

The second round of the Slovakian Presidential election will be a run off between Robert Fico and Andrej Kiska

Results (1st round)

As forecast Prime Minister Robert Fico (Direction-Social Democracy, SMER-SD) came out ahead in the first round of the presidential election in Slovakia on 15th March with 28.01% of the vote, i.e. the lowest result for a candidate in the first round of a presidential election ever – he took a four point lead over, Andrej Kiska, who clinched 24.01% of the vote. The two candidates will now face each other in the second round on 29th March next.

Radoslav Prochazka came third with 21.25% of the vote followed by one of the leaders of the 1989 Velvet Revolution, Milan Knazko who won 12.87% of the vote. Gyula Bardos, the first person of the Hungarian minority (10% of the Slovakian population) to run for President, won 5.11%. Pavol Hrusovsky, supported by the Christian-Democratic Movement (KDH) – a party he led from

2000-2009 – the Democratic and Christian Union and Democratic Party (SKDU-DS) and Most Hid (Bridge) won 3.33% and Helena Mezenska (the Party of Ordinary People and Independents, OL'aNO), 2.38%. The other seven candidates won less than 1% of the vote. Turnout, which was equal to the first round of the presidential election on 21st March 2009 lay at 43.4% (- 0.22 points).

Results of the first round of the presidential election on 15th March in Slovakia

Turnout: 43.40%

Political Parties	No of votes won	% of votes won
Robert Fico (SMER-SD)	531 919	28.01
Andrej Kiska	455 996	24.01
Radoslav Prochazka	403 548	21.25
Milan Knazko	244 401	12.87
Gyula Bardos	97 035	5.11
Pavol Hrusovsky (KDH, SDKU-DS & Most-Hid)	63 298	3.33
Helena Mezenska (OL'aNO)	45 180	2.38
Jan Jurista (KSS)	12 209	0.64
Jan Carnogursky (independent)	12 207	0.64
Viliam Fischer	9 514	0.50
Jozef Behyl	9 126	0.48
Milan Melnik	7 678	0.40
Jozef Simko (SMS)	4 674	0.25
Stanislav Martincko (Coalition of the Citizens of Slovakia)	2 547	0

Source : <http://prezident2014.statistics.sk/Prezident/data-en.html>

Outgoing Prime Minister, Robert Fico won the first round of the election but it seems that the polls' favourite will be under threat in the 2nd round.

The man who stands as a defender of the most vulnerable and the middle classes also wants to be the guarantor of the stability of Slovakia; He said he would like to strengthen cooperation between the head of State, the government and Parliament. *"The President of the Republic should unite the country whilst the Prime Minister tends to divide it,"* he declared. During the electoral campaign he has often quoted Austrian head of State, Heinz Fischer as his model.

Many analysts – and many Slovaks – fear however that a victory for the Prime Minister on 29th March next will lead to a presidentialisation of the political system in a country in which, at present, the head of State has few powers and no control over the political agenda.

Many fear that Robert Fico is modelling himself on Milos Zeman (Citizens' Rights Party, SPO), the first president to be elected by universal suffrage in the Czech Republic on 26th January 2013, who on several occasions has illustrated his will to influence political life and also Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban (Alliance of Young Democrats-Civic Union, FIDESZ-MPP). If Robert Fico became head of State his party's (Direction-Social Democracy), domination of political life would also grow. At present it enjoys an absolute majority in the National Council (*Narodna rada Slovenskej republiky*), the only chamber in parliament (83 MPs out of 150), and leads 7 regions out of 9, a domination which reminds some of the communist era.

The outgoing Prime Minister has already announced that he wants to extend the powers of the president of the Republic. Marian Lesko, a political analyst for the weekly Trend Business, fears that he will transform the present political system into a presidential one. *"He is a young, ambitious politician who would like to build a semi-presidential – and even a presidential system,"* believes Samuel Abraham, Director of the Higher School for Liberal Arts (BISLA) in Bratislava. *"The presidential election has become a referendum regarding Robert Fico and the concentration of power,"* maintains Grigorij Meseznikov of the Public Affairs Institute (IVO).

If he wants to win on 29th March however Robert Fico absolutely has to motivate his party's electorate who,

overly confident of their favourite's victory, deserted the ballot box to a great extent in the first round.

Interior Minister, Robert Kalinak, is due to take over from Robert Fico as head of government if the latter wins the second round. Robert Fico has also said that he would remain as Prime Minister if he was defeated on 29th March.

"Slovakia needs an independent, experienced president and not one who rallies all the power to himself. The head of State must not be partisan, he has to be independent so that the government has a healthy counter-balance," maintains Andrej Kiska. *"We have an opportunity to change Slovakia,"* he declared after having voted on 15th March in his birth town of Poprad in the centre of the country.

Kiska, a political novice and founder of "the Good Angel" (Dobry Anjel), a charitable organisation for sick children is fighting to counter corruption and the concentration of power. *"Traditional politicians do not take care of the real problems of ordinary people. It is in a bid to try and change this that I decided to run for the Presidency,"* indicated Andrej Kiska. He added that Robert Fico had led the country for the last six years and that the Slovaks had not always been satisfied. *"The question is: do we have to give another five year mandate to someone like this?"* wonders the candidate who has promised that if he is elected he would give up his pay as president for his entire term in office and donate it to charitable works.

In the second round Andrej Kiska should gain the support of many first round candidates. Pavol Hrusovsky, Milan Knazko and Radoslav Prochazka have given him their support. *"I shall do everything I can to prevent Robert Fico from becoming President of the Republic,"* declared Radoslav Prochazka. *"The three men have little in common but they stand united in the belief that Robert Fico's accession to the presidency will provide him with total power over the country,"* indicated Martin Simecka, editor of the weekly Respekt.

"Robert Fico has won on paper, but Andrej Kiska is the real winner. The second round will be a referendum over Robert Fico. All of the electorate who witnessed the failure of their candidate in the first round will

have a reason to support Andrej Kiska in the second," stressed Marian Lesko. "In the second round I am expecting Andrej Kiska to collect the votes of those who do not want Robert Fico as President of the Republic and of those whose candidate failed in the first round," maintained Grigorij Meseznikov.

"The President of the Republic must be a responsible, experienced politician who knows the world and who has contacts abroad. The final duel will oppose a candidate who is offering his experience against one who knows nothing," maintained Robert Fico in a televised debate before the first round. However Grigorij Meseznikov believes that, "Robert Fico is a populist with

authoritarian leanings. Andrej Kiska is seen as someone who has succeeded. His lack of political experience is an advantage today because the electorate is disappointed by politics."

And so the field will be open in the second round on 29th March. Voters will be choosing between Andrej Kiska, who stands apart from the parties and outgoing Prime Minister Robert Fico, who can rely on his experience as head of government.

A poll undertaken by the institute Focus before the first round granted 53.7% of the vote to Andrej Kiska and 46.3% to Robert Fico in the second round.

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