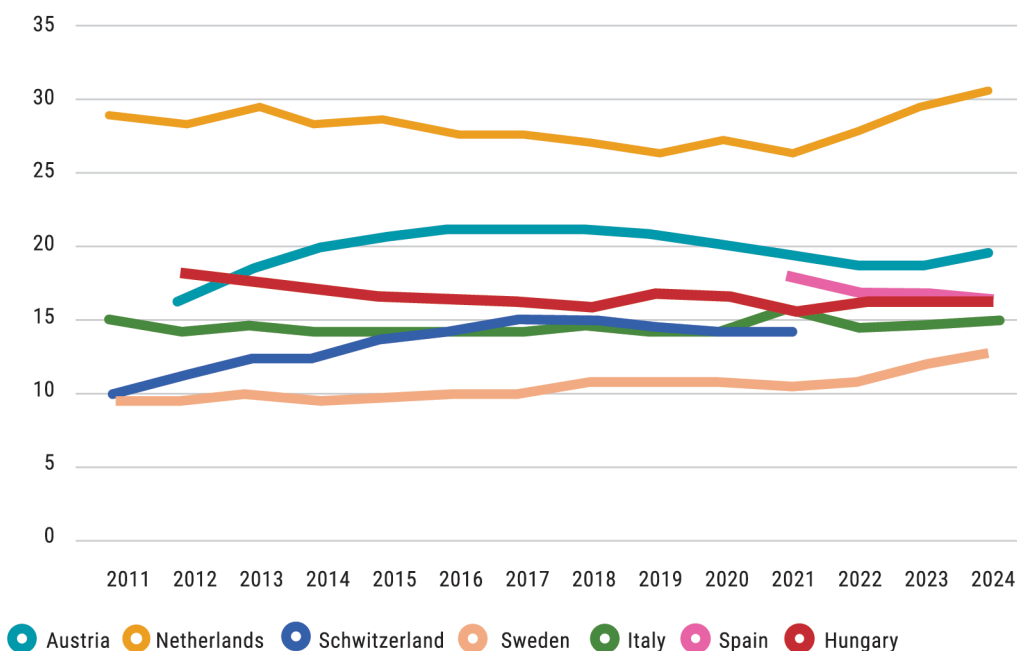
Fig. 1.

A significant proportion of Hungarians living abroad are young people (aged 15–29); however, precise figures are available only for a limited number of countries. As shown in Figure 1, the pace of emigration accelerated in the early 2010s, driven partly by the global financial crisis and partly by the lifting of labour market restrictions in Germany and Austria in 2011 (Szilasi et al. 2024). This growth slowed down—and in part even reversed—by the end of the 2010s, yet renewed outflows have been observed in recent years.

This pattern can also be seen in Austria. In the Netherlands, however, the number of young Hungarians increased gradually before rising sharply

in the 2020s. High-quality English-language university programmes that are more accessible than those in the United Kingdom attract many young people (Élő 2025). Although age specific data are not available for Germany, it can be stated that similar trends have prevailed there as well. The Hungarian community in Germany is characterised by considerable fluctuation: on an annual basis, both emigration and return are estimated at between 20,000 and 40,000 persons. Age specific data are also lacking for the United Kingdom, but similar processes have unfolded there: earlier growth was reversed due to Brexit and the tightening of the immigration system, while in recent years the number of Hungarians living there has begun to increase again.

Change in the proportion of 15–29 year olds born in Hungary among all Hungarians living in selected European countries 2011–2024 (%)



Source: Eurostat

Fig. 2.

Not only is the number of young people living abroad increasing, but their proportion is also high, as is the case for many other nationalities. Nearly 20% of people born in Hungary and living in Austria, and around 30% of Hungarians living in the Netherlands, belong to the 15–29 age group (see Fig. 2.). In other countries, the share of this age group is lower, indicating the differing roles of destination countries in Hungarian emigration. Meanwhile, in Hungary the number of young people declines by approximately 20,000–30,000 persons annually, and their proportion is estimated at 16% of the total population, a trend explained primarily by the progressively older age structure of society.

4. Reasons Behind the Emigration and Return of Young People

The reasons for emigration and the considerations of emigrants are highly diverse. Emigration is always the outcome of a complex process influenced not only by an individual's life situation but also by various external factors. When mapping the causes

of migration, it is important to take into account both so-called push and pull factors.

With regard to young people, a key age-specific factor is further education: the attractiveness of higher education abroad is particularly strong. A similar phenomenon already appears at the level of secondary education, as some Hungarians move abroad with their families in order to secure better educational opportunities for their children. Economic factors, naturally, constitute significant drivers across all age groups: economic crises and stagnation, unfavourable working conditions, high inflation, relatively high costs of living and housing, quality-of-life concerns, as well as individuals' satisfaction with life and work and their subjective well-being jointly exert a strong push effect. These factors direct especially young, dynamic workers towards countries offering better living conditions (Kiss-Kozma – Ruff 2024; Szilasi et al. 2024; Hárs 2025).

Among emigrants from Hungary (and other East-Central European countries), the proportion of highly educated individuals is substantial. This gives rise to the phenomenon known as "brain drain", whereby core

countries attract skilled labour from the periphery, posing a serious challenge for sending countries. At the same time, in recent years the concept of “brain gain” has also emerged, indicating that emigration may have positive effects for the sending country as well. These include the strengthening of international ties, the utilisation of expertise acquired abroad upon return, and direct financial gains in the form of remittances (Erdélyi 2023).

Just as the motivations for emigration are multifaceted, so too are the reasons for return. Many people reside abroad only temporarily: following the completion of university studies or the expiry of fixed-term contracts, they return to Hungary. Family-related and individual reasons can also be identified (Élő 2025), as well as the potential economic benefits of return, since knowledge and work experience acquired abroad may translate into higher earnings after returning home (Hárs – Simon 2025). It is important to note, however, that emigration and return are fluid states. Among those living abroad, turnover is often considerable (Élő 2025), and individuals who have returned from abroad are more likely to plan another period of emigration than those who have remained in Hungary throughout (Hárs – Simon 2025).

5. Public Policy Instruments

The government has undertaken efforts both to retain those intending to emigrate and to encourage the return of highly educated young people. Examples include the Resident Support Programme in the health sector, as well as the now-discontinued Come Home, Young Person! and Start a Business at Home, Young Person! programmes (Szilasi et al. 2024). In addition, support schemes aimed at family formation and childbearing (personal income tax exemption, Babaváró), housing and home creation (e.g. CSOK+, Rural CSOK, the Home Start Programme), and facilitating employment should also be highlighted. Although these measures operate indirectly, they may constitute attractive pull factors for young adults, contributing to the mitigation of emigration and to encouraging the return of Hungarians living abroad (Szegedi 2025).

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Hungarian Youth Abroad



Hungarian Youth Abroad

Ferenc Sullivan – Zoltán Kántor

Compared to the situation 30 to 40 years ago, Hungarian youth living in neighboring countries—such as Southern Slovakia (Felvidék) and Romania (Transylvania)¹—now form a far less homogeneous community. The permeability of borders, opportunities for study and employment abroad, cultural influences transmitted through the digital world, the increasing prevalence of mixed marriages, greater denominational mobility, processes of dispersion, and the presence of Hungarian-speaking Roma communities all contribute to a growing diversity of life situations and identities. Nevertheless, the national identity of Hungarian youth living beyond the borders is typically strong and deeply rooted, while they also fulfil a bridging role between the kin-state and the majority nation.

Among the various possible definitions of youth, the most widely accepted places the youth life stage between the ages of 15 and 29. On this basis, according to data from the 2021 census, there are approximately 250,000 Hungarian young people living beyond Hungary's borders, around two thirds of whom reside in Transylvania. In addition, one may also speak of young people of Hungarian origin living in the diaspora across different parts of the world, among whom there are individuals born in Hungary with Hungarian as their mother tongue, as well as later-generation youths who no longer speak Hungarian but nevertheless maintain their Hungarian identity.

1. Public life

Both in policies for Hungarian communities abroad and in Hungarian public life more generally, growing emphasis is placed on engaging young people and strengthening their community involvement.

By decision of the Hungarian Standing Conference, 2025 was declared the Year of the Future Generation in the field of policy for Hungarian communities abroad. Within the framework of this thematic year, the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad launched a call for applications under the Future Generation Programme, with a total budget of HUF 500 million, targeting Hungarian youth organisations beyond Hungary's borders. The more than 700 approved applications enabled, among other initiatives, the organisation of summer camps, student days, football tournaments, and heritage preserving events, thereby contributing to the strengthening of Hungarian communities

Both in policies for Hungarian communities abroad and in Hungarian public life more generally, growing emphasis is placed on engaging young people and strengthening their community involvement.

outside Hungary. The amount of support available per project ranged from HUF 500,000 to HUF 2 million.

In Southern Slovakia (Felvidék), preparatory work has begun on the establishment of a knowledge centre designed to support the unified Hungarian party, the Hungarian Alliance (MSZ), through policy analyses and recommendations. Representatives of the younger generation—including students of the Esterházy Academy in Martos—will play a significant role in the emerging background institution, thereby contributing to the renewal of Hungarian policies in the region. A notable achievement was the election of Balázs Tárnok, a 35-year-old minority rights lawyer from Southern Slovakia (Felvidék), as Vice-President of the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN) at the organisation's congress in October.

¹ Regions that once belonged to the Kingdom of Hungary and have been partially inhabited by Hungarians ever since.

In Romania, a repeat presidential election was held in May, during the second round of which the independent centrist candidate Nicușor Dan defeated the ultranationalist candidate of the AUR party. The Hungarian community played a significant role in Dan's victory, and research indicates that the high electoral participation of an otherwise typically apolitical Hungarian youth cohort was a decisive factor. The outcome also highlights the effective use of social media by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) in conveying its messages to the community.

In Serbia, following the tragic November 2024 incident at the Novi Sad railway station that claimed 16 lives, nationwide anti-government protests erupted under the leadership of university students, shaping the 2025 political agenda. The protests were largely avoided by the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) and other prominent Hungarian organisations, including youth groups.

For Hungarian youth in Transcarpathia (Kárpátalja), life opportunities in 2025 continued to be heavily influenced by the ongoing Russian–Ukrainian war. The number of Hungarian victims has approached 100, many of whom were young. Although the missile attack in August on the electronics factory in Mukachevo remained an isolated event, the men evading conscription and their families are increasingly under pressure, both existentially and psychologically. The volatility of the situation is highlighted by the case of Hungarian university students unlawfully detained at the Berehove military conscription office. In August, Ukraine allowed men aged 18–22 to travel abroad, leading many to choose prolonged stays outside the country.

Education and training of the young political generation are supported by the programs of the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC). Since 2017, MCC has organised the Transylvanian School of Politics in partnership with the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) and the Hungarian Youth Conference (MIÉRT). Similarly, the Transcarpathian Public Leadership Training is implemented in partnership with the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association (KMKSZ), its youth organisation, and MEP Viktória Ferenc.

2. Education

In Slovakia, 2025 saw the implementation of secondary school network optimisation, meaning small schools were merged. While this measure has so far had little effect on day-to-day education, it has caused tensions in some localities affected by the mergers. The ongoing reform of primary schools could impact families with young children, as it may lead to the closure of additional small Slovakian schools and negatively affect church-run institutions.

In Romania, government austerity measures affected the Hungarian education system, increasing teaching hours, class sizes, and administrative workload, while reducing social and academic scholarships. Thanks to the RMDSZ's participation in government, however, the ethnic school network was not reduced. Research by sociologists Tamás Kiss and Tibor Toró highlighted that despite strong PISA results in Romanian Hungarian high schools, early school leaving remains a serious problem, particularly among Roma students.

At the Selye János University, the September academic year began with the inauguration of János Tóth as the university's reappointed rector. With around 1,600 students, the university faces challenges such as strengthening its national presence and compensating for students from Hungary who are unable to attend.

On October 1, the former Ferenc Rakóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College in Berehove officially gained university status. The foundation-supported, Hungary-funded institution plays a key cultural and identity-building role in the war affected region. Currently, approximately 1,600 students attend its 33 bachelor's and master's programs, with doctoral schools planned to join.

In Serbia, after nearly a year-long forced hiatus, the academic year resumed in November at universities where students had blocked some campuses since last autumn. While teaching officially restarted, some students remained in the streets demanding early parliamentary elections. The Subotica Hungarian Teacher Training Faculty did not participate, but roughly 500 Hungarian

students on state-language campuses were directly affected.

For Hungarian youth in the diaspora, education is provided through around 250 Hungarian weekend schools, serving several thousand students.

3. Organisational Life

By 2025, Hungarian youth organisations beyond the borders had largely recovered from the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic; nevertheless, in a world that has changed in many respects, engaging young people remains a challenging task. Concurrently, the emergence of a new generation has contributed renewed dynamism to the functioning of Hungarian youth organisations outside Hungary.

In May, the Hungarian Youth Conference (MIK), the highest-level coordination forum for young people from Hungary and beyond the borders, held its elective general assembly in Lendva, in the Muravidék region. The organisation elected Ádám Turi, in his mid-twenties, as its new president.

In March, in Southern Slovakia (Felvidék), the Hungarian Student Network Slovakia (Diákhálózat), an organisation representing Hungarian university students in Slovakia, held its event entitled Student Parliament. At the event, Martin Kontra, a law student in Bratislava and student president of the Bratislava Hungarian College for Advanced Studies, was elected as the organisation's new president. The task of the new presidency will be to revitalise the long-established network of clubs operating in



the university towns of the former Czechoslovakia and Hungary in preparation for the organisation's 35th anniversary in 2026.

In July, the Hóvár Association was launched, primarily on the initiative of young Transcarpathian (Kárpátalja) intellectuals living in Hungary. The association's identity-strengthening community initiative for Hungarians from Transcarpathia living in various parts of the world is co-chaired by Arnold Komonyi and Viktor Roland Úr.

In Transylvania, the Hungarian Youth Conference (MIÉRT), which brings together youth organisations cooperating with the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ), held its leadership renewal in October. It was decided that Dóra Emese Szilágyi, a lawyer from Tasnád, would remain president of the organisation for the next two years. The priorities of the returning youth leader include supporting career orientation and the learning of the Romanian language, creating a database of scholarship and exchange programmes, and engaging young Transylvanian Hungarians living in the Western diaspora.

4. Summer Festivals and Community Events

As in previous years, 2025 once again brought emblematic summer festivals and camps that attracted Hungarian youth from beyond the borders and created important spaces for dialogue between young people from Hungary and abroad, as well as across generations.

In addition to recreation, these events provide participants with opportunities to review the situation of their own communities and to jointly define future directions for action. In 2025, well-known events were once again held, including the Bálványos Free Summer University and Student Camp in Transylvania (Tusványos), the Gombaszög Summer Camp in Southern Slovakia (Felvidék), Dombos Fest and Malomfeszt in Vojvodina, the Méra World Music Festival, the Double Rise Festival in Torockó, and the VIBE Festival in Târgu Mureş. Hungarian Days events (such as Festum Varadinum in Oradea, the Hungarian Days of Timișoara, and the Hungarian Days of Arad) also take place with youth programmes and active youth participation. At the

Rákóczi Association's camp in Sátoraljaújhely, the capacity of youth accommodation has increased by nearly 100% since 2025, enabling approximately 900 young people at any one time to participate in all-Hungarian camps. Among public life oriented events addressing Hungarian youth beyond the borders, particular mention should be made of the Esterházy Public Life Camp in Southern Slovakia (Felvidék), the VIFÓ Free Summer University in Vojvodina, the joint events of the National Youth Council and the Hungarian Youth Conference (MIK), as well as the "Minority Protection in Europe" Summer University in Budapest. Within the framework of the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Programme and the Petőfi Sándor Programme, supported by the Hungarian state, numerous young people from Hungary and beyond the borders contribute to community-building among diaspora and dispersed communities, with particular emphasis on involving local youth.

The National Youth Strategy Roadshow, launched in 2025, also reached Southern Slovakia (Felvidék) and Transcarpathia (Kárpátalja). The MCC training programmes, which began in Vojvodina in 2024, reached maturity by 2025.

5. Summary

Although the social, economic, and political environments of the countries in the region differ, they share a fundamental recognition that the future of Hungarian communities is determined primarily by the level of participation, sense of identity, and cultural embeddedness of the younger generation. Over recent years, it has gradually become apparent that Hungarian youth organisations beyond the borders have become more professional: their institutional structures have stabilised, their programmes have expanded, and ties with Hungary have been strengthened. In 2025, the system of support from Hungary was significantly reinforced, the range of programmes available to Hungarian youth beyond the borders broadened, and cultural, educational, and community-building events showed a marked increase.



Youth Policy Measures



Youth Policy Measures

Gergely Réti

Youth policy at the level of government constitutes a horizontal public policy area that is highly diverse and affects the entire central public administration; consequently, the achievement of its objectives requires cooperation and coordination across different sectoral fields. 2025 has also brought a number of new developments in the field of youth policy. A dialogue has been initiated among decision-makers, civil society organisations and young people in connection with the new National Youth Strategy, and the Hungarian Government has launched the largest home-creation programme of the post-transition period, the Otthon Start Programme.

1. Strategy and Vision

The National Youth Strategy, adopted by the National Assembly in 2009 in the form of a parliamentary resolution, lost its validity in 2024, making it necessary to prepare a new concept that provides strategic responses to the current needs and challenges of young people. For this reason, the Hungarian Government, in cooperation with the National Youth Council, launched a roadshow entitled What Do You Think? (Mit szólsz hozzá?), and jointly developed the foundations of the new youth policy document. Within this framework, Hungarian settlements were visited, where young people were asked about their views on housing, health, employment, education and community life. In addition, young people were also able to express their opinions online. The document is expected to be submitted to the National Assembly at the beginning of 2026. This marks an important milestone in Hungary's history, as the strategy is likely to shape the fundamental character of Hungarian youth policy over the long term.

2. The Opportunity of a First Home – Launch of the Otthon Start Programme

A defining measure of 2025 was the introduction of the Otthon Start Programme on 1 September, which provides home-creation support in the form of a fixed-interest loan at 3% with a maturity of up to 25 years. Under the programme, apartments may be purchased up to a value limit of HUF 100

The strategy marks an important milestone in Hungary's history, as it is likely to shape the fundamental character of Hungarian youth policy over the long term.

million, and single-family houses up to a value limit of HUF 150 million. Unlike previous home-creation schemes, eligibility does not require marriage or childbearing; the programme is open to all individuals who do not own, and have never owned, residential property, and who have not previously held a share exceeding 50% in a residential property.

There are no age or geographical restrictions under the Otthon Start Programme. The maximum loan amount is HUF 50 million, requiring a minimum 10% equity contribution and at least two years of social security insurance coverage in Hungary. The programme may be combined with other loan schemes, such as CSOK Plus and the Rural CSOK. The new measure can indeed be regarded as the largest home-creation support programme of the post-transition period. By mid-November 2025, 22,000 loan applications had been submitted, amounting to nearly HUF 800 billion.



3. Other Forms of Support

On 1 January 2025, the Hungarian Government introduced the so-called Worker's Loan, a freely usable loan available in the amount of HUF 4 million. This new form of support is targeted at young people aged between 17 and 26 who are not eligible for the Student Loan scheme. Since its introduction, approximately 20,000 applications have been approved, with a total value of HUF 77 billion.

In 2025, the Government also announced that, from 2026 onwards, public service employees will be eligible to apply for a non-repayable grant of HUF 1 million net, which may be used either to repay an existing housing loan or to supplement the applicant's own contribution when purchasing a home. This support may be claimed through the employer by police officers, nurses, doctors, teachers, child protection workers, elderly care workers, nursery education staff, disability care

workers, local government employees, ministry staff, employees of the metropolitan and county government offices, as well as employees of institutions maintained by churches or by public-interest asset management foundations performing public tasks.

The rules of the existing CSOK Plus scheme were also amended with regard to age-related eligibility criteria for married couples. As a result, mothers who are pregnant or who are participating in an adoption authorisation procedure may continue to apply for this support after 31 December 2025, regardless of their age.

In July 2025, three further amendments entered into force within the framework of family policy measures. The infant care allowance (CSÉD), the child care allowance (GYED) and the adoption allowance (ÖFD) became fully exempt from personal income tax (SZJA), meaning that beneficiaries receive the gross amount of the benefit without any tax deduction.

From 1 October 2025, mothers raising three children became exempt from personal income tax on income earned from employment for the rest of their lives. The benefit may be claimed by a biological or adoptive mother who is entitled to family allowance for at least three children, or who was previously entitled to family allowance for three children for a period of at least 12 years. This measure affects approximately 250,000 mothers, and according to the plans, mothers raising two children may also become eligible for this support in several stages.

From January 2025, employers may provide monthly support of up to HUF 150,000, under favourable tax conditions, to employees under the age of 35 to cover rental costs or housing loan instalments. Under this arrangement, the support may be granted as a fringe benefit; however, it is important to emphasise that it is not automatic and depends on the individual decision of the employer.

4. Tightening of Drug Policy

In the spring of 2025, a new phase began in Hungary's drug policy. This shift was prompted by an increase in drug-related criminal offences, as well as by the spread of inexpensive drugs available in large quantities and of uncontrolled quality, primarily in rural settlements. In response, the Hungarian Government appointed László Horváth as Government Commissioner responsible for the elimination of drug trafficking.

The legal framework was also tightened through amendments to the Criminal Code (Act C of 2012 on the Criminal Code), with particular emphasis on designer drugs, procedures related to users, and the effectiveness of prevention measures. The scope for applying asset forfeiture as a sanction was expanded: authorities may now confiscate not only cash and equipment, but also vehicles and residential property. In addition, drug traffickers may be banned for a period of 5 years from the settlements or regions where the offence was committed.

The fight against drug trafficking and drug use

was also enshrined by the legislating National Assembly at the highest level of the legal hierarchy, in Hungary's Fundamental Law, as part of its 15th Amendment, which entered into force on 15 April 2025.

5. Calls for Proposals and Programmes

In 2025, in addition to the previously mentioned forms of support aimed at home creation and family formation, a number of new calls for proposals and programmes sought to assist young people and their communities. The Ministry of Culture and Innovation implements the Government's youth policy objectives through the Children and Youth Fund Programme and the National Cultural Support Management Authority.

Through the Children and Youth Fund Programme (GYIA), calls for proposals with a total budget of HUF 550 million in the current year have focused on the preservation of young people's mental health, the implementation of drug prevention activities, the establishment of community spaces, and the support of programmes implemented within these spaces.

The policy area responsible for youth affairs also launched a new initiative: the "Youth Capital of Hungary" call for applications, for which one municipality in Hungary and one municipality beyond the borders may jointly apply. The call provides support of HUF 100 million each to promote cooperation between the participating municipalities and to support local young people and their communities.

6. What Will Happen to Mobility Programmes?

The European Commission has continued to withhold participation in the Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe programmes from students of 21 Hungarian universities that have undergone a model change, citing concerns related to corruption and conflicts of interest involving public-interest asset management foundations. No substantive progress was made in the so-called "Erasmus case" in 2025 either. When, in November,



the Council of Education Ministers sought to adopt a new higher education strategy that did not guarantee Hungarian students and researchers participation rights in mobility programmes on an equal footing with their foreign counterparts, the Hungarian Government vetoed its adoption.

As a response to the exclusion of Hungarian students, the Pannonia Scholarship Programme, operated with the involvement of the Tempus Public Foundation, may be interpreted as a compensatory measure. 8,115 participants studied, taught and conducted research in various parts of the world under the programme in its first year.

7. Conclusion

The year 2025 brought numerous new developments in the field of youth policy. Among these, the newly introduced Otthon Start Programme stands out, as it supports young people in starting their independent lives by promoting home ownership instead of rental housing. Its introduction has also stimulated the real estate market and the construction sector; however, the long-term consequences of the programme can as yet only be assessed in broad outlines.

Significant tightening measures were also implemented in the area of drug policy, with a primary emphasis on prevention and on action against drugs of opaque composition and those who distribute them. In addition, the social consultation on the new National Youth Strategy was completed. While this process may define the directions for the optimal long-term development of the youth cohort, the finalisation of the new concept and its adoption by the National Assembly will take place in 2026.

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Education



Education

Enikő Szakos

In 2025, the education sector experienced balanced growth alongside forward-looking renewal. Student enrolment figures in higher education indicate a stable system, while interest in the teaching profession continued to strengthen. Salary increases for teachers and the introduction of a new in-service training structure have created substantial professional recognition and opportunities for development, while the renewed training programme for public education school leaders provides contemporary leadership competencies. The results of national competence assessments show an overall improvement, and international surveys—such as TALIS, TIMSS, and the EU Monitor—also indicate favourable trends across several areas, reinforcing the progress of Hungarian education and outlining directions for further development.

1. 2025 in figures

Although the structure of the academic year does not coincide with the calendar year, it is nevertheless possible to draw an overall assessment of developments in 2025.

Learners within the system

According to data from the 2024/25 academic year, approximately 1.27 million children and young people were enrolled in Hungary's public education system, including those attending kindergarten, primary school, and secondary education. During the 2025 general higher education admissions procedure, 129,730 applicants applied for admission, of whom 26,865 applied to teacher education programmes. A total of 95,907 applicants were admitted, including 14,887 prospective teachers who will commence their studies in September.

The total number of students in higher education in the 2024/25 academic year was 328,562 across nearly 70 institutions, clearly illustrating the scale and capacity of the institutional system.

Taken together, these figures depict a stable and large-scale education system in which interest in the teaching profession remains substantial. This trend may also have been supported by the launch of the newly established István Nemeskürty Faculty of Teacher Education at the National University of Public Service, which admitted its first cohort and,

In the 2024/25 academic year, approximately 1.27 million children and young people were enrolled in Hungary's public education system, including those attending kindergarten, primary school, and secondary education.

owing to its distinctive and attractive features, succeeded in engaging a large number of young people.

Teacher salary increases

The salary increase cycle implemented between 2024 and 2025 in Hungarian public education represents not merely a financial adjustment, but a deeper structural realignment. Its primary objectives are to support retention within the profession and to enhance the social prestige of teaching. These measures are also essential to ensuring that the teaching profession remains an attractive career option for young people.

The process began in 2024 with a large-scale average increase of over 30%, followed in 2025 by a further rise of 21.2% on average at institutional



level, thereby consolidating salary levels. Teaching and educational work fundamentally shapes the wellbeing of children and young people as well as the country's competitiveness. The quality of this work is closely linked to teachers' professional stability, their risk of burnout, and the sustainability of their long-term career trajectories, as well as to their perception of professional recognition.

The evaluation of teaching work increasingly requires a differentiated approach. The entry-level trainee grade has been raised, while the Teacher I and Teacher II categories provide an income framework in which professional experience, qualifications, and institutional responsibilities can be more clearly reflected. Higher remuneration associated with the Master Teacher and Research Teacher grades, in turn, represents recognition of professional excellence and pedagogical work of a scholarly and research-oriented nature.

Particular attention should be given to the reform of the allowance system for shortage subjects. Increasing the supplementary payments for teachers of natural sciences and information technology represents not only a financial incentive but also a strategic intervention, as a developing economy based on knowledge and advanced technologies requires highly qualified professionals with strong competencies in the natural sciences. High quality science teachers can foster students' interest in these disciplines, thereby encouraging a greater number of young people to pursue careers in STEM fields.

The 2025 salary settlement constitutes a pivotal step towards the long-term sustainability of the teaching profession and also conveys a clear message to both educators and society at large: that teaching and educational work is worthy of recognition and esteem.

2. A new level in the professional development system for teachers

From September, a new phase has begun in teacher professional development, marked by changes in both structure and content. Teachers are now required to complete 120 credits within a five-year period, replacing the previous seven-year cycle.

In addition to the accredited programmes of the Education Authority, content-renewal courses have been introduced. These are closely aligned with specific subjects and enable participants to acquire up-to-date disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical innovations, and new methodological approaches. The National University of Public Service is responsible for the quality assurance and delivery of these high-standard programmes. Alongside online courses, the university also offers face-to-face training, implemented in cooperation with partner institutions. Over the course of the 5-year cycle, school principals are required to designate half of the 120 credits to be completed by teachers from among these programmes.

The renewed teacher professional development system aims to promote more deliberate and goal-oriented professional growth, ensuring that children receive modern, enduring, and future oriented knowledge and educational support in classrooms and group settings alike.

3. School leadership matters

As of September, the system of training for public education school leaders has also been renewed: earlier forms of leadership training have been replaced by a more coherent, modern, and practice oriented professional development framework.

The objective is to establish a sustainable pipeline of school leaders capable of ensuring the predictable and child-centred operation of institutions amid changing social, demographic, and labour market challenges.

To support those currently serving as school leaders in public education, a national mentoring network has been launched under the leadership of Dr Katalin Balatoni, Prime Minister's Commissioner. The network brings together partners from school districts, municipalities, and the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC), and is underpinned by the active participation of approximately 600 school leaders nationwide who are willing to share their professional experience and learn from one another in the interest of continuous development.

4. Positive trends in the National Competence Assessment

The 2025 National Competence Assessment represents one of the most important diagnostic instruments of Hungary's public education system. Beyond providing data on students' levels of knowledge and skills, it also offers insight into deeper structural characteristics of the educational process. The assessment examines key domains such as reading comprehension, mathematics, science, digital competence, and foreign languages.

The 2025 results indicate an overall improvement; however, this positive trend is not evenly distributed. While rising average scores at the national level present a favourable picture, underlying disparities persist, including differences between year groups, regional variations, and performance gaps across types of institutions. In particular, at the lower year levels it is evident that adaptation to the digital assessment environment and the stable acquisition of foundational competencies are not progressing at the same pace across all student groups.

At the national level, improved average scores compared to the previous year can be observed across several domains and year groups. In mathematics, national average scores increased at all but one year level, with particularly strong improvements recorded in Years 7 and 11. Mathematical competencies are of particular importance, as they encompass not only calculation skills but also logical reasoning, problem-solving, and abstraction. In addition, average scores in science, foreign languages, digital studies, and history were generally higher than in the previous year, indicating continued development in students' competencies.

5. 2025 in the light of international assessments

In 2025, Hungary participated in several international education surveys, while the results of assessments conducted in previous years were also published during the year. The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) examined teachers' job satisfaction, working conditions, use of digital

tools, and mentoring practices. According to the findings, teacher satisfaction increased, workplace-related stress declined, and support for early career teachers strengthened.

The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) assessed the mathematics and science performance of students in Years 4 and 8, in which Hungarian Year 8 students performed above the international average.

The Education and Training Monitor 2025 analyses the education systems of the Member States of the European Union. The analysis identifies reducing early school leaving, strengthening digital skills, and increasing adult literacy as key priorities for Hungary.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures the reading literacy, mathematics, and science competencies of 15-year-old students. In Hungary, data collection was conducted in spring 2025, and the analysis of the results is currently ongoing.

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Interest Representation



Interest Representation

Virág Sövegjártó - András Dulovics

2025 proved to be exceptionally active in the field of youth interest representation in Hungary. Alongside traditional professional events, two groundbreaking initiatives even at the national level: the forum series entitled “Life at University” (“Az egyetem ilyen”) organised by the National Conference of Student Governments, and the nationwide youth strategic roadshow “What Do You Think?” (“Mit szólsz hozzá?”), implemented through the cooperation of the National Youth Council and the Ministry of Culture and Innovation.

1. Young people in the spotlight: Interest representation within the framework of the “What Do You Think?” roadshow

The National Youth Strategy, adopted in 2009 and entering into force by Parliamentary Resolution No. 88/2009 (X.29), expired in 2024. Following a call by the Ministry of Culture and Innovation, the process of developing a new strategy commenced with the participation of numerous civil society organisations. To this end, the “What Do You Think?” roadshow was launched with the aim of fostering active dialogue among young people, professionals and decision-makers, while also providing a platform for young people to share their views, proposals and experiences.

The opening event of the programme series took place on 3 June 2025 at the Royal Palace of Gödöllő. At the event, the first processed results of the Large Sample Youth Research were presented, followed by the presentation of awards to civil society organisations involved in the preparation of the strategy.

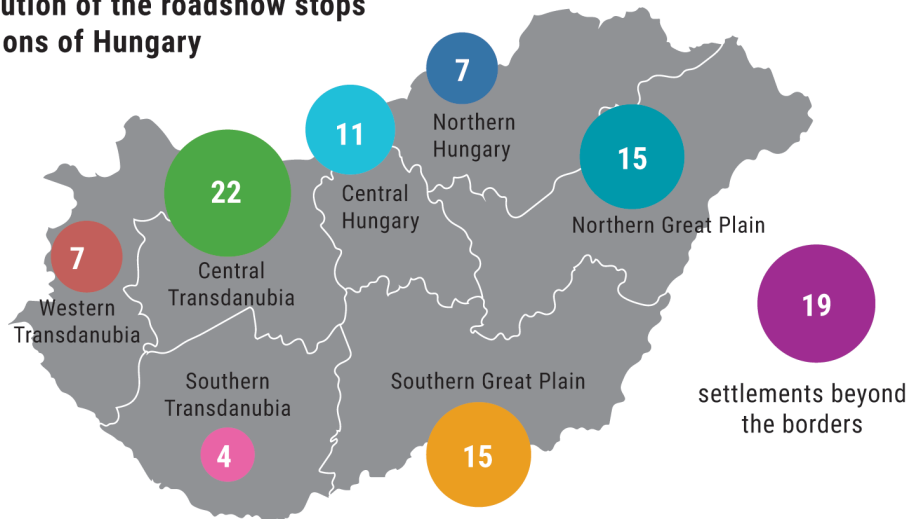
One of the roadshow’s objectives was to provide opportunities for dialogue between young people and experts across at least 20 locations in Hungary and beyond its borders. Ultimately, the programme exceeded all expectations, reaching 27 locations, including 5 cities outside Hungary. During the summer months, the presenters, facilitators and professionals involved in the roadshow also visited a number of festival venues, thereby further expanding outreach to young people. In addition to the National Youth Council, several civil society

One of the roadshow’s objectives was to provide opportunities for dialogue between young people and experts in at least twenty locations in Hungary and beyond its borders.

organisations took part in the organisation of the programme; for locations beyond the borders, the Hungarian Youth Conference (MIK) was involved, while at certain locations within Hungary the Association of Hungarian PhD and DLA Candidates (DOSZ), the National Union of Students in Hungary (HÖÖK), and the National Association of Non-State Higher Education Institutions (NÁFIORE) contributed to the implementation.



Distribution of the roadshow stops by regions of Hungary



Source: Author's own work, percentage

The workshops facilitated by trained moderators were organised around 4 main thematic areas: home and housing; mental health and sustainability; education and the world of work; and a dedicated workshop for youth professionals. During the discussions, participants raised questions including the affordability of housing, access to support schemes (such as the CSOK Family Housing Allowance Programme and the Baby Expecting Loan), the availability of places in student halls of residence and student accommodation, constraints on mobility, and the difficulties associated with leaving the parental home. Particular emphasis was placed on access to home ownership as a critical threshold for embarking upon an independent life.

With regard to mental health, young people highlighted the pressures associated with schooling and higher education, examination-related stress, the phenomenon of bullying, and the lack of a supportive environment. In relation to education and the world of work, issues raised included the shortage of teachers, the professional recognition and esteem afforded to educators, the opportunities available to young people in rural areas, the absence of intergenerational dialogue, and the challenges posed by digitalisation and the use of artificial intelligence. Further discussion addressed questions of equal opportunities, inclusion, language education, language examinations, and the conditions underpinning mobility.

A substantial proportion of young people expressed concerns regarding social isolation, school bullying, and the absence of supportive communities. Notes taken during the events are being processed by professional analysts and provide important background material for the development of the renewed National Youth Strategy.

Through the event's website, www.mitszolszhozza.info, interested young people were also able to articulate their views in written form in connection with the roadshow, structured around 6 thematic areas: home and housing; life transitions and family; mental health; sustainability and the future; education; and the world of work. The ideas, observations and questions collected in this manner will likewise be incorporated into the strategy.

From a regional comparative perspective, the Hungarian initiative can be regarded as unique: among the youth policy programmes of the Visegrád Group countries, there is currently no similarly structured, nationwide dialogue series that directly involves young people. This form of direct consultation between decision-makers and young people represents an innovative approach within the region.

Overall, the roadshow introduced new perspectives into youth interest representation in Hungary. The series of events created opportunities for young people to discuss real issues affecting their generation, while fostering a constructive dialogue grounded in professional expertise. The roadshow is scheduled to conclude in December, and the evaluation of its outcomes is currently under way. The integration of these experiences into the renewed National Youth Strategy may, in the long term, contribute to a more evidence-based and inclusive shaping of Hungarian youth policy.

2. “Life at University”: Student Perspectives and Systemic Lessons from the HÖÖK Forums

Planning for the HÖÖK forum series entitled “Life at University” began in early March 2025. The methodological framework was preceded by several rounds of consultation, undertaken specifically to ensure that the organisation’s core objective—namely, the direct articulation of student views—would be operationally viable in practice. This represented a novel situation for HÖÖK: traditionally, student experiences are conveyed to the national level through representative channels, primarily via student governments, whereas the forum series created a direct, institution-by-institution dialogue among students.

From the students’ perspective, the format was equally innovative. Within Hungarian higher education, opportunities for students to articulate

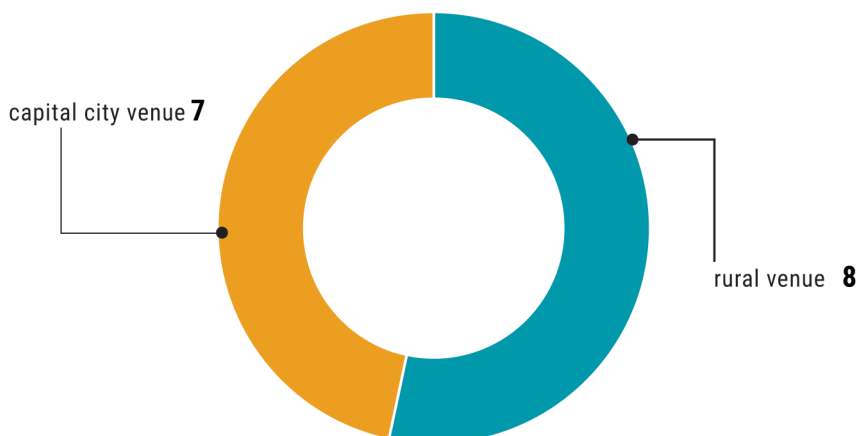


their views in structured, public, and interactive settings are not self-evident. The methodology therefore intentionally sought to mitigate the unfamiliarity of the situation by establishing a safe and predictable environment that enabled genuine participation. A key strength of the format lay in the fact that it was neither a traditional lecture nor a conventional roundtable discussion, but rather provided participants with an opportunity for flexible dialogue. The focus consistently remained on students' lived experiences and perceptions, which were substantiated through data, local examples, and rapid, interactive feedback. A regular participant in the discussions was Marcell Eszterhai, President of HÖÖK, who on each occasion outlined the broader structural contexts of student life. His interlocutor was the President of the Student Union of the host university, who brought the institutional reality into closer view. The rhetoric of the discussions was explicitly inclusive: rather than relying on a dichotomy of "us" and "them", it sought to identify common ground among diverse student perspectives, even within a turbulent environment. The thematic exploration of issues during the discussions drew on two sources: questions and opinions collected in advance on an anonymous basis, and interactions taking place on site.

Between late March and late May 2025, forums were held at 15 institutions:

- Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences*
- University of Pécs*
- Széchenyi István University*
- Budapest Business University*
- Semmelweis University*
- Pázmány Péter Catholic University*
- Eszterházy Károly Catholic University*
- Eötvös Loránd University*
- University of Public Service*
- Budapest University of Technology and Economics*
- Óbuda University*
- University of Nyíregyháza*
- University of Pannonia*
- University of Miskolc*
- University of Debrecen*

Percentage distribution of forum venues



Source: Author's own work, percentage

Subsequently, the organisation tracked the main dimensions of student life through a series of thematic mini-studies, covering issues ranging from livelihoods and physical and mental health, through academic administration and the organisation of teaching, to employment, institutional autonomy, housing, digital infrastructure, the labour-market value of degrees, mobility, and the quality of teaching staff. The questionnaire was administered on a weekly basis from the end of May to the end of August, thereby providing a time-comparable “pulse picture” of the most pressing issues.

The subsequent online “referendum” offered a quantitative snapshot: 15 questions were linked to 12 thematic areas, generating a total of more than 13,000 responses. According to respondents, the three most urgent areas were scholarships, housing, and issues related to academic administration, the latter particularly hindering access to courses and examination places.

Shortcomings related to scholarships were especially pronounced: 69% of students do not consider the current level of support to be sufficient at all. A recurring motif in the qualitative comments was that the amount “does not even cover weekly meals”, making paid employment the primary means of subsistence. According to the responses, this directly undermines academic performance for many students.

Within the housing block, the principal points of tension were the shortage of places in student halls of residence, the unpredictability of access to such accommodation, and the sustained rise in private rental prices.

In the area of academic administration, the most frequently reported problem concerned information provision and timing: “we are not informed about many important dates, or only at the very last moment”, which generates risks in preparation and produces inequalities of opportunity.

With regard to the wellbeing dimension, students reported an insufficient number of accessible psychological counselling sessions (for example, the rapid exhaustion of the maximum of 6 sessions per year) and considered external, market-based counselling to be unaffordable for financial reasons. In the domain of physical health,

limitations in opportunities for sport and recreation were highlighted.

This methodological chain ensures that student experiences do not remain anecdotal impressions but are transformed into decision-preparatory content, particularly in the three most urgent areas.

From a youth policy perspective, the lessons are twofold. In the short term, targeted “small step, big impact” interventions (such as more transparent and earlier-scheduled academic communication) are capable of reducing everyday obstacles. In the longer term, without addressing financial and housing conditions (including increases in scholarship levels and normative funding frameworks, as well as the expansion of student accommodation capacity), the necessity of paid employment and the resulting decline in academic performance will continue to reproduce inequalities of opportunity. The data and quotations presented convey a clear message: the student voice delineates the points of intervention with precision, and the task of public policy is to address them in a systemic and measurable manner.

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Young People and Public Life



Young People and Public Life

Szabolcs Janik, Miklós Bálint Tóth

As the parliamentary elections approach, the issue of young people's political engagement traditionally gains prominence. According to public opinion surveys conducted in 2025, interest in politics among young people increased, and the opposition's messages successfully reached them. In turn, the government also sought to appeal to the younger demographic. Among other initiatives, this included the Otthon Start programme, which aims to address housing issues, as well as amendments to drug policy regulations, aligning with young people's generally stricter stance on such matters. In the second half of the year, the politicisation of the popular music scene and government-opposing demonstrations related to Pride provided opportunities for primarily urban youth to express protest sentiment. The 23 October commemorations demonstrated that both the ruling and opposition parties are attentive to young voters in the 2026 elections. Public opinion surveys suggest that the opposition performed better in engaging this group, although it is clear that the ruling parties are also mobilising considerable resources to secure their support.

1. Trends in Party Preferences Among Young Voters

In 2025, young people's voting intentions and party preferences remained a prominent topic in Hungarian public discourse. However, since 2025 fell between election years, there were no "high-stakes" events to directly measure these preferences. The most recent relevant data came from the 2024 European Parliament elections, held concurrently with local elections. In these elections, 34% of 15–24-year-olds and 55% of 25–39-year-olds with voting rights participated, with the younger group roughly matching the EU average (36%) and the older group significantly exceeding it (46%) (Eurobarometer, 2024).

This higher-than-usual participation among young people may be explained by the simultaneous local and EP elections (increasing the political stakes) and the reconfiguration and rise of opposition forces, particularly the Tisza Party. Although detailed data on the exact voting behaviour of youth in June 2024 are lacking, earlier studies indicate that younger voters tend to favour opposition parties more (Bajnay et al., 2021). Nevertheless, in the most recent parliamentary elections, first-time voters among young people largely supported the ruling parties (Székely, 2024).

In the most recent parliamentary elections, among young people, first time voters largely supported the ruling parties.

The Eurobarometer youth survey published in February 2025 (16–30-year-olds) highlighted the key factors influencing voting decisions: competence of the party (31%), youth-oriented policies (20%), and alignment of party image or positions with personal views (17% each). Interestingly, the alignment factor was notably below the EU average of 30%, while perceived competence played a stronger role among Hungarian respondents.

Other surveys in late 2024 supported these trends. For instance, the Medián survey indicated that 50% of 30–39-year-olds and 58% of 18–29-year-olds would vote for the Tisza Party in a hypothetical

parliamentary election. Similarly, the Mi Hazánk and the Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party showed relatively high popularity among young voters, with 35% and 49% support within their potential electorates, respectively (Iránytű Institute, 2024/2025).

Polls published in 2025 confirmed the continuation of these patterns. Despite methodological differences and selective data reporting that complicate long-term tracking by age group, opposition-leaning preferences remained strong among young voters. Most age-specific studies consistently found that the 18–39-year-old demographic formed the majority of the Tisza Party's support base, followed by potential young voters of Fidesz-KDNP. For example, a June 2025 Závecz Research survey reported 37% support for the Tisza Party and 13% for Fidesz-KDNP among the relevant youth population, while an early October 2025 Magyar Társadalomkutató survey found 58% support for Tisza versus 29% for Fidesz-KDNP among those able to choose a party.

In short, opposition-oriented preferences, particularly toward the Tisza Party, remained the defining trend among Hungarian youth in 2025, despite ongoing fluctuations and interpretive disputes in polling data.

Youth-Related Issues on the Domestic Political Agenda in 2025

In 2025, several political issues on the Hungarian domestic agenda were particularly relevant to young people, reflecting both their social concerns and generational interests.

2. Drug Policy

One of the most prominent youth-focused issues was drug policy. The spread of new psychoactive substances, particularly designer drugs, elevated the societal importance of drug-related concerns over recent years. In March 2025, the government appointed László Horváth as the ministerial commissioner responsible for combating drug trafficking. Legal reforms followed: in April, the National Assembly amended the Constitution (15th amendment) to constitutionally protect against the production, use, distribution, and promotion of drugs, and later passed a new, stricter drug law.

Surveys by the Ifjúságkutató Intézet indicated that two-thirds of young people supported tougher regulations, with the issue remaining among the top concerns for the generation (Ifjúságkutató Intézet, 2025a).

3. LGBT+ Rights and Pride

The June 28 Pride event in Budapest also drew significant youth attention, reflecting generational engagement with social issues. Young participants, especially from the capital, were disproportionately represented in government-opposition protests organised in response to the March amendments to the assembly law regulating demonstrations. The visibility of political messages at music festivals and performances, including the widespread chanting of government-critical slogans (“Filthy Fidesz!”), underscored the politicisation of cultural spaces relevant to young people.

4. Housing Issues

Housing difficulties, which particularly affect young adults, were addressed through the Otthon Start programme starting 1 September, 2025. The program offers a fixed 3% housing loan, supporting young people entering independent life. The government expects that the program will not only increase home ownership rates among first-time buyers but also reduce rental costs, thereby improving housing conditions for non-owners.

5. Political Mobilisation of Youth

Both the governing Fidesz-KDNP alliance and the main opposition Tisza Party focused their campaigns on attracting young voters. This was evident during political events on 23 October, 2025, where speeches emphasised understanding youth problems and encouraging civic participation. Surveys at major demonstrations supported this trend: approximately 11% of participants in the pro-government Peace March were under 35, compared with 34% at the Tisza Party-led Nemzeti Menet (Mikecz et al., 2025).

6. Implications for 2026 Elections

These developments suggest that the political engagement of young voters, who traditionally have lower turnout rates, could significantly influence the outcome of the 2026 parliamentary elections, depending on both their turnout and party preferences.

In summary, in 2025, young people in Hungary were highly engaged in issues related to drug policy, social rights, housing, and cultural politics, and their participation in political events indicated a growing generational presence in shaping the public agenda.

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HOT5 - Expectations for 2026



HOT5 – Expectations for 2026

Levente Székely, Georgina Kiss-Kozma

Expert assessments of the near future, both in general and specifically regarding the Youth Research Institute, are not intended as predictions. Rather, our primary aim is to highlight issues of particular importance to young people which may shape the coming year. The following therefore presents, in no particular order, the events and processes that the experts at the Youth Research Institute consider likely to have the greatest impact on young people in 2026.

1. Whom Would You Choose?

In Hungary, slightly more than 1.2 million young people under 30 will be eligible to vote in the 2026 parliamentary elections. If they turn out to vote at a rate similar to that of the 2022 election, and to a comparable extent across age cohorts, we may expect approximately 800,000–850,000 votes from this group. Opinion polls present an overall contradictory and confusing picture regarding the popularity of parties and candidates, and these inconsistencies become even more pronounced when the data are examined specifically with reference to young people.

At the most recent parliamentary election in 2022, young voters largely cast their ballots for the governing parties, in line with the preferences of their parents. The decline of generational parties suggests that political organisations structured primarily along generational lines are able to demonstrate success only on a temporary basis, unless they are capable of renewal in the manner of Fidesz—which will have been in government for 16 years next year and which itself originated as the Alliance of Young Democrats at the time of the democratic transition.

2. Pathways Out of the Erasmus Dead End

Over the past 2 to 3 years, one of the most significant issues affecting young people has been the exclusion of Hungarian model-change universities from European Union funding schemes.

Parliamentary elections will be held in 2026, in which over 1.2 million young Hungarians— under 30 citizens of voting age—will be eligible to participate.

Negotiations between the Hungarian government and EU decision-makers did not yield results in 2025 either, and the restrictive measure continues to block thousands of Hungarian students, lecturers, and researchers from accessing mobility opportunities. The contrast is particularly striking when we consider that Erasmus+ is open to educational institutions in an increasing number of countries worldwide, including many in Africa and Asia.

The Hungarian government has launched expanded initiatives similar to Erasmus, offering competitive alternatives for higher education institutions excluded from EU programmes. The Pannónia Programme has already financed international experience for more than 8,000 students. The Horizon programme has been replaced by HU-rizont, with a budget of nearly HUF 8 billion for 2026. This set of initiatives is further complemented by the János Neumann Research Excellence Programme, announced

at the end of 2025 and jointly established by the American Fulbright Programme and the Pannónia Programme, which offers new opportunities for Hungarian researchers.

3. The Family-Friendly “Tax Revolution” Continues

The Hungarian government has announced a number of measures to be implemented in several stages. According to the plans, the 2026 budget will allocate HUF 4,800 billion to family support programmes, corresponding to 5% of GDP. The family tax allowance will be doubled in two steps: as a first step, from 1 July 2025 the monthly family tax allowance increased by 50%, with the second step taking effect on 1 January 2026. From 1 October 2025, all mothers of three children, regardless of the age of the children or the mother, are entitled to exemption from personal income tax.

The introduction of personal income tax exemption for mothers of two children will take place gradually: from 2026 for mothers under 40 years of age; from 2027 for those aged 40–50; from 2028 for those aged 50–60; and from 2029 for mothers over 60 years of age. The exemption is lifelong and independent of income level. From 1 January 2023, mothers under 30 years of age have been entitled, until they reach the age of 30, to personal income tax exemption up to the tax burden on the average wage. From 1 January 2026, however, this linkage to the average wage will be abolished, and mothers under 30 years of age will become exempt from personal income tax on their entire income.

The Home Start programme, launched in September 2025, has generated considerable interest; however, its medium- and long-term effects will only become fully apparent in the coming year.

4. Stranded Sziget

The history of the Sziget Festival began in 1993 with the Diáksziget festival, organised on the basis of an idea by Károly Gerendai and Sziámi Péter Müller. Between 1996 and 2001 it operated under the name Pepsi Sziget, organised based on an idea by Károly Gerendai and Sziámi Péter Müller. The cultural event has since grown into one of Europe’s largest popular music festivals. In 2025, however,

the future of the festival became uncertain after the Chief Executive Officer of Sziget Ltd initiated the termination of the agreement between the capital city and the festival. This move was driven by business considerations on the part of the festival’s foreign owner. Károly Gerendai, a former owner of the festival, re-entered the scene after an absence of nearly a decade, as a result of which Sziget returned to Hungarian ownership.

Support for hosting the festival was ultimately approved by the Budapest General Assembly, making it likely that Sziget will continue to be held in Budapest over the next ten years.

5. Happy Birthday

In 2026, the Youth Research Institute will mark its fifth anniversary, a significant milestone for any research organisation. In our fifth year, we anticipate dozens of conferences and scholarly publications, hundreds of lectures, and at least 500 media appearances. Through these activities, we aim to deepen understanding of the perspectives and mindset of the younger generation.





