

European
Elections monitor

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Results

Ivan Korcok and Peter Pellegrini to face off in the 2nd round of Slovakia's presidential election on 6 April.

Surprisingly, Ivan Korcok, former Minister of Foreign and European Affairs (2020-2022), came out ahead in the 1st round of the presidential election on 23 March. Supported by Michal Simecka's Progressive Slovakia (PS), Milan Majersky's Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), Richard Sulik's Freedom and Solidarity (SaS), Jaroslav Nad's Democrats (D), Mikulas Dzurinda's European Blue-Slovakia (M) and Ondrej Dostal's Civic Conservative Party (OKS), Korcok won 42.51% of the vote. He took the lead over Peter Pellegrini (Hlas-Social-Democracy), current president of the National Council of the Republic (Narodna rada Slovenskej republiky), the only chamber of parliament, and former Prime minister (2018-2020), who obtained 37.02% of the vote. Pelligrini was supported by Prime Minister Robert

Fico's party, Direction-Social Democracy (SMER-SD). The two men will meet again in the 2nd round on 6 April.

Independent candidate Stefan Harabin, former Minister of Justice (2006-2009) and former President of the Supreme Court (1998-2003 and 2009-2014), garnered 11.73%. The other 8 candidates - Krisztian Forro (Hungarian Alliance, Szövetseg Aliancia), Igor Matovic (Slovakia, Slovensko), Jan Kubis (independent), Patrik Dubovsky (Christian Union, KU), Andrej Danko (National Party, SNS), Marian Kotleba (People's Party-Our Slovakia, ĽSNS), Milan Nahlik (independent) and Robert Svec (Renewal Movement) - each obtained less than 3%.

Results of the 1st round of the presidential election 23 March in Slovakia

Turnout: 51.9%

Candidates	Number of votes won	% of votes cast
Ivan Korcok (independent)	958 393	42.51
Peter Pellegrini (Hlas-Social-Democracy)	834 718	37.02
Stefan Harabin (independent)	264 579	11.73
Krisztian Forro (Hungarian Alliance, Szövetseg Aliancia)	65 588	2.90
Igor Matovic (Slovakia, Slovensko)	49 201	2.18
Jan Kubis (independent)	45 957	2.03
Patrik Dubovsky (Christian Union, KU)	16 107	0.71
Marian Kotleba (People's Party Our Slovakia, ĽSNS)	12 771	0.56
Milan Nahlik (independent)	3 111	0.13
Andrej Danko (National Party, SNS)	1 905	0.08
Robert Svec (Renew Movement)	1 876	0.08

source : https://www.volbysr.sk/sk/vysledky_hlasovania_kolo1.html

Presidential election in Slovakia

23th March 2024

"I am appealing to voters who disagree with the direction in which this government is taking Slovakia, including in foreign policy (...) I want to be a president who represents the country at home and abroad and who makes independent decisions without taking orders," Ivan Korcok declared when the results were announced. He said he was ready to talk to the candidates in the first round, including Igor Matovic, Jan Kubis, Patrik Dubovsky and Krisztian Forro. "I am running to help Slovakia become a truly European country, not only in terms of values, but also in terms of quality of life," he said.

"The results showed that most Slovaks do not want a liberal, right-wing or progressive president. Instead, most of them expressed their interest in a president who will defend Slovakia's national interests, who will not drag Slovakia into a war but will talk about peace, a president who will put Slovakia's interests first," Peter Pellegrini stressed, adding: "I want to be a president of the people, not a president of the elites, the media, NGOs and foreign countries. I want to be a president who defends Slovakia's national interests with pride and sovereignty," he said, insisting that "voters will decide on the election of a president who will - or will not - work in good harmony with Robert Fico's government", not forgetting that "Slovakia is clearly anchored in the European Union and NATO".

"If Peter Pellegrini wins the presidential election, Slovakia could follow in the footsteps of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban (Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union, FIDESZ-MPSZ) in terms of foreign policy," said Tomas Koziak, political analyst at the University of International Affairs (ISM). "During the last debate before the presidential elections, Peter Pellegrini called for an immediate ceasefire and the start of peace negotiations between Kyiv and Moscow. He will most likely act as an ally of Robert Fico's government, while Ivan Korcok will most likely act as his counterweight. He will use various instruments to correct his anti-democratic tendencies," says Pavol Babos, a sociologist at Comenius University in Bratislava. "Although the powers of the president of

the Slovak Republic are limited, the election serves as a thermometer to see whether the population supports the nationalist and pro-Russian turn of the new government," said Jana Vargovcikova, a political scientist at the Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO). "Will Robert Fico be [elected] president of the republic?" the daily Sme asked last week.

On 24 February, the second anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine by Russian armed forces, the Slovak prime minister repeated Vladimir Putin's story word for word, blaming "Ukrainian neo-Nazis" for the outbreak of the war in the Donbass in 2014. "Slovakia is unfortunately specific in the sense that those who spread the most disinformation are the politicians who are part of the current government," said Sonia Szomolanyi, a political scientist at Bratislava's Comenius University. Peter Pellegrini said that Ivan Korcok, if elected, would send Slovak soldiers to Ukraine. "This is all the falser because the President of the Slovak Republic is not competent to do so, and Peter Pellegrini knows this very well," she added.

"In the event of Peter Pellegrini's victory, we can expect the government's current position and the comments it makes to be strengthened. If Ivan Korcok wins, we can at least expect him to act as a counterweight to the government and parliament on this issue," said Michal Mislovic, political analyst at the Median opinion institute. "Slovakia, like other countries, is divided into two camps that seem irreconcilable, and the camp of Peter Pellegrini and Robert Fico is the one that wants to make us look like Belarus or Hungary while the other camp, which will vote for Ivan Korcok, insists more than anything on belonging to the European Union and NATO", said Milan Knazko, actor and former Member of Parliament (1996-1999) (Slovak Democratic and Christian Union - Democratic Party, SDKU-DS), currently deputy of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Ivan Korcok criticised Robert Fico's calls for negotiations with Moscow. "Russia has trampled on international law. I don't think that Ukraine should give up part of its territory in order to achieve peace",

he declared, adding *"Peace cannot be synonymous with capitulation. The first precondition for talking about a peaceful solution to this war is that Russian missiles stop hitting Ukrainian schools and hospitals"*. No opinion poll indicated that Ivan Korcok would win the 2nd round against Peter Pellegrini, especially as the majority of the 11.74% of votes cast for the independent candidate Stefan Harabin appeared to be in favour of the President of Parliament. According to a survey conducted by the opinion institute. Focus/Markiza, 53% of them would vote for Peter Pellegrini in the 2nd round and 6% for Ivan Korcok. *"My voters know what they have to do"* stated the independent candidate, who said that preserving the state, national sovereignty and peace were Slovakia's priorities. However, *"no poll predicted that Ivan Korcok would have a five-point lead in the 1st round"*

recalled Tomas Koziak, adding, *"Now he is emerging as a strong candidate"*.

According to political analysts, foreign policy will continue to be a major issue in the run-up to the second round. *"If Ivan Korcok is elected, Slovakia will maintain its critical attitude towards Russia, its pro-European stance and its support for Ukraine. Peter Pellegrini would follow Robert Fico's path in loosening our ties with our allies and partners in NATO and the European Union, weaker support for Ukraine and a leaning towards Russia,"* said Grigorij Meseznikov, director of the Institute of Public Affairs in Bratislava. *"There is a chance that the 'Orbanisation' of Slovakia will not come to pass,"* says Tomas Koziak.

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