

[HU] New legislation restricting political advertisements which incite hatred and regulating the placement of commercial advertising

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Newly introduced legal provisions have substantially modified the pre-existing regulatory parameters governing political messaging, municipal aesthetic criteria for commercial advertisements, and specific investment rules in Hungary. Act XX of 2026 on the restriction of political advertisements capable of inciting hatred, ensuring the alignment of economic advertisements with the townscape, and amending certain investment regulations was enacted at the end of June 2026, with its primary provisions coming into force on 27 June 2026. The legislative package overhauls the existing statutory framework across public communication, media administration, and spatial planning domains. It updates central components of Act CIV of 2010 on the Freedom of the Press and the Fundamental Rules on Media Content (Press Act – Smtv.) and Act CLXXXV of 2010 on Media Services and Mass Communication (Media Act – Mttv.).

The newly adopted statutory updates implement the following changes to the pre-existing legal environment:

- A ban on out-of-campaign political ads and infrastructure restrictions: tightening pre-existing rules, the act introduces a strict, explicit prohibition on the dissemination of political advertisements outside the official election campaign periods. Furthermore, the legislation structurally restricts the physical infrastructure available for political messaging by banning the placement of any political advertisements or advertising carriers on public lighting poles. In parallel, the media's administrative liability regarding the evaluation of hate speech is expanded. The legislation implements significant operational adjustments and qualitative limits within the primary texts of domestic media law. It introduces strict prohibitions within the Press Act (Smtv.) against the publication of political advertisements containing elements or expressions deemed capable of inciting hatred against specific groups, national, ethnic, or religious communities, or constitutional values across print and online press products, placing direct administrative responsibility on editors and publishers to exclude non-compliant materials. Concurrently, the Media Act (Mttv.) is amended to enforce a strict statutory ban on the broadcasting of political advertisements on linear and non-linear media services outside the officially designated election campaign periods, alongside expanded liability frameworks regarding the protection of human

dignity and the moral development of minors.

- New *ex ante* evaluation and enforcement procedures: the amendment establishes concrete, accelerated administrative and enforcement protocols to implement these updated advertisement boundaries. Under the newly added provisions, media service providers may submit an *ex ante* request to the Media Council of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority (NMHH) to obtain an official administrative decision within 15 days, determining whether a specific announcement constitutes a prohibited political advertisement, prohibited public interest announcement, or prohibited cause-based/social advertisement. Broadcasters are legally bound by these decisions; if any content is classified as prohibited, its broadcast is banned, and non-compliance subjects the provider to direct liability for the content. Furthermore, a new public enforcement mechanism allows any person to file a formal complaint with the Office of the NMHH regarding unlawful political posters. Upon validation, the office is empowered to order the immediate removal of the non-compliant poster and impose administrative fines of up to fifty times the statutory monthly minimum wage on the individual responsible for its placement or the entity in whose interest the violation was committed. The Media Council's regulatory oversight and formal supervisory authority are explicitly expanded to cover all administrative procedures related to political advertisements, announcements, and political posters.

- The mandatory removal of non-compliant advertising carriers: addressing enforcement, the law introduces a transitional provision via the amendment to Act I of 1988 on Public Road Traffic. Intermediaries, advertisers, and public providers are bound by a strict statutory deadline to completely dismantle and remove all billboards, advertising structures, and displays covered by the new townscape and political content prohibitions by 31 December 2026.

-The urban integration of commercial advertisements: moving away from a patchwork of local ordinances, the Act establishes uniform, binding municipal aesthetic and structural requirements for commercial and economic advertisements. These provisions restructure the rules governing townscape integrity by introducing precise technical limits on the placement, dimensions, density, and general visual impact of billboards, outdoor displays, and commercial advertising installations within public spaces.

2026. évi XX. törvény a gyűlöletkeltésre alkalmas politikai reklámok visszaszorításáról, a gazdasági reklámok településképi illeszkedésének biztosításáról, valamint egyes beruházási szabályok módosításáról

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