

# Outgoing Prime Minister Robert Fico comes out ahead but without a majority in the Slovakian general elections

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Results

**Abstract:**

Direction-Social Democracy (SMER-SD), led by outgoing Prime Minister Robert Fico came out ahead in the general elections on 5th March in Slovakia but without winning an absolute majority. It won 28.28% of the vote and 49 of the 150 seats (34 less in comparison with the previous general election on 10th March 2012) of the National Council of the Republic (Narodna rada Slovenskej republiky), the only chamber of Parliament.

Freedom and Solidarity (Sloboda a Solidarita, SaS), a liberal party led by Richard Sulik, came second with 12.1% (21 seats, +10), followed by the Party of Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OL'aNO), led by Igor Matovic, and NOVA, a liberal party led by Daniel Lipsic, which stood together and won 11.02% and 19 seats. The far right made a breakthrough since the National Party (SNS) led by Andrej Danko, took 4th place with 8.64%, thereby making a return to parliament's benches with 15 seats (+ 15) and another far right nationalist party, the People's Party-Our Slovakia (ĽSNS) for the former leader of the region of Banska Bystrica Marian Kotleba, made its entry into parliament with 8.04% (14 seats). The two parties are not

close however. "The policy undertaken by Marian Kotleba belongs to the last century," declared Andrej Danko.

SME-Rodina (We are a family), a populist party led by Boris Kollar, won 6.62% (11 seats) and Most-Hid (Bridge), a liberal party led by Bela Bugar, won 6.50% of the vote and 11 seats (- 2). Finally SIET (Network), a centrist party recently founded by Radoslav Prochazka, won 5.60% and 10 seats. In all, 8 parties will be represented in parliament, which will find itself particularly fragmented.

Turnout was almost the same as recorded in the previous election on 10th March 2012 totalling 59.82% (+ 0.71 points).

**Results of the general elections of 5th March in Slovakia**

Turnout : 59,82%

Political parties	Number of votes won	% of votes won	Number of seats
<b>Direction-Social Democracy (SMER-SD)</b>	737 481	28,28	49
<b>Freedom and Solidarity (SaS)</b>	315 558	12,10	21
<b>Party of ordinary people and independent personalities (OL'aNO)-NOVA</b>	287 611	11,02	19
<b>Slovakian National Party (SNS)</b>	225 386	8,64	15
<b>People's Party Our Slovakia (LSNS)</b>	209 779	8,04	14
<b>SME-Rodina</b>	172 860	6,62	11
<b>Most-Hid</b>	169 593	6,50	11
<b>SIET (Network)</b>	146 205	5,60	10
<b>Others</b>	108 874	4	0

Source: <https://volbysr.sk/en/data02p.html>

**WHICH GOVERNMENT COALITION?**

On the announcement of the results outgoing Prime Minister Robert Fico showed his disappointment and indicated that he had hoped for a higher score by *"four or five points, at about 33%"* and announced that negotiations to form the next government would be long. *"We are starting the first round of negotiations. They will show us whether there are partners to form a reasonable government. We are a party of values, we have principles. This is why I speak of a "reasonable" government,"* he declared, adding, *"we have never excluded any party from our negotiations,"* and that *"everything must be done to avoid the organisation of early general elections."*

He might have to opt for an alliance with the National Party (SNS) as he did after the general elections on 17th June 2006. He will try to avoid finding himself in the same situation as on 12th June 2010 when his party, SMER-SD came out ahead but was unable to form a government coalition and was therefore obliged to sit on the opposition benches.

*"SMER-SD will try to cut the extremist parties off. Robert Fico must draw away from Marian Kotleba and the National Party. He will choose carefully and with difficulty those who want to join him,"* stressed Samuel Abraham, rector of the Bratislava International School

of Liberal Arts, who sees in SIET, Most-Hid and SaS possible partners for the outgoing Prime Minister. For its part the leader of SaS, Richard Sulik, maintained that his party would not take part in a coalition with SMER-SD and that he was prepared to try and form a government if negotiations led by Robert Fico failed. *"Robert Fico will need at least two to three partners to form a government. He would need an alliance of 6 parties in the centre and right so that the present opposition can do the same,"* indicated Abel Ravasz, a political sociologist.

**THE SLOVAKIAN SITUATION**

Slovakia's economy is growing fast (3.5% in 2015 and 3.2% forecast for 2016, 3.3% in 2017), low government debt (53% of the GDP, one of the lowest in the EU and an unemployment rate, although high (10.4%), at its lowest rate in the last 10 years). However the country is experiencing several problems, notably it lags behind in terms of infrastructure development and there are persistently high levels of inequality between various regions. Moreover the sectors of education and healthcare are in need of reform. At the end of February teachers and medical staff demonstrated demanding wage increases. Robert Fico then promised to raise teachers' wages by 25% if he won on 5th March.

The outgoing Prime Minister campaigned on the defence of Slovakia from the flows of migrants. *"We shall never allow one single Muslim enter, nor shall we create a Muslim community here, because Muslims represent a serious danger to security,"* he declared during one of his campaign meetings in Bratislava. Robert Fico rejects the idea of Slovakia hosting refugees as planned by Brussels to relocate 160,000 refugees from Syria, Iraq and Eritrea and hopes to strengthen the control of the borders, a position approved of by 89% of his fellow countrymen according to the polls. Judging by the result Robert Fico's *"firmness"*, rather than having contained the far right, has encouraged its progress rather.

Last autumn the head of government lodged a complaint against the decision taken by the European Council to relocate the refugees before the European Court of Justice.

Bratislava will take over the presidency of the Council of the European Union on July 1st next for a six month period. The outgoing Prime Minister presented the issues that might influence the agenda: the financial crisis, the Stream 2 project, the possible withdrawal of the UK from the EU, the threats linked to migration and the situation in Ukraine and Syria. *"We shall concentrate on five areas; economic growth, the strengthening of the internal market, energy, migration and enlargement and external relations,"* said the outgoing Foreign Affairs Ministers, independent Miroslav Lajcak.

## WHO IS ROBERT FICO ?

Born 51 years ago in Topolcany (west of the country), Robert Fico is a graduate in law from the Comenius University and the State Institute and also a qualification in law from the Slovakian Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. He started his professional career within the Institute for Law at the Justice Ministry before being appointed in 1994 representing Slovakia at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, a post he occupied for six years.

Member of the Communist Party as of 1987, then of the Democratic Left (SDL), Robert Fico was elected MP in 1992. He left his party after the general elections in September 1998 which saw his party enter government without him winning a ministerial post. One year later in December 1999 he founded Direction (SMER).

In 2006, Robert Fico was appointed Prime Minister after his party's victory in the general elections on 17th June 2006. It won again in June 2010 but was unable to offer a coherent line of action and rally people to its name and so it could not form a government. Robert Fico came to office again in March 2012 after early elections.

In March 2014, he failed in the presidential election easily beaten in the second round by independent Andrej Kiska (59.38% of the vote against 40.61% to Robert Fico).

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