



By: TA | AP Brief

Hungary's Magyar kicks off his first foreign trip as prime minister to ally Poland



Hungary's new prime minister headed on Tuesday to Poland, a longtime ally whose recent political transformation has plenty of lessons to offer on how Péter Magyar's government can go about reversing his country's **authoritarian drift**.

Magyar, whose center-right Tisza party defeated far-right Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his nationalist-populist Fidesz in an earthquake **election** last month, has vowed to dismantle the political and economic system his autocratic predecessor spent 16 years building.

That has raised hopes across Europe, and also drawn comparisons to Poland's 2023 election when Prime Minister Donald Tusk's center-right coalition defeated the national-conservative Law and Justice party after eight years in power.

Like Magyar, Tusk moved quickly to restore democratic institutions eroded during the previous government, including the judiciary and public media, while seeking accountability for officials accused of abuses of power.

Hungary's new leader hit the ground running

Magyar is flying to the southern Polish city of Krakow on Tuesday, before proceeding by train to the capital of Warsaw and then on to Gdansk, on the Baltic Sea.

After taking office on May 9, Magyar called openly for many officials appointed by Orbán's government to **step down** or be removed by constitutional amendment — a power available to him after Tisza won a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

Magyar has targeted Hungary's President Tamás Sulyok, a mostly ceremonial role but with some key constitutional powers, as well as the country's attorney general and the heads of the constitutional and supreme courts — all figures he's decried as “Orbán's puppets.”

Magyar's biggest challenge is that some key state institutions are still in the hands of people nominated by Fidesz - Andrzej Sadecki

Andrzej Sadecki, an analyst with the Center for Eastern Studies in Warsaw, told The Associated Press that Magyar's biggest challenge is that “some key state institutions are still in the hands of people nominated by Fidesz.”

Still, unlike in Poland, “the situation is much easier for Magyar because he has a constitutional majority. This makes it much easier for him to introduce deep changes,” Sadecki said.

While Tusk took power through a coalition government in Poland's 2023 election, Magyar's Tisza won 53% of the vote, gaining more votes and seats in Parliament than any other party in Hungary's post-Communist history.

“It's not just a change of government, it's a watershed moment,” Sadecki added.