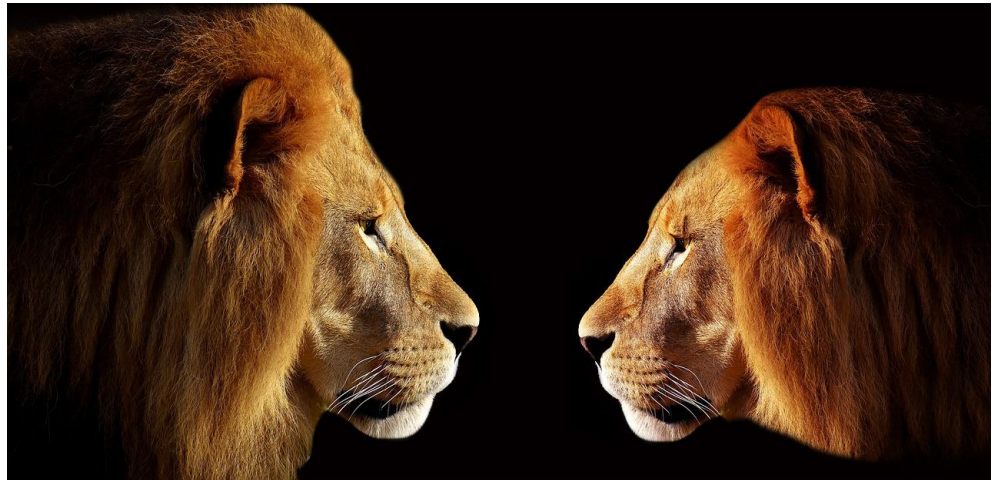


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## Beyond Total Rejection



In 2014, Ivan Krastev wrote a very interesting essay, one of the main claims of which was that Western European governments are quite inept. Why? Because most countries are governed by fragmented coalitions without a clear direction.

It is unlikely that the members of the Orbán government would have read Krastev's article, but in any case they instinctively felt that multi-party governance was not an option for them. They did not need to do so, because between 2010 and 2022 they were able to form a government themselves. Though coalition governance ceased in Hungary, many parties remained on the side of the opposition.

After 2010, this multi-party opposition always joined forces to overthrow the government, but they never succeeded. In 2022, for example, six parties announced in the campaign that they would win the April election, but then they did not: the opposition coalition was unable to put a stop to the Hungarian “eternal one-party system”.

Today, however, Hungary has entered a new phase of development. The defining feature of this phase is the formation of a new opposition, called the Tisza Party, led by Péter Magyar. This party wants to defeat Fidesz by not wanting to join forces with anyone. Not one opposition party. Almost two years have passed since Péter Magyar emerged, and he has a chance of becoming a successful challenger to Viktor Orbán in April 2026. For two reasons.

Magyar realized that it is not possible to build an opposition policy on total rejection. Viktor Orbán's previous opposition rejected everything that the ruling party represented. Although Magyar also calls the government a mafia government and heaps insults on it, in fact, on criticizing quite a few things (rejection of migration, the assessment of the Russian-Ukrainian war) he does not say anything spectacularly different from the government. From this we can conclude that the new opposition party has a better grasp on the psyche of Hungarian

society than the previous opposition parties. It understands why Hungarian society elected Viktor Orbán four times. If it wants to win, it has to reckon with this psyche, and not just with those who hate the Orbán system from the start.

The Tisza Party is also trying to establish important party organizational frameworks. Orbán's old opponents had six different party frameworks, and they could not be coordinated in any way. Following in the footsteps of Fidesz, the Tisza Party is building itself on a movement base (Tisza Islands), but it does not stop there. The dilemma that Fidesz solved over a longer period of time in the 1990s (transforming from a movement into a professional party) is now being overcome by Tisza in a matter of months.

As a result of all this – returning to Krastev – Hungary now has not one, but two parties that do not have to fiddle with coalitions, but will be able to make decisions quickly and efficiently. Incidentally: Hungary has never had a two-party system. Not many places in the world have one, so if it comes together in a few months, Hungary will demonstrate another unique feature aside from the dominance of Fidesz.