

PREFACE

Hungary is about to make a historic decision. This is the second time since the change of regime that Hungarian voters get an opportunity to directly shape the future of the country on the scene of international policy. An opportunity presented itself for the first time in November 1997, in the national referendum on the accession to the NATO. While in the past centuries, decades, the position of our country among the nations of Europe was usually determined by external force, now in the national referendum to be held on 12 April 2003 it is Hungarian voters that determine it with the force of their ballot.

The present referendum is of great importance also in terms of professional issues: electronic governance is increasingly gaining ground in our rapidly changing world; thus, for the first time in the history of elections in Hungary Election Internet has been advanced to the most detailed form of providing information – not only for Hungarian voters. All essential data of the national referendum can be accessed in the official languages of the current 15 EU Member States. In order to ensure as great publicity and to provide information as efficiently as possible, the National Election Office, as a matter of fact, supports the work of foreign election officials, observers and the representatives of the media in the traditional way too. The aim of this publication prepared in this spirit is to provide detailed information on the structure and operation of the national referendum. In addition to a brief summary of the institution of referendum, our brochure contains the rules of law ensuring its background, the description of the IT system, and instructions on how to access information services important for enquirers.

We hope that our publication will give efficient help to the observers coming to Hungary, further widening the publicity of the national referendum beyond the borders of our country.

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