

Milos Zeman manages to stay as President of the Czech Republic

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Results
2nd round

On 27th January the Czechs finally re-elected outgoing head of State Milos Zeman (Citizens Rights Party, SPOZ). With 51.36% of the vote he won against Jiri Drahos (independent) who won 48.63% of the vote. Milos Zeman easily won the first round of voting on 12th and 13th January last with 38.56% of the vote ahead of Jiri Drahos, who won 26.6%

Two-thirds of the Czechs turned out to ballot for the second round, with turnout totalling 66.6% i.e. +7.49 points in comparison with the second round of the previous presidential election on 25th and 26th January 2013.

Presidential election results on 12th and 13th January and 26th -27th January 2018 in the Czech Republic

Turnout: 61.92% (1st round) and 66.6% (2nd round)

Candidates	No. of votes won (1st round)	% of votes won (1st round)	No. of votes won (2nd round)	% of votes won (2nd round)
Milos Zeman (Citizens' Rights Party, SPOZ)	1 985 547	38.56	2 853 390	51.36
Jiri Drahos (independent)	1 369 601	26.60	2 701 206	48.63
Pavel Fischer (independent)	526 694	10.23		
Michal Horacek (independent)	472 643	9.18		
Marek Hilser (independent)	454 949	8.83		
Mirek Topolaneck (independent)	221 689	4.30		
Jiri Hynek (independent)	63 348	1.23		
Petr Hannig (Common Sense Party)	29 228	0.56		
Vratislav Kukhanec (independent)	24 442	0.47		

Source : <https://www.volby.cz/pls/prez2018/pe2?xjazyk=CZ>

"The trust of the Czech citizens will give me energy over the next five years and I am convinced that they will not be disappointed," declared Milos Zeman when the results were announced. He also said that he wanted to show that "some journalists and politicians were less intelligent than ordinary people". He intends incidentally, to allow the latter to express their opinion more regarding major issues, and notably on the Czech Republic belonging to the European Union, an issue on which the president would like to organise a referendum.

"Milos Zeman dearly promoted his anti-immigration stance, which helped him win the presidential election. He attracted voters who are earning the least and who are the least qualified in the country and who are convinced that they have found someone who defends them at the highest level of State," stresses Jakub Charvat, professor of political science at the University of Prague.

"We didn't win but we didn't lose either," indicated Jiri Drahos after the announcement of the results, adding "I am very happy with the wave of

Presidential election in Czech Republic 12th-13th and 26th-27th January 2018

energy that emerged during this election and which will not disappear. I promise that I shall continue to feed this energy and hope, I am not leaving public life.

"Jiri Drahos did not really extend a hand to the voters of the candidates in the first round who called to vote for him and it was a mistake. It seems that some of them preferred to stay at home or even voted for the outgoing President. Incidentally Jiri Drahos's lack of political experience undoubtedly cost him some points during the two TV debates during which he did not perform very well," indicated Jiri Pehe, a political analyst.

"Jiri Drahos's campaign in the second round probably was not convincing enough in the eyes of the voters whose candidate was eliminated in the first round, and for whom, quite dearly he did not know how to be a second choice. The simple fact of not being Milos Zeman was not enough. Jiri Drahos did not succeed in creating strong enough dynamic or support around his name, declared Lukas Macek, director of the Sciences Po Campus in Dijon.

Aged 73 and from Kolin, near Prague Milos Zeman is a trained economist. He joined the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC) in 1968 before being excluded from it two years later. In 1992, he became a member of the Social Democratic Party (CSSD), of which he took the leadership the following year. In 1996 he was appointed leader of the House of Deputies, the lower house of the Czech Parliament. Appointed Prime Minister in 1998 he signed an agreement for the creation of a stable political environment in the Czech Republic with the Democratic Civic Party (ODS) led by Vadav Klaus at the time. According to the terms of this agreement the ODS promised not to place a vote of no confidence against the social democratic government led by Milos Zeman for the entire legislature. In exchange the Democratic Civic Party was to be consulted before the vote on any major project and achieved for its member's access to strategic posts in various institutions. (Hence the leadership of the House of Deputies went to Vadav Klaus).

After a first failed attempt to become President in 2003 (at the time the head of State was elected by the Czech Parliament), Milos Zeman chose to withdraw from political activities. However, he returned to front stage seven years later and in 2010 he founded the Citizens' Rights Party (SPOZ), which, with 4.33% of the vote, failed to enter parliament in the general elections on 28th and 29th May 2010 (a minimum of 5% of the vote cast is obligatory to be represented). Milos Zeman then resigned as leader of his party.

On 26th January 2013 he won the first presidential election organised according to direct universal suffrage with 54.8% of the vote against Karel Schwarzenberg (Tradition, Responsibility, Prosperity 09, TOP 09) who won 45.19% of the vote.

On 27th January the Czechs decided therefore that they wanted him to retain this post for another five years. Milos Zeman will be sworn in on 8th March next in the Wenceslas Hall at the Castle of Prague with the members of both Houses of Parliament in attendance. (200 members of the House of Deputies and 81 members of the Senate).

The Czech President has given Andrej Babis (ANO) whom he appointed as Prime Minister on 6th December last another chance to form the next government. The first attempt by Andrej Babis was a failure since on 16th January the House of Deputies rejected him in a vote of no confidence by 117 votes.

Milos Zeman asked the ANO leader to present him with his new bid in a document laying out a government that would be supported by at least 101 MPs. After his re-election as head of the country, the Head of State said that Andrej Babis could take the time he deemed necessary to form his government. "Since I have been re-elected I see no reason to hurry Andrej Babis in terms of the appointment of his government," declared Milos Zeman.

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