

Surprise in the Slovenian general elections where the new party, Positive Slovenia (left), led by the Mayor of Ljubljana, Zoran Jankovic, beat the Democratic Party (right) led by Janez Jansa.

The Slovenian general elections that took place on 4th December caused a surprise since the new party, Positive Slovenia, founded by the Mayor of Ljubljana, Zoran Jankovic, came out ahead with 28.45% of the vote and 28 seats in the Drzavni Zbor (National Assembly), the lower chamber in Parliament. He beat the main opposition party, the Democratic Party (SDS) led by Janez Jansa, which won 26.25% of the vote and 26 seats (-2 in comparison with the previous general elections on 21st September 2008). In 3rd place came the Social Democratic Party led by outgoing Prime Minister Borut Pahor, which recorded a clear decline: it won 10.5% of the vote and 10 seats (-19). It was followed by the Citizens' List-Gregor Virant, another new party, which won 8.42% of the vote and 8 seats.

After that came the Democratic Pensioners' Party (DeSUS) led by Karl Erjavec with 6.97% of the vote, 6 seats (-1), the People's Party (SLS) led by Radovan Zerjav (6.97% of the vote, +1). Finally New Slovenia-Christian People's Party (NSi-KLS) led by Ljudmila Novak is making a come-back in Parliament with 4.79% of the vote (4 seats).

Winning 1.8% of the vote, the far right National Party (SNS) led by Zmago Jelincic Plemeniti has left the Drzavni Zbor (-5), likewise Zares (Real, Z) led by Gregor Golobic 0.65% of the vote (-9) and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDS) led by Katarina Kresal, 1.46% of the vote (-5%).

Turnout totalled 64.69%, i.e. -1.59 points than the level recorded in the previous general elections on 21st September 2008. The centre of Ljubljana was the most motivated constituency (70.55%), Maribor the least (59.15%).

"The results show that citizens want a different State, they have had Janez Jansa, Borut Pahor, now they want a democratic, efficient State, respect and consideration. Citizens voted for a new Slovenia, a Slovenia that will succeed, that will stand by others and that will be social," de-

clared Zoran Jankovic on the announcement of the results. *"Janez Jansa and Borut Pahor have already had their chance to show who they were and what they were able to do,"* he repeated during his campaign. The leader of Positive Slovenia who has transformed Ljubljana, which he

says he manages like a company, intends to manage the country in the same way. *"At the end of this legislature, Slovenia will have a 4% growth rate again,"* he maintains.

This election has revealed the Slovenians' defiance in a high turnout against the established political parties. Voters chose to wager on an entrepreneur who has produced good results as leader of his city. They rejected the Democratic Party, the favourite in the campaign, which did not succeed in convincing them that it could revive the country. According to many analysts, Janez Jansa paid for his fierce opposition over the last three years and for his aggressive tone during the electoral campaign. He was certainly affected by the Patria trial in which he was appearing. The former Prime Minister is accused of having received around 900,000€ in bribes in 2006 from Austrian businessman Walter Wolf, in support of his party as the Defence Ministry was purchasing 135 armoured vehicles to a total of 278 million € from the manufacturer Patria, 73% of which is owned by the Finnish government (EADS owns 27%). This transaction, that was made obligatory on Slovenia's entry into NATO in 2004, was the biggest military contract ever signed by Slovenia.

Zoran Jankovic now has to find the partners with whom to form a government coalition. *"I can work with everyone except Janez Jansa,"* he declared. Outgoing Prime Minister Borut Pahor has already said that his party was prepared to start negotiations. *"We are open to dialogue. We must think about our country's future,"* he declared. Many political analysts are forecasting a left coalition bringing together Positive Slovenia, the Social Democratic Party and the Citizens-List-Gregor Virant. The latter, former Administration Minister (2004-2008) in the government led by Janez Jansa, said he was open to dialogue but has set his conditions to take part in the next government: the Interior and Justice Ministers should not be held by members of Positive Slovenia. The leader of the Democratic Pensioners' Party, Karl Erjavec has also said he was ready to take part in a government led by

Zoran Jankovic, likewise the People's Party. *"The formation of a government will be difficult. Zoran Jankovic will have to negotiate with all of the small parties in Parliament and the differences between them are great,"* declared Tanja Staric, journalist at the daily, Delo. *"Parliament's fragmentation leaves little hope to see the emergence of a wide government coalition which Slovenia needs. I hope that I'm wrong but I do not think so. I cannot imagine the next government completing its four year mandate. The country can expect further early elections,"* indicated Janez Jansa.

Aged 59, Zora Jankovic was born in Serbia. He came to Slovenia, his mother's homeland, when he was 11. A graduate in economy from the University of Ljubljana, he started his career as director of Mercator Investa in 1984 before creating his own company, Electa. He managed the chain of supermarkets Mercator from 1997 to 2005 and is believed to be one of Slovenia's wealthiest men. A former member of the Democratic Party he decided in 2006 to stand as an independent in the town of Ljubljana after, in his own terms, of being "let down" by the then Prime Minister Janez Jansa. He won in the capital with 63.03% of the vote, taking 23 of the 45 seats on the town council. Four years later Mr Jankovic was re-elected in the first round of voting. With the motto 'Dela!' (It works!), the outgoing mayor campaigned basing himself the results of the four years he spent in office: modernisation of the transport system, construction of new bridges, construction of 3000 flats and a sporting complex in Stozice.

The new government's first task will be to present a plan to reduce public debt so that Slovenia can stay on the financial markets. It will also have to start retirement reform, which has been asked for by the European Commission, in a country where the legal age of retirement is one of the lowest in Europe, (57 for women and 58 for men). Zoran Jankovic has already said that he wants to raise VAT by one point (21%), a measure which some of his possible government partners oppose.

Results of the General Elections on 4th December 2011 in Slovenia

Turnout: 64.69%

Political Parties	No. of votes won	% of votes won	No of seats
Positive Slovenia	310 071	28.54	28
Democratic Party (SDS)	285 205	26.25	26
Social Democratic Party (SD)	114 023	10.50	10
Citizens' List-Gregor Virant	91 465	8.42	8
Democratic Pensioners' Party (DeSUS)	75 675	6.97	6
People's Party (SLS)	74 917	6.90	6
New Slovenia-People's Christian Party (NSi-KLS)	52 084	4.79	4
Slovenian National Party (SNS)	19 558	1.80	0
Liberal Democratic Party (LDS)	15898	1.46	0
Others	47 441	4.37	0
Italian and Hungarian Communities			2

Source : Internet site of the Slovenian elections (http://volitve.gov.si/dz2011/en/rezultati/rezultati_slo.html)

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