

# QUESTIONS LIST TO ASSESS POLITICAL PARTIES' PROGRAMMES

## CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVE (HUNGARY, 2010)

### CONTEXT

In April 2010 Hungary held legislative elections. With the aim of raising the quality of the debate during the campaign, a group of professionals from different sectors of civil society (some of them members of the Budapest Policy Analysis Institute) developed the initiative What do they promise? aimed at assessing the programmes of the political parties and promoting accountability.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE TOOL

- Assess political parties' programmes in the context of the electoral campaign.
- Inform citizens about political parties' programmes.
- Promote political parties' accountability for the promises they make.
- Raise the general quality of political and policy debates during the elections.

### WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

The list of assessment questions used by the experts to analyse the programmes considers the three criteria:

1. Targetedness,
2. Soundness, and
3. Accountability.

The assessment focuses specifically on how targeted and well-grounded the programmes and whether the parties could be made accountable for the promises they make.

<b>Targetedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does it have a clear message as to where the country should be heading?</li> <li>• How clear and well-defined are the goals set in the programme?</li> <li>• How clear are the priorities within the programme?</li> <li>• How extensively does the programme cover the (Top7) priorities?</li> </ul>
<b>Soundness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any controversies between the key programme points?</li> <li>• Do the goals/planned measures in the key areas supplement or eliminate each other?</li> <li>• With regard to the budget balance, how risky are the revenues and spending items set in the programme?</li> <li>• With regard to the timing of the planned actions, does the party observe and differentiate between the short-term, medium-term and long-term achievability of the measures?</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shall we be able to determine in 2014 whether planned measures were seen through or not? Shall we be able to gauge during the government cycle how far the implementation of given measures progressed?</li> <li>• Has the party identified social economic impacts that will be induced by the planned measures? If it has, does it specify the short-term, medium-term and long-term consequences?</li> </ul>

Source: mitigének.hu

Moreover, a second set of questions are applied to the programmes to assess seven public policy priorities identified by the team in consultation with critical stakeholders:

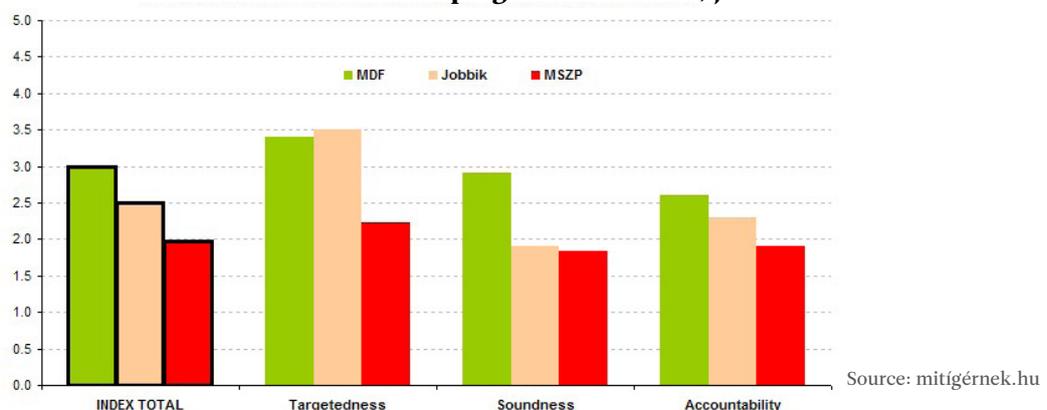
1. Has the party identified specific goals in this area?
2. Has the party specified targeted measures in this area?
3. Has the party provided quantified estimates in respect of the impact of the proposed measures (on the budget, society, economy)?
4. Are there domestic or international examples that confirm the expected impacts of the proposed measures in this area?

## HOW WAS IT IMPLEMENTED?

The assessment was done by three experts for each party programme by assigning scores on a 5-1 scale (5=best, 1=fail) per each evaluation question, and the average of all scores gave the final score for the party. The original final score could be revised based on subsequent public statements, promises made by party representatives until election day.

The final scores of the political parties were illustrated on charts. The charts ranked political parties in the three main criteria separately, and a fourth chart indicates the total score of the party. Party scores in each criteria were made public, and a brief (500 words) note was provided to summarise the overall result.

**Sub-indices and index total for the election programmes of MDF, Jobbik and MSZP<sup>2</sup>**



1. In 2010, the initiative assessed the following priorities: Quality and efficiency of public education, Business friendly / performance enhancing tax regime, Employment of low-skilled people, Corruption and political party financing, Integration of the Roma population, Quality and efficiency of the healthcare system, Stability and transparency of the budget policy.
2. MDF is the centre-right party Hungarian Democratic Forum. MSZP is the Hungarian Socialist Party. Jobbik is the far-right party Movement for a Better Hungary.

For a description of how this tool was applied to a programme of a political party, see the article [Hungary's Socialists Almost "Fail" With Election Programme](#) (XpatLoop, 2010).

## REFERENCES

*Hungary's Socialists Almost "Fail" With Election Programme*. XpatLoop (March 2010) Retrieved from: [www.xpatloop.com/news/63652](http://www.xpatloop.com/news/63652)

### Budapest Institute for Policy Analysis (BIPA) - Hungary

Founded in November 2008, the Budapest Institute produces independent research and analysis to support policymaking, -tracking and -evaluation. The Institute has a double mission. First, to contribute to public policy making grounded in research evidence that would benefit both Hungary and Europe and secondly, to promote the evidence-based approach in public discourse and policy debate. The Institute operates primarily in the areas of employment and social policy, Roma integration, education policy, the business environment and good governance.

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Electoral platforms: strengthening capacities to influence the electoral cycle

[www.ilaipp.org/portfolio/plataformas-electorales](http://www.ilaipp.org/portfolio/plataformas-electorales)

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