

Hungarians unveil a Thatcherite and 'uncompromising' manifesto

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Susan Viets in Budapest

ONE of Hungary's leading opposition parties, the Alliance of Free Democrats, yesterday unveiled a Thatcherite programme for its campaign in next month's elections.

It says the package cannot be compromised in any post-election bargaining to form a coalition government. In taking the initiative, the Free Democrats are hoping to outstrip their main rival, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, with whom they are jostling in the opinion polls.

The Free Democrats' principal aim is radically to accelerate Hungary's transition from a controlled to a

market economy. Subsidies to state enterprises will be cut; those that are not viable will be allowed to collapse; and the majority of those remaining will be sold to shareholders, competing to attract capital investment, much of it from abroad.

"Our first promise is that Hungary will not go the way of Poland and Yugoslavia," said a member of the Free Democrats' executive board, Mr Janos Kis.

"Hungary's forint will not turn into a zloty-type (Polish) currency. In one year, please come to us and ask whether we have fulfilled our promises."

The Free Democrats say they will fight high inflation and unemployment.

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