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Elections in Slovakia

2020 Parliamentary Elections

Frequently Asked Questions

Europe and Eurasia

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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Frequently Asked Questions

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Disclosure:

These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Slovak elections authorities as of February 24, 2020, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.

When is Election Day?

The Slovak Republic will hold parliamentary elections on Saturday, February 29, 2020, from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. Voting will take place in 5,998 polling stations across the country. Once all polling stations close, poll workers will begin the counting and tabulation process.

Unlike during presidential elections, Slovak nationals living abroad can vote in parliamentary elections by mail. Out-of-country voter registration ran until January 10, 2020. After registration, voters receive a vote-by-mail ballot and instructions on how to vote. Out-of-country voters can then cast their votes until February 28, 2020, when the envelope must be delivered to the provided address.¹

What is at stake in these elections?

These are highly consequential elections for citizens of the Slovak Republic. The current ruling party, Direction – Social Democracy, has been the largest and most popular party for the last 10 years but faces a number of challenges, chiefly widespread corruption. It was recently linked to the murder of a journalist and his wife, which may call the party's support into question. Opposition parties, including those at the fringes of Slovakia's political spectrum, have recently been gaining in popularity and pose a significant challenge to the ruling party's hegemony in Slovak politics. A shake-up in the composition of the National Council is possible.

What is the electoral system?

The electoral system of Slovakia is based on proportional representation, and the National Council is elected in one nationwide constituency. Parliamentary elections in Slovakia have a preferential component, meaning that, apart from voting for a specific party, a voter can also choose up to four specific candidates from the preferred party's candidate list.²

Parties must reach a threshold of at least 5 percent of valid votes to be eligible for the distribution of parliamentary mandates. The threshold for a coalition of two or three parties is 7 percent, and four or more parties in a coalition must reach 10 percent of valid votes.³

In the past there have been multiple unsuccessful attempts to change the parliamentary system from one constituency to multiple constituencies.

What is the campaign timeline and expenditure limit?

The election campaign begins on the day of the publication of the decision to announce elections as per the Collection of Laws of the Slovak Republic and ends 48 hours before Election Day. The 2020

¹ <https://volby.srdcomdoma.sk/>

² <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/slovakia/235591?download=true>, page 10

³ <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/slovakia/235591?download=true>, page 10

parliamentary election campaign officially began on November 5, 2019.⁴ The campaign expenditure limit is EUR 3,000,000, or about USD 3,245,000.⁵

Who is eligible to run as a candidate?

Citizens who are 21 years or older and have permanent residency in Slovakia are eligible to run for a parliamentary mandate. According to the Election Act of Slovakia, people who are currently serving a sentence or have previously served a sentence for committing an intentional crime or who are deprived of legal capacity are not eligible to run.⁶

The National Council has 150 seats, with 76 seats assigned to the majority party or coalition. A majority party may seek to form a coalition for 90 seats, which is the number of votes required to pass amendments to the Constitution.⁷ For the 2020 parliamentary elections, there are 25 registered political parties and coalitions and 2,736 registered candidates.⁸

Political parties, movements and coalitions officially registered under the Political Parties Act can submit candidate lists. Independent candidates are not eligible to run in the elections. The deadline for submitting the candidate lists for the 2020 parliamentary elections was December 1, 2019. With the submission of the lists, registered parties must pay an electoral deposit of EUR 17,000, or about USD 18,400 per list, which is then returned to the party after it reaches 2 percent of the valid votes.⁹

Who is eligible to vote and how many registered voters are there?

Citizens of the Slovak Republic who are at least 18 years of age on Election Day have the right to vote in National Council elections. Citizens serving prison sentences for serious crimes, deprived of legal capacity or whose freedom is restricted due to “public health protection” are ineligible to vote.¹⁰

Based on data from the 2019 European Parliament elections, there are approximately 4,429,801 registered voters in Slovakia. This year there will be approximately 200,000 first-time voters.¹¹ Out-of-country voter registration hit a record high at 86,062.¹² Voter registration is decentralized – each municipal authority is responsible for its respective voter list – and open through Election Day.¹³ Voters are added to the voter lists based on their permanent address.¹⁴

⁴ http://www.minv.sk/?nr20_infokampan

⁵ http://www.minv.sk/?nr20_infokampan

⁶ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2014/180/20160101>

⁷ <https://www.nrsr.sk/web/?sid=nrsr/poslanie>

⁸ <https://volbysr.sk/sk/age.html>

⁹ <http://www.minv.sk/?nr20-info2>

¹⁰ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2014/180/20160101>

¹¹ <https://www.webnoviny.sk/februarove-parlamentne-volby-na-slovensku-budu-premierou-pre-priblizne-213-tisic-volicov/>

¹² <https://spravy.pravda.sk/volby-2020/clanok/538957-rekordny-pocet-slovakov-bude-volit-zo-zahranicia/>

¹³ <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/slovakia/235591?download=true>, page 6

¹⁴ <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2014/180/20160101>

There are a number of ways citizens may cast their vote. Voters can vote in a polling station assigned to them based on their permanent address or at any other polling station in Slovakia with an absentee ballot. They can also vote by mail if they are permanently or temporarily residing abroad and requested a ballot by January 10, 2020.

What provisions are in place to guarantee equal access to the electoral process for persons with disabilities?

Voters with disabilities can notify their Precinct Election Commission before Election Day and are permitted to be accompanied to the ballot marking area. The accompanying party can mark the ballot and submit the envelope as instructed. The accompanying party cannot be a member of the local election management body (EMB).¹⁵

For voters who are unable to travel to the polling center due to a disability or illness are able to contact their local EMB and request to vote via a portable ballot box used solely in the territorial district of the electoral district.¹⁶

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

The election management body in Slovakia is the State Commission for Elections and Control of the Financing of Political Parties. This body was established by Act No. 180/2014 to control the financing of political parties and political movements, to manage elections and to determine election results.¹⁷

The commission has 14 members. Ten are nominated by political parties that are represented in the National Council of the Slovak Republic in the last election, proportional to the number of seats obtained. It has various powers but mainly is responsible for:

- Reviewing and registering candidate lists for National Council and European Parliament elections;
- Supervising the readiness of the lower-level election commissions to carry out their tasks, according to the Election Act;
- Ensuring the results of postal elections by nonresident voters of the Slovak Republic, and drawing up minutes of postal voting results;
- Publishing interim and overall election results;
- Processing voting results;
- Controlling the financing of political parties under Act No. 85/2005 Coll. on political parties and political movements;
- Imposing sanctions for political parties' violations of election campaign and funding rules.

¹⁵ <https://volby.sme.sk/parlamentne-volby/2020/i/ako-volit>

¹⁶ <https://volby.sme.sk/parlamentne-volby/2020/i/ako-volit>

¹⁷ <https://www.minv.sk/?statnakomisija-status>

When will official results be announced?

The official results of the upcoming National Council elections will be announced after the counting and tabulation process of all casted votes is completed. In line with previous elections, this is anticipated to be the day following Election Day. Unofficial results can be transmitted after midnight on Election Day.¹⁸

¹⁸ <https://volby.sme.sk/parlamentne-volby/2020/vysledky/banskobystricky-kraj/zvolen/zvolen>

Resources

- [Ministry of Interior](#)
- [Act No. 180/2014 Coll. on the conditions for the exercise of the right to vote and amending certain acts, as amended](#)
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights [Election Assessment Mission, 2016 Parliamentary Elections, Final Report](#)
- [Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovakia](#)
- [State Election Commission of the Republic of Slovakia](#)