

Indicators Assessment- Unitary States

Hungary

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This Indicators Assessment report offers a country assessment of 4 composite indicators: (1) state-religious institutions relations, (2) status of religious minority groups, (3) religious radicalisation level, and (4) radicalisation prevention measures. It is part of a series covering 23 countries (listed below) on four continents. This assessment report was produced by GREASE, an EU-funded research project investigating religious diversity, secularism and religiously inspired radicalisation.

Countries covered in this series:

Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Morocco, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

<https://www.grease.eu.eu>



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The EU-Funded GREASE project looks to Asia for insights on governing religious diversity and preventing radicalisation.

Involving researchers from Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Oceania, GREASE is investigating how religious diversity is governed in over 20 countries. Our work focuses on comparing norms, laws and practices that may (or may not) prove useful in preventing religious radicalisation. Our research also sheds light on how different societies cope with the challenge of integrating religious minorities and migrants. The aim is to deepen our understanding of how religious diversity can be governed successfully, with an emphasis on countering radicalisation trends.

While exploring religious governance models in other parts of the world, GREASE also attempts to unravel the European paradox of religious radicalisation despite growing secularisation. We consider the claim that migrant integration in Europe has failed because second generation youth have become marginalised and radicalised, with some turning to jihadist terrorism networks. The researchers aim to deliver innovative academic thinking on secularisation and radicalisation while offering insights for governance of religious diversity.

The project is being coordinated by Professor Anna Triandafyllidou from The European University Institute (EUI) in Italy. Other consortium members include Professor Tariq Modood from The University of Bristol (UK); Dr. H. A. Hellyer from the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) (UK); Dr. Mila Mancheva from The Centre for the Study of Democracy (Bulgaria); Dr. Egdunas Raciunas from Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania); Mr. Terry Martin from the research communications agency SPIA (Germany); Professor Mehdi Lahlou from Mohammed V University of Rabat (Morocco); Professor Haldun Gulalp of The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (Turkey); Professor Pradana Boy of Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang (Indonesia); Professor Zawawi Ibrahim of The Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (Malaysia); Professor Gurpreet Mahajan of Jawaharlal Nehru University (India); and Professor Michele Grossman of Deakin University (Melbourne, Australia). GREASE is scheduled for completion in 2022.

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GREASE - Radicalisation, Secularism and the Governance of Religion: Bringing Together European and Asian Perspectives

Country Assessment Report

Name of Country Assessed: Hungary

I. Composite Indicator 1: State-Religious Institutions Relations

The legal background regarding religious communities changed in 2011 after the coming to power of the new FIDESZ led government. In 2011 both the [Basic Law](#) and the [Law on Churches](#) were changed.

The Basic Law (Art. 4) and the Law on Churches (Preamble) defines Hungary as a secular state where church and state are separated. Still there are limitations as far as equal treatment of religious communities is concerned. There are certain religious communities that enjoy privileged status as far as their relationship with the government is concerned. These are so-called established churches that may enter into closer relationship with the government in the framework of a cooperation agreement (Law on Churches, Par.9). Having the highest form of state recognition is still a political question and this does not guarantee a close cooperation with the state either. It is up to the government to decide which religious community gets preferential treatment by entering into the cooperation agreement.

In the Hungarian Unicameral Parliament, there are no reserved places for religious communities. The affairs with religious communities and churches are coordinated by an under-secretariat as part of the Prime Minister's Office. Churches have the ability to use this office to contact the government, but they are not formally involved in policy planning or decision making. Nevertheless, the state may cooperate with religious certain organizations as it was mentioned before.

Even though the Basic Law separates churches and the state institutionally, the text does not forbid the founding of political parties based on religious grounds. As such parties based on religious views has been participating in the Hungarian parliament since 1990. Christian democratic parties of some form have been part of the Hungarian party system since the advent of multiparty politics in 1990. As Hungary has a predominantly Christian heritage there is no other religion that parties tried to use for the foundation of their ideology as of today. There is only one political party, the Christian Democratic Party (Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt, KDNP) that has a clear religious identity. Other parties such as the FIDESZ party is also supportive of Christian values and identity. As KDNP is a member of the political alliance of FIDESZ, its independence could be questionable.

Churches are autonomous, and the government does not interfere in the internal dynamics of these communities, however, the government does not tolerate clear criticism of government policies from these communities. There is informal pressure coming from the fact that the state has the power to distribute funds as mentioned before. This also makes certain religious communities having to consider their opinion on certain domestic political questions. The Jewish community is a good case in point. It is observed that the church friendlier to the government (Egységes Magyarországi Izraelita Hitközség, EMIH) does get a more positive treatment and more resources than the church that is more critical towards government policy (Magyarországi Zsidó Hitközségek Szövetsége, MAZSIHISZ). Still, there is no institutional linkage that would enable open interference from the state into the life of religious communities.

The new pieces of legislation made it harder for religious communities to reach the recognized church status. This is because the governing elite wanted to marginalize the so-called business churches and other communities that may pose a threat to the national security.

Churches may run their own denominational schools and other social institutions, such as hospitals and care homes. The new legislative framework after 2011 made it easier for the state to transfer institutions and funding for the churches that are granted the privileged status mentioned earlier. In theory, every church is allowed to set up and run institutions like this. However, as funding is a vital challenge for these organizations, in practice churches having the cooperation agreement are able to set up and manage such schools.

Classic media channels, such as radio and national TV channels are allocated by the government. There is a Christian Radio channels in the country. As for other religious communities, there are present on social media (Facebook is the dominant one in the country). Those powerful churches that have enough funding may get airtime on cable TV channels.

1. State autonomy from religion	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law defines the state as secular	Very High	2020
(1b) Practical Dimension: Actual level of state political autonomy/independence from religion	Medium	2020
2. Participation of religious institutions and religious groups in political decision-making and policy-making.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation forbids formal participation of religious institutions and religious groups in formal political decision-making.	High	2020
(2b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious institutions and religious groups lack formal participation in political decision-making.	Very High	2020
3. Religiously-based political parties in political life.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation forbids participation of religiously-based political parties in political life.	Low	2020
(3b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religiously-based political parties lack participation in political life.	High	2020
4. State non-interference in the regulation of religious matters of religious institutions and religious communities (including regulation of religious courts, councils, religious family laws, etc.).	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(4a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation enforces state non-interference in the	High	2020

regulation of religious matters of religious institutions and religious communities.

(4b) Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of religious affairs of religious institutions and religious communities.

High

2020

5. State non-interference in the regulation of the administrative matters of religious institutions and religious communities (including personnel and funds).

Score

YEAR
(Most Recent)

(5a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation enforces state non-interference in the regulation (e.g., personnel, financial matters) of the administrative matters of religious institutions and religious communities.

Very high

2020

(5b) Practical Dimension: In practice, there is no state interference in the regulation of the administrative affairs (e.g., personnel, financial, etc.) of religious institutions and religious communities.

Very High

2020

6. State recognition of freedom of religion.

Score

YEAR
(Most Recent)

(6a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation allows freedom of religion.

High

2020

(6b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious groups/communities enjoy freedom of religion.

High

2020

7. Freedom for religious groups/communities to set up and manage educational institutions.

Score

YEAR
(Most Recent)

(7a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation allows religious groups/communities to set up and manage educational institutions.

High

2020

(7b) Practical Dimension: Religious groups/communities set up and manage educational institutions.

High

2020

8. Autonomy of religious media

Score

YEAR
(Most Recent)

(8a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant legislation recognises and allows religious media.

High

2020

(8b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious media practice their activity.

High

2020

II. Composite Indicator 2: Status of Religious Minority Groups

In Hungary, no church or religious community has an overall majority in society. Catholics are the biggest groups with 39% of the population according to the [2011 Census data](#). Overall Christians constitute more than 50% of society.

Religious minority groups constitute a very diverse and heterogeneous group. Some of these groups have good working relations with the government, others, not. A good example is the Jewish minority.

The new [Law on Churches](#) created a stricter regime for registering religious communities. According to the latest version, a religious community can be recognized as a church with a number of conditions, such as at least 1000 followers in the country. There are three different legal recognition levels for churches according to the new Law.

Religious communities have no formal representation in the different branches of power. This is prescribed in the [Basic Law](#) first and foremost, as the churches and the state are separated according to the text. Religious organizations may run social services, but these must be available to everyone regardless of their affiliations. They may have special social services for their own members, as well, such as care homes for the elderly.

The Basic Law allows the practice of religion in public spaces, but this is not a major issue in the country as religion is not practiced in such places officially. The same applies to minorities, they may use public spaces, but it happens rarely, such as Hanukkah celebrations on the streets of Budapest, or collecting donations for Krishna Consciousness, or preaching by neo-protestant individuals in the street.

There is no restriction on religious dressing, food, etc. There is no legislation defining these issues. As for the topic of religious freedoms of religious minority groups, the Basic Law applies. There is rejection from members of society toward certain religions, such as Judaism and Muslims, which may lead to incidents such as verbal or physical abuse. These minorities may be a target of abuse because of the way they dress.

Relations with religious minorities are dependent on the political climate. Two Muslim groups have the highest level recognition in the country. Still as the government pushes anti-Muslim and anti-migrant rhetoric, Muslims do not receive any preferential treatment, such as the ability and funding to run schools.

Religious communities have the right to own their places of worship. The Law on Churches grants this for religious communities of all sorts, but the state does not have to financially support these projects.

1. Legal status of religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation recognises religious minority groups.	High	2020

(1b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups enjoy legal registration status recognised by the government.	High	2020
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2. Religious minority group participation in political life.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Legal Dimension: Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to participate in the political life of the state.	Very low	2020
(2b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups participate in political life.	Very low	2020
3. Special social security status of religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to special social security benefits.	High	2020
(3b) Practical Dimension: In practice, religious minority groups have special access to social security benefits.	Medium	2020
4. Access of religious minority groups to public spaces.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(4a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups right of access to public spaces.	Very high	2020
(4b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups enjoy access to public spaces.	Very high	2020
5. Access to public funds for initiatives/activities of religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(5a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups right of access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.	Medium	2020
(5b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups have access to public funds for their own initiatives/activities.	Medium	2020
6. Public accommodation of cultural practices specific to religious minority groups.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(6a) Legal Dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation allows public accommodation of cultural practices specific to religious minority groups.	Very high	2020
(6b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups express their cultural practices publicly.	Medium	2020
7. Ownership of houses of worship.	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(7a) Legal dimension: The Constitution/Basic law or other more relevant religious legislation grants religious minority groups rights to own their houses of worship.	Very high	2020
(7b) Practical Dimension: Religious minority groups own houses of worship.	Very high	2020

III. **Composite Indicator 3: Radicalisation Levels**

Structural factors/ environment:

Indicators show that the level of freedom in Hungary has been deteriorating for the past 10 years. However, according to this data rating was also bad in 2000. Rule of law has been deteriorating gradually under the current government. This is mirrored by the [Rule-of-law Article 7 Procedure](#) started by the EU and a number of reports, such as the ones from the [Venice Commission](#).

The state of Human Rights also deteriorated as mirrored by the HR index 's gradual deterioration over the years, too.

Perception-based indicators (Social experience factors):

Around half of the population Distrust national institutions such as the government and the parliament. Trust has decreased for these institutions in the past decade. Still almost half of the population judges the situation in Hungary as good or very good. Majority of Hungarians (58%) are also satisfied with the EU and its institutions. Economic discontent has been on the decline until 2020. It remains to be seen what next year's data will show in this domain.

Islamic radicalization is a non-issue in the country. Radical nationalism is the major challenge for society. Certain groups target mainly the Roma ethnic minority. In fact, discrimination as a whole against the Roma is the main problem in Hungary as religious communities are small in number and not very visible outside major cities either. Hungarians are not very enthusiastic about diversity. Opposing diversity has its historic roots in the country.

Recently, the government also started to push an anti-Roma rhetoric from the beginning of 2020. As such the anti-Muslim narrative seems to have subsided for the moment. The narrative of the government could be considered as radical in many European countries. Extremism is not a major issue in Hungary. There were two individuals, with a Hungarian origin and a migrant, who was picked up after a tip-off from fellow EU secret services. Three cases and scattered in time in the last years since 2016.

Incidence-based indicators (incl. Religious Violence and Conflict):

Hungary has been peaceful in the last 3 decades, there was not state-based armed conflict in the relevant timeframe.

Recent figures show a worrisome trend – an increasing hostile attitude towards visible minorities. However, there have been few major incidents, but only minor ones, such as verbal abuse and light physical assault. The instances of hate crimes did not increase in a significant way. However, a high number of minor incidents, such as physical and verbal abuse never gets reported. Ethnic and visible religious minorities are targeted in many cases. Maybe reporting increased, but still a large number of cases are never reported.

Much of the anti-Muslim rhetoric comes from government-related bodies. In Hungary the government is also responsible for disseminating radical narratives on a number of issues, such as migration and integration of migrants who are mainly Muslim. In this

sense the government and related press outlets could also be considered radical outlets. However, over the last year Hungary has experienced a decrease on anti-Muslim rhetoric from these actors.

1. Structural factors/environment	Score/Level/Percentage	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Level of Freedom	Level: Free Freedom score: 2	2019
(1b) Level of adherence to rule of law	Overall rank: 60 Overall score: 0.53	2020
(1c) Level of religious-related government restrictions	Score: 0.5 Level: Low	2020
(1d) Level of state legitimacy	Score: 6.1 Level: Moderate	2020
(1e) Level of protection of human rights	Score: 5 Level: Moderate	2020
(1f) Level of group grievances	Score: 3.9 Level: Moderate	2020
(1g) Uneven economic development	Score: 3.9 Level: Moderate	2020
(1h) Wealth disparity (top 10% possessing above average percentage of the total income share)	Percentage: 33.4	2016

2. Perception-based indicators (social grievances)	Percentage (%)	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Distrust in national institutions	Parliament: 50% Government: 50%	2018
(2b) Political discontent	Dissatisfaction with country direction: 47%	2018
	Dissatisfaction with overall situation: 46%	2018
	Dissatisfaction with democracy/government performance: 40%, 45% (Pew)	2019, 2017 (pew)
(2c) Economic discontent	Dissatisfaction own financial situation: 38%	2019
	Dissatisfaction national economy: 40%	2019
(2d) Discrimination	Discrimination is widespread: 29% Opposing diversity: 27% Discomfort with minorities: 47%(Muslims), 51%(Buddhists) Dislike neighbors from minority groups: 52%	2015 2018 2015 2018

	Experienced discrimination: 24%	2015
(2e) Views on violent extremism	VE is a serious problem/threat: 87%	2017

3. Incidence-based indicators (religious violence and conflict)	Score/Level/Number	YEAR (Most Recent)
(3a) State-based armed conflict	Yes/No: NO	2020
(3b) Level of social hostilities involving religion	Level: Moderate Score: 3.7	2017
(3c) Incidence and impact of terrorism	Score: 0 Number of Incidents: 0	2019
(3d) Violent extremist incidents	Number: 194	2018
(3e) Significant violent extremist actors/ networks	Level: Moderate	2020

IV. **Composite Indicator 4: Radicalisation Prevention Measures**

The National Security Strategy (NSS) adopted in 2012 and [updated in 2020](#) covers this topic. This legislation focuses mainly on classic security challenges concerning the military and the police. This strategy mentions the challenge of aggressive acts linked to terrorism and mentions the need to cooperate with NATO and EU partners. It also mentions the need to prevent terrorism and the need for a comprehensive action in the field. However, the Strategy fails to mention the allocation of any tangible resources to deal with such challenges.

The NSS gives little detail about monitoring mechanisms for extremist tendencies.

The main actors responsible for the execution of the NSS, mainly the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense, deal with such security challenges. Besides, the civil secret services are responsible for dealing with such issues, but their effectiveness is questionable as arrested extremists did not get caught because of the actions of the secret services. The Hungarian security services focus on extreme right groups and not religious extremists. In that former they are quite successful. As for the development of the strategy, as these policy areas belong to the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defense, they are responsible for delivering input, as well as the secret services. However, there is no detailed steps on prevention.

The working group that was put together to revise the current National Security strategy was organized by government representatives. A number of ministries and government agencies got involved in the working group: Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Secret Services, the National Bank, and the Prime Minister's Office.

There are no separate institutions dealing with prevention. Some NGOs such as the [Foresee research group](#) deals with giving training to state employees about radicalization, for instance, in prisons.

As radicalization and religious radicalization, more particularly, are a non-issue in Hungary, the Strategy focuses on keeping the threat outside the country. Domestic prevention does not get a focus as the Muslim population is very small and is not showing any signs of radicalization. Radicalization and extremism, as mentioned above are more of a challenge in regards to the Roma community. Religious minorities are not in the spotlight in this sense in Hungary.

There are a number of ultra-right groups. These are dealt with by the secret services. The prevention here is more about making life hard for the members of these groups so they would not have resources for effective operations. No separate institutions target these groups by offering counter-narratives or comprehensive social programs.

There are no government programs for helping victims of violent acts. There are a number of NGOs that help the Roma victims of violent extremist acts. These people suffer post-traumatic stress and need counselling. However, these initiatives come from civil society and not from the government and cannot be considered as comprehensive programs, but only ad-hoc reactions.

Civil society actors and researchers of the field offer programs and training for government employees for dealing with extremist actors and their victims. For a number of years NGOs such as the Helsinki Foundation and Cordelia Foundation gave trainings for staff of the Ministry of Interior. After the so-called "Stop Soros" campaign, these NGOs are not welcome by the government anymore. Other groups such as the Foresee research group still offer trainings, for instance for prison staff.

There is no comprehensive program for countering violent extremism and related narratives or fake content online. Media studies was a subject taught in secondary schools and transferred skills of critical thinking and usage of legacy and new media. These skills may protect individuals

from radicalization and suggestive content. In 2020, the government decided to stop these courses in secondary schools in order to decrease the workload of students.

The government has a close connection to a number of established churches in the country. With these churches the government signed a cooperation agreement that allows them to perform a number of social services funded by the government. With these churches, the government has regular contacts. With other churches, this is not the case. There is no institutionalized dialogue between churches belonging to different faiths. The traditional Christian churches have a closer relation through ecumenical organizations.

As religiously-inspired violent radicalisation is not a major issue in Hungary, there is little reaction from civil society on this sense.

As far as State-commissioned research on religiously-inspired radicalisation and violent extremism is concerned, the government cooperates with a number of [research think tanks](#) and [universities](#), such as the [Migration Research Institute](#) that receive tangible government help for their research activities. They mainly study other European countries and prepare research papers and recommendations that are very close to the government narrative.

There are no prevention programs sponsored by the government. The EU [sponsored Mediation and Restorative Justice in Prison Settings \(MEREPS\)](#) program was active in this field in the last decade. It was conducted by a research and training group called Forsee Research Group. They managed to introduce basic deradicalization tools in prison settings. Currently they do not have active programs, but they made a number of trainings for staff and inmates in penitentiary institutes until 2018. The main problem was ethnically related radical behavior, namely anti-Roma and anti-non-Roma sentiments.

1. Comprehensive strategic approach	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(1a) Legislative foundation for adoption of PVE action plan	Yes	2020
(1b) Existence of PVE strategy and a national action plan	No	2020
(1c) Presence of comprehensive monitoring mechanisms of strategy / action plan implementation	No	2020
(1d) Presence of dedicated body tasked with PVE strategy development and coordination	Yes	2020
(1e) Compliance of strategy and action plan with human rights standards and the principles of rule of law	Not applicable	2020
(1f) Participation of a wide range of government actors in development and implementation of PVE strategy and action plan	Yes	2020
(1g) Participation of non-government actors in development and implementation of PVE strategy and action plan	No	2020
(1h) Reference to FTFs and related measures in PVE strategy/action plan	Yes	2020
(1i) Reference to terrorism financing and related measures in PVE strategy and action plan	No	2020
(1j) Reference to communication counter- or alternative narrative campaigns in PVE strategy/action plan	No	2020

2. Comprehensiveness of measures - areas of action, actors and projects	Score	YEAR (Most Recent)
(2a) Development and implementation of programmes for support of victims of terrorism and violent extremism	Yes	2020
(2b) Training for frontline practitioners	Yes	2020
(2c) Initiatives to improve the preparedness of security forces, law enforcement and justice institutions to deal with radicalisation.	Insufficient information	2020
(2d) Development and implementation of P/CVE-specific education initiatives for youth	No	2020
(2e) Development and implementation of P/CVE education initiatives and projects for women	No	2020
(2f) Platforms for intra and interfaith dialogue between the state and religious leaders	Yes	2020
(2g) Networks for civil society, religious leaders, youth and women's organisations for dialogue, cooperation and best practices.	No	2020
(2h) Grassroots initiatives by civil society actors focussed on prevention	Very Limited Level	2020
(2i) Counter- and alternative- narrative campaigns	No	2020
(2j) Multi-agency cooperation and/or referral mechanisms at local level identifying and supporting at-risk persons	Insufficient information	2020
(2k) State-commissioned research on religiously-inspired radicalisation and violent extremism	Yes	2020
(2l) programs and measures to prevent radicalisation into violent extremism in prison and probation settings	No	2020

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