

Economic Policy Making and Parliamentary Accountability in Hungary

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Acronyms

AFD	Alliance of Free Democrats
APEH	Tax and Financial Control Administration
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CC	Constitutional Court
CDPP	Christian Democratic People's Party
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Area
CW Bank	Affiliate of the National Bank in Vienna
EP	European Parliament
ECE	East Central Europe
EU	European Union
FDI	foreign direct investment
GDP	gross domestic product
HDF	Hungarian Democratic Forum
HSP	Hungarian Socialist Party
HUF	Hungarian forint
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISP	Independent Smallholders Party
JPC	Joint Parliamentary Committee
MP	member of Parliament
MSZOZ	National Association of Hungarian Trade Unions
PHJL	Party of Hungarian Justice and Life
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAT	value added tax

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Summary/Résumé/Resumen

Summary

This paper by Attila Ágh, Gabriella Ilonszki and András Láncki examines the process of democratization in Hungary and discusses the fine balance between economic policy making and parliamentary accountability. It also explores the new challenges and opportunities created by the country's accession to the European Union (EU).

While part I outlines these problems within a theoretical framework and social context, part II offers a more concrete and empirical analysis of these issues. The case study of the Hungarian Parliament is presented as a two-dimensional critique, discussing, first, the internal workings in terms of the activities of the legislators in the various party factions and committees and, second, the Parliament's institutional environment, or relationship with economic institutions on one hand, and with the government on the other.

An understanding of Hungary's development is linked to how well the country's early democratic consolidation is defined and explained. This is related further to understanding the influence of the dual challenges of globalization and Europeanization. These two issues raise questions about the assumed tension between technocracy and democracy, policy making and politics, and the nature of the process of parliamentarization in Central Europe in general and in Hungary in particular.

Accession to the EU raises new standards for policy making and efficiency in Hungary, and it also changes the criteria and process of democratic accountability beyond recognition. The first decade of democratization can thus be seen, in retrospect, as a prelude to Europeanization and EU membership.

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Résumé

Cette étude d'Attila Ágh, Gabriella Ilonszki et András Láncki porte sur le processus de démocratisation de la Hongrie et sur l'équilibre délicat à trouver entre l'élaboration de la politique économique et la responsabilité parlementaire. Les auteurs s'interrogent sur les défis que pose l'adhésion du pays à l'Union européenne (UE) et sur les perspectives nouvelles qu'elle ouvre.

Si, dans la première partie, ils exposent à grands traits ces problèmes en les plaçant dans un cadre théorique et un contexte social, ils proposent, dans la deuxième partie, une analyse plus concrète et empirique de ces questions. L'étude de cas du Parlement hongrois est présentée comme une critique à deux dimensions, qui traite, tout d'abord, du fonctionnement interne, c'est-à-dire des activités des parlementaires dans les diverses factions partisanes et commissions, et ensuite, de l'environnement institutionnel du Parlement ou des relations avec les institutions économiques, d'une part, et le gouvernement, de l'autre.

Il est difficile de comprendre l'évolution de la Hongrie si l'on ne définit pas et n'explique pas bien la consolidation démocratique qui s'est produite relativement tôt dans ce pays. Cette évolution est aussi liée à l'influence du double impératif de mondialisation et d'eupéanisation. Ces deux enjeux amènent à s'interroger sur la tension supposée entre technocratie et démocratie, la définition des politiques et les considérations politiques, et sur la

nature du processus de parlementarisation de l'Europe centrale en général et de la Hongrie en particulier.

L'adhésion à l'UE oblige la Hongrie à régler l'élaboration de ses politiques et son efficacité sur de nouvelles normes et change les critères et l'exercice même de la responsabilité parlementaire au point de les rendre méconnaissables. Rétrospectivement, on peut donc voir dans la première décennie de démocratisation un prélude à l'europanisation et à l'entrée dans l'UE.

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Resumen

En el presente documento, Attila Ágh, Gabriella Ilonszki y András Láncki analizan el proceso de democratización en Hungría y debaten el delicado equilibrio entre la formulación de las políticas económicas y la responsabilidad parlamentaria. También exploran los nuevos desafíos y oportunidades que crea el ingreso del país a la Unión Europea (UE).

En la parte I se esbozan estos problemas en un marco teórico y un contexto social, mientras que en la parte II se presenta un análisis más concreto y empírico sobre estas cuestiones. El estudio de caso del parlamento húngaro se presenta como una crítica bidimensional: primero se analizan cómo se desarrolla el proceso internamente, con las actividades de los legisladores en las diversas facciones partidistas y distintos comités, para luego abordar el entorno institucional del parlamento, o su relación con, por una parte, las instituciones económicas y, por la otra, el gobierno.

La comprensión del desarrollo de Hungría pasa por una clara definición y explicación de la consolidación democrática inicial del país. También debe comprenderse la influencia del doble desafío de la mundialización y la "europeización". Estos dos factores generan interrogantes en torno a la presunta tensión existente entre la tecnocracia y la democracia, la formulación de políticas y la política, y la naturaleza del proceso de "parlamentarización" de Europa Central en general y Hungría en particular.

El ingreso a la UE trae consigo nuevas normas relativas a la formulación de políticas y la eficiencia en Hungría, e igualmente cambia radicalmente los criterios y procesos de rendición de cuentas en un entorno democrático. En retrospectiva, el primer decenio de democratización puede entenderse entonces como un preludio a la europeización y la incorporación a la UE.

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