

In Slovenia the new party, Miro Cerar (SMC) wins the general election

Corinne Deloy

Translated by Helen Levy

Results

The new party led by Miro Cerar (SMC) founded on 2nd June last easily pulled ahead in the general elections organised on 13th July in Slovenia. This election was the second in three years to be convened early in the wake of the resignation on 5th May last of Prime Minister Alenka Bratusek (Alenka Bratusek Alliance, but Positive Slovenia at the time (PS)). The SMC which was formed by a professor of law at the University of Ljubljana, Miro Cerar, won 34.61% of the vote and took 36 of the 90 seats in the Drzavni Zbor (National Assembly), the lower chamber of parliament. The Democratic Party (SDS) of former head of government (2004-2008 and 2012-2013) Janez Jansa, who is in prison at present, came second with 20.69% of the vote and 21 seats (-5 in comparison with the previous elections on 4th December 2011). In prison since 20th June in the town of Dob near Ljubljana after his conviction for corruption, the SDS leader complained of not being able to vote after the rejection of his request for exceptional leave from prison and criticised the elections as being "unfair". It should be noted that he forgot to enrol to vote within the time limit to make a postal vote. The Democratic Pensioners' Party (DeSUS) led by outgoing Foreign Minister Karl Erjavec won 10.21% of the vote and 10 seats (+4). He came out ahead of the United Left (ZL), the Democratic Labour Party (DSD), the Sustainable Development Party (TRS) and the Initiative for Democratic Socialism (IDS) which took fifth place with 5.97 % of the vote (6 seats). The Social Democrats (SD) led by Dejan Zidan followed close behind with 5.95% of the vote and 6 seats (-4). Finally New Slovenia-Christian Democrats (NSi) led by Ljudmila Novak won 5.53% of the vote (5 seats) and the Alenka Bratusek Alliance (ZAB) 4.34% of the vote and four seats.

Turnout was not very high, undoubtedly due to the date of the election. Indeed many Slovenians have already left for their holidays. Half of those registered turned out to vote (50.99%) i.e. -14.61 points in comparison with the previous elections on 4th December 2011.

General Election results of 13th July 2014 in Slovenia

Turnout: 50.99%

Political Parties	No of votes won	% of votes won	No of seats won
Miro Cerar Party (SMC)	298 342	34.61	36
Democratic Party (SDS)	178 294	20.69	21
Democratic Pensioners' Party (DeSUS)	88 026	10.21	10
United Left (ZL)	51 490	5.97	6
Social Democrats (SD)	51 300	5.95	6
New Slovenia-Christian Democrats (NSi)	47 701	5.53	5
Alenka Bratusek Alliance (ZAB)	37 375	4.34	4
Hungarian and Italian Minorities			2
Others	121 002	12.70	0

Source : Slovenian Electoral Commission <http://volitve.gov.si/dz2014/index.html>

"It is a good result. It shows that people have chosen commitment to an alternative political culture which does not divide. I am happy that voters have realised that Slovenia needs change, that it needs to change its political culture. It is this type of culture that our party can provide. We do not want the politics of division," declared Miro Cerar when the results were announced. The academic, who led a campaign focused on a return to moral behaviour in politics, undeniably benefited from the Slovenian population's disgust with their political class.

On 5th June 2013 former Prime Minister Janez Jansa was sentenced to two years in prison after being found guilty of having received a bribe of around 900,000€ from Austrian businessman Walter Wolf, in support of his party during the purchase in 2006 (he was Prime Minister at the time) of 135 armoured vehicles by the Defence Ministry for a total of 278 million € from the arms manufacturer Patria. Moreover the Mayor of Ljubljana and leader of Positive Slovenia (PS) Zoran Janjanc, is suspected of having failed to declare several thousand euro in income tax to the authorities.

Miro Cerar is criticised for having neither experience nor a programme. Author of the first Slovenian Constitution after independence in 1991 he says that he wants to strengthen the rule of law and counter corruption more effectively and "eliminate the ideological gulf between left and right". The SMC is formed by academics, business people and public personalities.

Mr Cerar maintained during his electoral campaign that he would respect European criteria and work towards reducing Slovenia's budgetary deficit to bring it under the 3% required by the Stability and Growth Pact. He said he favoured privatisations, which he is making his priority, deeming however that some strategic business sectors must remain under State control. Hence he is against the privatisation of the telecoms operator Telekom Slovenije and that of the international airport in

Ljubljana. We should note that more than half of the Slovenian economy still lies in the hands of the State. Miro Cerar wants to improve Slovenia's competitiveness and to do this he has announced that the labour market will be reformed.

Aged 51, the winner of the general elections is better known because of his parents. Miroslav Cerar, his father, won two gold medals at the 1964 Olympic Games for gymnastics (parallel bars and the pommel horse) and his mother Zdenka, a member of the Democratic Liberal Party, (LDS), which governed Slovenia from 1992 to 2004, was Slovenia's Prosecutor General and Slovenian Justice Minister (20th April-3rd December 2004).

An academic and expert in constitutional law, Miro Cerar has been a parliamentary advisor for many years. After Janez Jansa's resignation following a vote of no confidence by MPs on 27th February 2013 he was in line to lead government for a time, a position that finally went to Alenka Bratusek.

Miro Cerar, who has ruled out governing with the Democratic Party, will, in all likelihood, form the next government with the Social Democrats and the Democratic Pensioners' Party – unless he chooses to open up his majority by forming an alliance with an additional party.

Many analysts doubt that the elections on 13th July will bring stability back to the country which is in both political and economic crisis. Some even forecast a further election within a year. "It is not a question of who will win but who has a plan for the terrible autumn that awaits Slovenia," read the columns in the Slovenian daily newspaper Delo on the eve of the elections. Indeed the country has still not recovered from the economic crisis it has been suffering since 2009. Although it seems to be recovering many, sometimes painful reforms for part of the population, still have to be undertaken.

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