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Elections in Slovakia

March 15 Presidential Election

Frequently Asked Questions

Europe and Asia

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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Frequently Asked Questions

- When is Election Day?..... 1
- Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?..... 1
- Who can vote in the country?..... 1
- How many registered voters are there? 1
- What is the structure of the government? 1
- Are there reserved seats for women? What is the gender balance within the candidate list? 2
- What are the rules on campaigning?..... 2
- What are the rules for campaign finance? 2
- What is the election management body? What are its powers? 3
- What is a polling place? What is a polling booth? 3
- How many polling places are set up on Election Day? 3
- Is out-of-country voting allowed?..... 3
- How will voters with disabilities cast their ballots?..... 4
- What technology will be used?..... 4
- Will the election management body use a media center? 4
- Where are vote counting and tabulation held?..... 4
- Who can observe on Election Day? How can they get accreditation? 4
- When will official results be announced? 5
- How will election disputes be adjudicated? 5
- Who is responsible to ensure Election Day security? 5
- How much will the election cost? Who is responsible for funding the electoral process? 6
- Resources 7

Disclosure:
These FAQs reflect decisions made by Slovakian election authorities, to the best of our knowledge as of March 11, 2014. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.

When is Election Day?

The first round of the presidential election in Slovakia will take place Saturday, March 15, 2014. If one candidate obtains an absolute majority of all valid votes in the first round he/she will be directly elected.

Otherwise, the two candidates receiving the largest number of valid votes will compete in a second round. The second round of the presidential election will be held on March 29, 2014. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

Citizens will be electing a successor to President Ivan Gasparovic who is currently concluding his second term in office. Given that no more than two consecutive terms are allowed under the law, the incumbent will not run in this election. The president is elected by direct, secret vote for a five-year term.

Who can vote in the country?

Every Slovak citizen who is 18 or older on Election Day and resides within the territory of Slovakia is entitled to vote. Furthermore, every citizen that does not have a permanent residence in Slovakia but is within the State's territory can vote with his/her passport. Those voters are added to the voter list on Election Day by the local Precinct Election Commission.

How many registered voters are there?

The total number of registered voters cannot be disclosed prior to Election Day. According to Article 4 in the Law on the Election of the President 46/1999, eligible voters can be added to the voter list by Precinct Election Commissions on Election Day. Therefore, the number of registered voters for the first round of the presidential election will be known only after the Central Election Commission has signed the final voting protocol (result sheet).

For the 2009 presidential election, 4,339,331 voters were registered for the first round and 4,339,257 voters were registered for the second round.

What is the structure of the government?

Slovakia is a parliamentary democratic republic with a multi-party system. The government is divided into three branches: the executive, legislative and judiciary.

The President is the head of State. However, most executive powers lie with the head of the government, the Prime Minister (PM). The PM is nominated by the majority coalition in the parliament – the National Council. Current PM Robert Fico is among the candidates for the 2014 presidential election.

Legislative powers are vested with the 150-seat unicameral National Council of the Slovak Republic. Members are elected for four-year terms on the basis of proportional representation.

Slovakia's highest judicial body is a Constitutional Court composed of 13 members appointed by the President and nominated by the National Council.

Are there reserved seats for women? What is the gender balance within the candidate list?

Apart from the constitution, Slovakia's 2004 Anti-discrimination Act constitutes the most important legislation in the field of gender equality and equal opportunities. However, the legal framework governing the electoral process does not provide specific measures to promote participation of women in decision making roles.

Following the 2010 parliamentary elections, a woman was nominated as Prime Minister (PM) for the first time. PM Iveta Radičová's government fell in 2011,¹ which led to early parliamentary elections. In the current National Council (elected in 2012), 16% are women (24 out of a total of 150 members).

Among the 14 candidates running for President, there is only one female candidate.

What are the rules on campaigning?

The campaign period begins 15 days before Election Day. It officially ends 48 hours before voting begins.

In the case of a second round, campaigning resumes with the announcement of first round results and ends 48 hours before the second round of voting begins. During the campaign, the Law on the Election of the President 46/1999 provides for equal access to the media.

What are the rules for campaign finance?

According to Article 16 of the Law on the Election of the President 46/1999, a candidate for presidential office can spend a maximum of €132,175 (USD \$183,359),² including tax, on the campaign. He/she can only accept financial gifts or other assets from entities registered as permanent residents of Slovakia. The law also requires candidates to report any contribution larger than €331 (USD \$459) in case of

¹ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. "Needs Assessment Mission Report, Slovak Republic: Early Parliamentary Elections 10 March 2012," p. 3. February 17 2012. <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/88246>.

² Currency conversion was calculated using foreign exchange rates from March 10, 2013.

natural persons³ and €3,319 (USD \$4,604) in case of legal persons,⁴ within 30 days following Election Day.

What is the election management body? What are its powers?

To conduct elections, Slovakia establishes an ad-hoc, three-tiered election administration composed of the Central Election Commission (CEC), District Election Commissions (DEC) and Precinct Election Commissions (PEC). The CEC is responsible for general oversight and conduct of elections. The members are nominated by political parties represented in the National Council and by petition councils⁵ supporting each of the presidential candidates. Currently, there are six political parties in the National Council and 14 petition councils.

What is a polling place? What is a polling booth?

A polling place (polling station) is where voters come to cast their ballot. Voters are assigned to a polling station according to their place of residence. In Slovakia, one polling station represents one electoral precinct.

Article 69 of the constitution provides for the right of voters to cast their ballot in secret. To guarantee this right, every polling station is equipped with polling booths that allow voters to mark their ballot in secret.

How many polling places are set up on Election Day?

For the presidential election 6,958 electoral precincts (polling places) were created.

Is out-of-country voting allowed?

The Law on the Election of the President 46/1999 does not provide for out-of-country voting. Voters living abroad and willing to cast their ballot must return to Slovakia on Election Day.

However, the Law on Elections to the National Council allows out-of-country voting by mail. The reason why similar measures are not in place for a presidential election is that the short time between the first and the second round does not allow for administration and counting of ballots cast through the mail.

³ Natural person refers to an individual human being. A natural person can run a business, however, the term does not refer to a company or organization.

⁴ Legal persons are organizational units (the legal personality is acquired through the appropriate legislation). As opposed to the natural person, the term refers to associations, foundations, cooperatives, companies and similar bodies.

⁵ Petition councils nominate the candidate; help collect signatures for the candidate (15,000 required); and support the candidate (although this is separate from the campaign operation).

How will voters with disabilities cast their ballots?

According to Article 21 (5) of the Law on the Election of the President 46/1999, every eligible voter who cannot cast a ballot on his/her own, due to a physical disability (including blind voters), can seek assistance from another eligible voter. The assisting person cannot be a member of a Precinct Election Commission.

What technology will be used?

Standard computerized technology will be used for counting and tabulation of results by the Slovak Statistical Office. The Statistical Office will publish election results by the polling station on its [website](#) as soon as they are received from the Precinct Election Commissions.

Will the election management body use a media center?

No. The Central Election Commission will not use a media center during the presidential election.

Where are vote counting and tabulation held?

Polling places will be organized mainly in municipality councils, civic centers, and elementary and secondary schools. Mayors are responsible for allocating space for polling stations within their municipalities.

Counting will first take place at the level of the polling station (by the Precinct Election Commissions). For counting and tabulation at higher level election commissions (District Election Commissions), the Statistical Office establishes special Summarizing Departments. The Statistical Office assumes final responsibility for vote counting and tabulation.

The Summarizing Department of the Central Election Commission will be established in the Statistical Office in the capital city of Bratislava.

Who can observe on Election Day? How can they get accreditation?

There is no special provision in the Law on the Election of the President 46/1999 regarding election observers. Article 23 (5) of the law empowers the Central Election Commission (CEC) to grant permission to interested individuals to be present in the room where the vote count is conducted. In practice, the CEC does not distinguish between observation of voting and counting, and generally grants permission to international and national election observers upon request.

As of March 7, 2014, no observer groups requested accreditation to observe the presidential election.

When will official results be announced?

Preliminary results will gradually be accessible starting March 15, 2014, at 10:00 p.m., following the transfer of voting protocols (results sheets) to the Summarization Departments. According to the election calendar, the Statistical Office has to finalize counting and tabulation before March 17, 2014, and transfer the final results to the Central Election Commission that subsequently announces them.

How will election disputes be adjudicated?

Slovakian law does not provide for a clear framework to adjudicate electoral disputes.

There are a number of bodies dealing with election disputes; however, there is no clear hierarchy among them. Rather, they divide their competency according to the subject of the complaint.

The following bodies adjudicate electoral disputes in Slovakia:

- Municipal courts handle claims related to voter registration.
- Central Election Commission (CEC) deals with complaints about the conduct of electoral process.
- Supreme Court addresses complaints about the conduct of electoral process when the CEC is dissolved (after the election).
- Constitutional Court is responsible for adjudicating claims if the legality of the electoral process is compromised or fundamental rights and freedoms have been violated (and only if all other legal remedies were exhausted).

According to Civil Legal Order 99/1963 (2011 amendment) a political party or candidate can appeal to the Supreme Court in cases related to the registration of candidates. Criminal Law 300/2011 deals with electoral corruption cases.

Who is responsible to ensure Election Day security?

The Presidium of the Slovakian Police Force adopts measures to ensure that public order is respected on Election Day. They are also responsible for securing the buildings where polling stations will be located.

The transport of voting protocols (official results sheets) to the Central Election Commission will be secured by the municipalities.

How much will the election cost? Who is responsible for funding the electoral process?

The costs of the election are calculated to be approximately €10.78 million (USD \$14.95 million).⁶ The Ministry of Interior covers the salaries of all members of election commissions, ballot paper printing and equipment of the polling stations, which costs €9.74 million (USD \$13.52 million). The Statistical Office covers the election results process, which costs €1.04 million (USD \$1.44 million).

⁶ Currency conversion was calculated using foreign exchange rates from March 10, 2013.

Resources

- 2004 Anti-discrimination Act ([Slovakian](#))
- ACE – The Electoral Knowledge Network, *Comparative Analysis: Legislative Framework* ([English](#))
- Civil Legal Order 99/1963, amendment 332/2011 ([Slovakian](#))
- Constitution of the Slovak Republic ([Slovakian](#))
- Criminal Law 300/2005, amendment 313/2011 ([Slovakian](#))
- Law on the Election of the President 46/1999, amendment 204/2011 ([Slovakian](#))
- Ministry of Interior's Webpage, *Election of the Slovakian President* ([Slovakian](#))
- Statistical Office, *Election of the President of the Slovak Republic 2014* ([English](#), [Slovakian](#))