Calendar of the most important dates for democracy building and the rule of law crisis in Hungary

23 October 1989 – Act XXXI of 1989 was adopted to amend Act XX of 1949, the first codified constitution of Hungary.
The amendment substantially, albeit not formally introduced a new constitution: it proclaimed the Hungarian republic and pruned away the constitution's Soviet character. Several significant constitutional amendments followed, in 1989 and 1990.

April 1990 – The first free and fair multiparty democratic elections in Hungary.

1995-1997 – With over 70% of the parliamentary seats, the left-wing governing coalition could have changed the 1989 constitution because only two-thirds of the parliament was needed to amend it.
Yet, the coalition refrained from changing the constitution or adopting a new one; instead, it adopted a rule that provided that 80% of Parliament had to agree to new procedural rules on constitution-making. The process failed because of the obstruction of the old ruling Socialist party.

1 May 2004 – Hungary became a member of the European Union

April 2010 – Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party won 68% of the parliamentary seats, which opened the way for adopting constitutional amendments and drafting a new constitution.
The governing majority repealed the procedural rule adopted during the 1995-1997 constitution-drafting process.

April 2011 – The governing majority adopted a new constitution, officially called the Fundamental Law, only requiring the votes of the governing party's parliamentary members.

2011 – Provisions were adopted to lower sitting judges' retirement age from 70 to 62 and introduce a unique judicial administration system by abolishing the previous judicial self-governance and creating a National Judicial Office.
New laws changed both the name of the Supreme Court to Kúria and the qualifications for all judges. The name change made all Supreme Court judges reapply for their jobs, and the

new qualifications had the effect of removing the incumbent Supreme Court President before the end of his lawful term.

1 January 2012 – The Fundamental law entered into force.

March 2013 – The Fourth Amendment to the Fundamental Law was adopted, which completed the process in which the ruling majority effectively neutralised the Constitutional Court as a check on the government.
Previously, between 1990 and 2010, the Constitutional Court was the most potent check in the constitutional structure.

April 2014 – Fidesz gained roughly the same percentage of seats in Parliament as they had 2010.
Notably, this result was achieved with 45% of the national list vote, as opposed to 53% in 2010. The OSCE-ODIHR concluded that the 2014 elections were free but not fair.
2015: Freedom House lowered its assessment of Hungary from a consolidated to semi-consolidated democracy

April 2018 – Again, Fidesz gained roughly the same percentage of seats in Parliament as in 2010 and 2014.
The OSCE-ODIHR again concluded that the elections were free but not fair. For example, Fidesz obtained 67% of the parliamentary seats with 49% of the national list vote, but the opposition won 32% of the seats with 44% of the national list vote.

September 2018 – European Parliament triggered Article 7(1) of the Treaty on European Union against Hungary.
Article 7(1) is the primary sanctions mechanism that requires the supermajority agreement of the other Member States to identify the risk of non-compliance with EU basic values.

2020 – Freedom House categorised Hungary as a hybrid regime, whilst the Varieties of Democracy Project labelled Hungary an electoral autocracy.

1 January 2021 – The Equal Treatment Authority is abolished by Parliament.
This authority was set up in 2003 to implement the directives on equal treatment in the EU. The office of the ombudsperson has assumed the tasks of the abolished authority. However, as recorded in the 2022 EU Rule of Law Report, the office of the ombudsperson is not independent of the government.

February 2021 – The government launches a national consultation online on

potentially easing COVID-19 restrictive measures.

June 2021 – An Act is adopted and promulgated to ban 'homosexual propaganda to minors', i.e., media content related to the 'portrayal and promotion of homosexuality' and limiting gender-affirming health care to minors to protect 'the child's identity, which is immutable from birth'.

July 2021 – A team of international journalists, including a domestic media outlet (Direkt36), reports that the Hungarian government has been using a powerful advanced spyware called Pegasus manufactured by an Israeli cybersecurity firm. Pegasus has been used to monitor investigative journalists, publishers, attorneys, and opposition politicians.

10 December 2021 – The Hungarian Constitutional Court declares that it is a fundamental right of the Hungarian nation not to tolerate that a foreign national stays illegally in Hungary indefinitely and thus become part of the population.

15 December 2021 – In his open letter addressed to the president of the republic, the prime minister, and the speaker of the National Assembly, the president of the Hungarian Constitutional Court claims that proposals by academics on constitutional change amount to a direct, massive, and utterly unacceptable attack on the constitutional system and requests the assistance of these authorities to take appropriate and effective measures against the academics.

16 February 2022 – The National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information finds that using Pegasus spy software was legal.

3 April 2022 – The Fidesz party wins the general election with 54 % of the votes and 85% of the districts. The disproportionate electoral system again gives the winning party a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

24 May 2022 – Parliament adopts the 10th Amendment to Hungary's Fundamental Law. The prime minister and the government are given the power to declare a state of emergency in case of an armed conflict, war, or humanitarian disaster in a neighboring country. The prime minister announces that the government has declared a state of emergency to be able to respond more quickly to the challenges created by the war in Ukraine.

19 July 2022 – Parliament adopts the 11th Amendment to Hungary's Fundamental Law, stipulating that local elections in Hungary are to be held on the same day as elections to the European Parliament.

15 September 2022 – A resolution of the European Parliament concludes that Hungary can no longer be considered a full democracy.
The resolution also states that, in addition to the measures of the Hungarian government, the lack of decisive EU action has also contributed to the emergence of a 'hybrid regime of electoral autocracy', i.e., a constitutional system in which elections occur, but there is no respect for democratic norms and standards.

13 July 2022 – The election observation mission of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights concludes that the 2022 parliamentary elections and referendum were free but not entirely fair due to a combination of factors, including undue advantage enjoyed by the governing party.

September 2022 – The prime minister announces the government has approved the Fidesz parliamentary group's proposal to launch a national consultation on European Union sanctions against Russia ('Brussels sanctions').

December 2022 – The European Council decides that the Hungarian universities that already went through the 'model change' and are run by the so-called 'public interest trusts' are excluded from direct EU tenders, including Horizon Europe and Erasmus.

2022 – Hungary is identified as the worst EU country regarding academic freedom according to the V-DEM Academic Freedom Index, and the only EU Member State (out of all those measured) in their 'B category'.

4 May 2023 – Parliament empowers the government to prolong the state of emergency declared because of the war in Ukraine.

2023 – The European Court of Human Rights condemns Hungary's unlawful, inhumane and arbitrary refugee policy.

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