

## Slovakia before the parliamentary election: back to the past

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The election to Slovakia's unicameral parliament, scheduled for 30 September, will bring significant changes to the composition of the National Council, and the new government is likely to adjust the country's foreign policy. The left-nationalist Smer party of former Prime Minister Robert Fico is leading in the polls. In its campaign it has used slogans about a return to 'stability and order', it has promised social programmes, and has announced sealing the country's borders and ending military support for Kyiv. This would be a return of the political force that was in power from 2006 to 2020 (with a short break between 2010 and 2012). At that time, Fico became known as a pragmatic politician, but in the opposition he radicalised his message. He now stands a good chance of regaining the PM's office that he lost after a wave of protests following the murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak in 2018. The investigation into this case revealed numerous abuses by the government then in power, which Igor Matovič – head of the winning party of the previous parliamentary election in 2020, OĽaNO – had promised to hold to account. However, Matovič is currently the political leader with the lowest trust among Slovaks, and his formation may have trouble crossing the electoral threshold. The centre-right is paying the cost for a difficult pandemic period and economic troubles, but also for chaotic governance full of internal disputes, both on programme and personal issues, that prevented many targets, such as justice reform, from being brought to a conclusion.

### What is at stake in the election

The upcoming election to the National Council will determine whether Slovakia remains in the international coalition of political and military support for Kyiv. In an extreme scenario, it may even result in the isolation of the country in the EU, similar to Hungary's situation. It will also be important in the context of the processes of healing the state's institutions and the fight against corruption, whose continuation will be questioned. Finally, the election's outcome will also draw "red lines" for the next few years on highly polarising moral and ethical issues.

In the most likely scenario, i.e. the victory of the Smer-Social Democracy party and of a governing coalition built around it, Bratislava will reduce political support for Ukraine's defence. Over the past year and a half, Slovakia has become the sixth largest donor of various types of support to Kyiv in relation to GDP (according to IfW Kiel; 1.3% of GDP including its share of EU support). The continuation of military aid would be difficult anyway, as stocks of equipment that could be given to its



invaded neighbour are depleted. Fico also announces opposition to Ukraine's accession to the North Atlantic Alliance (although he is not against the support for the country's admission to the EU) and an eastern policy analogous to that pursued by the government in Budapest. Although his campaign rhetoric is at times even more strongly anti-Ukrainian than that employed by Viktor Orbán, Fico had previously become known as a pragmatic politician. Hence, only the post-election reality will show how deep the changes that await Slovakia-Ukraine relations will be.

Previous Smer governments were characterised by a reluctance to antagonise the administrations in Brussels, Washington and Berlin, who in turn rarely stigmatised

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Slovakia's problems with corruption or the rule of law until the crisis triggered by Kuciak's murder. Although Fico criticised the subsequent EU packages of sanctions imposed on Russia since 2014, he ultimately accepted them. Under his government, many decisions were also made regarding the costly modernisation of the armed forces on the basis of intergovernmental agreements with the US. The dual-track nature of the rhetoric directed at Slovaks and the *de facto* actions taken is also demonstrated by the events of 2015–2016. At the time, Fico was directing an anti-immigration message to the domestic electorate (which was instrumental in his victory in the 2016 parliamentary election), and yet Slovakia was the only V4 country to accept the minimum number of refugees under the relocation mechanism, thus avoiding a dispute in the Court of Justice of the EU.

Nor is it currently in Fico's interest to enter into a heated dispute with the West. During the campaign, he met with the US ambassador, among others, and sent a message to foreign investors that “now is the phase of so-called political folklore, called the election campaign, but after 30 September the country will calm down again”. So while changes in foreign policy are to be expected, they may not be as profound as many in the international media are predicting. They warn of a return in Slovakia's politics of the anti-Western tendencies known from Vladimír Mečiar's government in the 1990s or that Slovakia under Fico might enter into a kind of alliance with Russia. Even if one does not take into account the experience of his previous governments, it is worth noting that in the current campaign Fico has also emphasised that he will not undermine the foundations of the country's foreign policy orientation, i.e. EU and NATO membership. He also continues to subscribe to the call for Slovakia to belong to the ‘core of European integration’, although he is increasingly formulating reservations towards Brussels. He also made it more or less clear that he will not scupper arms deliveries to Ukraine made on the basis of commercial contracts.

While the scale of change in foreign policy may be doubted, the Smer-led government's course in domestic politics is more predictable. Both the party and its potential coalition partners are promising to step up the state's regulatory and social activities, which are ultimately intended to improve the living standards of Slovaks. However, Fico's return to power also raises the risk of a return to the mechanism of politicising the police (which the investigation into Kuciak's murder revealed) or widespread clientelism. In the opinion of Smer's political opponents and a large part of the media, Fico's many months of great campaign activity and of strong rhetoric previously unseen show his determination to ensure impunity for himself and his own political camp by returning to power. Judicial proceedings are pending against many of these individuals, but also in the few years since the ‘untying of the hands of the police and the courts’ under the centre-right government, more than 40 people with links to the former regime have been convicted.<sup>1</sup> However, it is to be expected that

<sup>1</sup> V. Prušová, ‘Odsúdili už viac ako 40 zločincov z éry Smeru. Nie sú len spolupracujúci obvinení, nedostali iba podmienky’, Denník N, 28 August 2023, dennikn.sk.

a possible attempt to hijack the judiciary or law enforcement agencies by Smer in the post-Kuciak reality will attract more public attention not only in the country, but also abroad. On moral issues, which are highly controversial in Slovakia, Smer will seek to preserve the status quo. While it rejects the 'gender ideology' or introduction of civil partnerships advocated by liberal formations, it does not want changes to the relatively liberal abortion legislation.

## Specifics of elections and the party system

One of the most important distinguishing features of the Slovak electoral system is that it provides for only one electoral district for the whole country. This means that individual parties (or coalitions) field a single list, which most often includes 150 candidates, corresponding to the total number of MPs in the National Council. This solution, in which voters across the country can vote for the leader of a party, is beneficial for groupings with a well-known leader at the top, but no longer necessarily with a broad membership base. As a result, the grouping Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (OĽaNO), which had only four members for many years since its founding in 2011, and the vast majority of MPs representing the party did not even belong to it, could win the 2020 elections. This translates into a small personnel base for many parties, making governance more difficult, while in opposition such incoherent parliamentary groups easily disintegrate.

Slovakia is therefore dominated by parties whose leaders have a strong position. Fico has been the head of Smer since its found-

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ing in 1999, and when a camp (headed by Peter Pellegrini) emerged that could aspire to change the party leadership, it eventually chose the path of splitting and founding a rival grouping (Hlas-Social Democracy). The same happened with the extremist People's Party Our Slovakia (LSNS) of Marian Kotleba when a group of rebels founded the Republika party. Apart from the lack of a real possibility to change the party leader, the motivation of the splitters in both cases was an attempt to build new entities unencumbered by negative associations. Other parliamentary groupings have also had the same presidents since their inception and constitute their *de facto* quasi-ownership: this is the case with the We are Family (founded in 2015), which is in favour of generous social welfare spending, of oligarch Boris Kollár or the liberal Freedom and Solidarity (Saska) party, which has been led by Richard Sulík since its inception in 2009. The aforementioned anti-corruption and conservative OĽaNO is inextricably associated with its chairman Igor Matovič. All three entered politics from the business world on a wave of disillusionment with traditional parties; their formations are sometimes led in a manner which resembles that of a company, while their political marketing is similar to attempts to reach a target customer. The exceptions among the leading parties are President Zuzana Čaputová's original party, Progressive Slovakia (PS), which is second in the polls and which has changed its leader several times in recent years, and also the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), which has a broad membership base. However, neither party was elected to the National Council in 2020.

The fragmentation of the political scene is likely to play a key role in the upcoming elections, which at the same time carries the risk that some groupings fail to cross the electoral thresholds: 5% for single-party lists and 7% for coalitions. This uncertainty affects as many as eight lists (including one with a coalition). This means they either rarely exceed the threshold in the polls by more than 2 p.p. and thus find themselves in the danger zone, or they manage to record support above 3% and are still hoping to capture the emotions of the final days of the campaign and respond to them in a convincing manner (see the Table and Chart 1 in Appendix). The experience of the last election allows them this hope as the winner then, OĽaNO, was not sure of entering the parliament three months before the election (it had 7–8% support in opinion polls), and its final result (25%) was almost double

the poll support two weeks before voting (13%). Now OĽaNO is so convinced that its ratings (6–7%) will improve that it has decided to run in a coalition with two smaller parties, raising the electoral threshold for itself on the one hand, but also its spending limit on the other. However, taking this risk in the previous election did not pay off for the centre-liberal PS-Spolu coalition, which fell 0.04 points short of entering the parliament. The distribution of seats after the election is also influenced by the lack of guaranteed parliamentary seats for national and ethnic minorities.<sup>2</sup> The most numerous of these are Hungarians, but their community is sharply divided, which is why there are as many as three parties representing it in the current election: the strongest one, Aliancia, is close to Fidesz, the ruling party in Budapest, while the more liberal Most-Híd and Hungarian Forum parties are highly critical of Orbán. The latter two are on different lists with smaller Slovak formations (though formally not in a coalition). It is likely that none of the three will cross the 5% threshold, although Aliancia, whose support at times approaches 4%, has some chance of doing so. These divisions contributed to the fact that in 2020, for the first time in the history of the Slovak Republic, there was no minority representative in parliament. This has also been influenced by the declining percentage of Hungarians among the population (as a result of assimilation and exodus) – while it was around 11% in the early 1990s, it has now dropped to less than 8%. As for the Romani, whose share of the country's population (around 9% according to the OECD) is the second highest in Europe, after Bulgaria, they do not have their own coherent political representation. Both the Hungarian and Roma populations are relatively successfully appealed to by all-Slovakia groupings, also due to the fact that they have leading activists from the Hungarian minority (e.g. Deputy Speaker of Parliament Gábor Grendel of OĽaNO) or the Roma community (e.g. Deputy Chair of PS Irena Bihariová). This encourages other Slovak parties to do the same – even the Nationalists (SNS) prepared billboards in Hungarian in the south of the country in 2023.

## A long and brutal election campaign

This election campaign is the longest in Slovakia's history, as it began *de facto* with the vote of no confidence for the centre-right government of Eduard Heger (then of OĽaNO) in December 2022. A September election date had already been set by MPs in January. In the meantime, there has been considerable regrouping on the centre-right and liberal scene. Although parties from this part of the political spectrum insist that “a Fico comeback cannot be allowed”, in the end this camp is heading into the elections significantly fragmented. The favourite both to get the best result and to become the foundation of the future government – on the basis of at least a three-party coalition – is Smer.

## Smer and its potential coalition partners

Smer, due to its harsh criticism of the government and high level of activism, gradually rebuilt its position from single-digit support at the end of 2020 to around 20% two weeks before the election. Fico read the public mood well, dominated the campaign and, due to his incisive message, regained some voters who had drifted away to the more moderate, centre-left Hlas. The Smer leader recognised the potential for resistance to the centre-right's pro-Ukrainian measures. He appealed to the anti-American and pro-Russian sentiment ingrained in much of society.<sup>3</sup> He was one of the first to start exploiting the topic of falling living standards resulting from inflation and the failure of wage growth to keep pace with it – so-called real wages fell by 4.5% last year, i.e. more than in Poland or Germany (2.1% and 4% falls respectively), although it was less than in the Czech Republic (8.5%). In the first week of September, he managed to reopen the migration topic when he travelled to an

<sup>2</sup> In Poland, where the percentage of minorities is significantly lower, national minority committees can apply for exemption from the electoral threshold.

<sup>3</sup> K. Dębiec, 'Slovakia: strategic dilemmas after the Russian invasion of Ukraine', *OSW Commentary*, no. 445, 10 May 2012, [osw.waw.pl](http://osw.waw.pl).

overcrowded and poorly maintained refugee camp in the south of the country, which the government had set up without informing the public. Although the increase in migratory transit through Slovakia had been a phenomenon recorded since 2022,<sup>4</sup> it has now been exacerbated by Budapest's loosening of its policy of strict border policing (local liberal politicians speculated about whether there were deliberate actions of the Fico-friendly Orbán government). Fico, who already before Kuciak's murder had a track record of controversial statements, has now sharpened his rhetoric even further. This is demonstrated, for example, by his involvement in inciting the crowd to vulgar shouts against Čaputová ('American wh\*re') or his statement at one of the summer meetings with voters, where he announced that 'not even a greasy stain will be left behind' his political rivals.

Fico's radicalisation of the public debate benefits far-right and pro-Russian groups which declare their readiness to enter a future governing coalition with Smer:

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Republika and the Slovak National Party (SNS). The former, although originating from neo-Nazi circles, has moderated its rhetoric in recent months and support for it in the polls has reached 8–10%. It no longer wants Slovakia to leave NATO, but only proposes a referendum on the issue. Party leader Milan Uhrík has moved away from glorifying the Third Reich-dependent government of Jozef Tiso and condemned its anti-Jewish actions, something he had previously refused to do (although he added that it is for historians to assess how conscious Tiso's actions were). The SNS party, Smer's coalition partner from 2016–2020, managed to unite many smaller anti-system groups on its list, and is increasingly frequently crossing the 5% threshold in the polls. Its leader Andrej Danko hides his pro-Russian sentiment under the slogan of multivector policy – as chairman of the National Council in the previous term he visited Moscow many times, but at the same time the defence ministry, controlled by his party, modernised the army on the basis of contracts with the US (in one debate, he symbolically emphasised that “he has both a Lada and a Ford in his garage”).

With the radical rhetoric of Smer, Republika and SNS proving effective in the polls, it is contributing to a change of mood in the more moderate Hlas. Its leader Pellegrini is himself reluctant to talk about a coalition with Fico, but does not rule it out. This is supported by the preferences of the party's voters: for more than 60% of them a coalition with Smer is 'acceptable', and only less than 20% think the same about an alliance with the PS.<sup>5</sup> Fico's courtship of the Republika party serves as a tool for him to apply pressure on Hlas in future coalition talks, and at the same time creates an alibi for Pellegrini, who will be able to justify an alliance with Smer – despite his previous dislike of the party and attempts to differentiate himself from it – by the greater need to 'stop fascists from entering the government'.

### Centre-right and liberal parties

On the other side of the political scene, Progressive Slovakia is the clear leader, recording increases due to a calm campaign (contrasted with the radicalism of Smer and the clamour of its own camp's rivals) and growing doubts over whether other groupings with a similar profile will cross the electoral threshold. It also benefits as a political force unencumbered by the responsibility of governance in 2020–2023, although rivals link the actions of the caretaker cabinet to the head of state that hails from this party, and sometimes extend criticism of the prime minister or president to PS. As its support grows, the formation is increasingly becoming the target of attacks from opponents and also (and even especially) politically related groups. The latter accuse PS on the one hand of being too liberal

<sup>4</sup> K. Dębiec *et al*, 'Central Europe facing a new wave of migration from the Balkans', OSW, 21 October 2022, [osw.waw.pl](https://osw.waw.pl).

<sup>5</sup> A survey by the Ipsos agency in July this year. This also works the other way round, as the presence of Hlas in government is 'acceptable' to 64% of Smer voters and only 26% of PS voters.

in its programme on moral issues, which has led them to label PS activists as ‘extremists’, and on the other hand, of not being clear about a potential coalition with Hlas (a possible governing coalition based around PS without the participation of Hlas will most probably be impossible). Progressive Slovakia is trying to showcase less controversial topics, such as improving the quality of health care or changing the political culture. The introduction of civil partnerships ‘for all’ is present in the programme, but is not among the most important goals.

The remaining parties of the broadly defined centre-right camp are likely to fight for nothing more than survival in this election. Particularly noteworthy are the groupings co-founding the governing coalition from 2020 to 2022 (and partly 2023): Matovič’s OĽaNO, Sulík’s Saska and Kollár’s We are Family. The first two activists top the ranking of distrust in political leaders: Matovič is distrusted by 91% of Slovaks, Sulík by 83%, while Kollár scores only slightly better (77% of negative opinions).<sup>6</sup> This is probably why Matovič is the only major party leader whose face does not appear on campaign billboards. His political strategy is based on media-savvy marketing – this time he chose to promote his promise to pay €500 for participation in the election as such a point. He claims that he will only enter into a governing coalition with parties that support this demand. At the end of the campaign, he intensified the political stunts for which he was previously known, disrupting a Smer rally and getting into a fight with the former head of the Interior Ministry from that party. He also expanded his catalogue of promises, including a four-day working week.

Matovič and Kollár also strongly emphasise the significant increase in spending on families with children under their government, which has indeed greatly improved their material situation. Despite

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this, the head of We are Family is mainly on the defensive in this campaign. Initially, his formation chose the promotion of ‘normality’ and the emphasis on conservative themes its main slogan. This had limited chances of success from the start, given that Kollár is the father of 13 children with 11 women. It became even more difficult when the mother of two of Kollár’s children publicised the fact that he had beaten her twelve years ago, and he could not bring himself to express remorse for a long time. As a result, support for the formation fell from around 7.5 to 5%. A number of Slovak women, who make up about 70% of this party’s voters and are attracted by the image of a caring father promoted in the tabloid media, have walked away from the party. The grouping considers that the issue may have been dug up before the election as part an organised plot that its political opponents may be behind.

Sulík, liberal on economic and moral issues, but reluctant to tighten European integration, is trying to improve the party’s image by reaching out for support from the co-author of Andrej Babiš’s greatest electoral successes in the neighbouring Czech Republic. Sulík’s party (Saska) had its highest ratings in the polls when it was part of the governing coalition, in which in practice it often contested solutions proposed by its stronger partners, such as pandemic restrictions. When it demonstratively left the government, demanding the departure of the unpopular Matovič, it lost media attention and had to deal with accusations that it led to the collapse of successive centre-right cabinets (the first time in 2011), which may now pave Fico’s path to victory for a second time. This has benefited PS in particular, whose increases in support over the last year have correlated with Saska’s declines.

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<sup>6</sup> Focus agency survey for TV Markíza of August 2023.

As a result of the large number of players, the votes of the centre-right and liberal camps will be dispersed and partly lost. It is very likely that the groupings of two former prime ministers will not make it into parliament: the 'Blues, Most-Híd' alliance led by Mikuláš Dzurinda, who returned to Slovakia after years spent in Brussels and who is trying to make a link to his time as prime minister (1998–2006) and head of diplomacy (2010–2012), and the Democrats, a party of leading politicians in the Heger government with a liberal profile. The latter is competing for voters with the stronger PS and the more expressive Saska, but is also burdened with responsibility for the unpopular governments which Heger was the face of for more than two years.

## Perspectives

With the creation of a one-party government essentially impossible, the most likely scenario seems to be the formation of a government based on Smer, that has a good chance of getting the best result. His preferred coalition partner is Hlas, which has been leaning more and more clearly towards him in recent weeks. Hlas's leader Peter Pellegrini, who is hesitant about a coalition with Smer, may finally be persuaded by the offer of the prime minister's portfolio, which – in the context of Fico's radicalism – would be an asset internationally. A natural partner for these two groupings would be the SNS (provided it crosses the electoral threshold), in which case the majority of the 2016–2020 governing coalition would be reconstituted (Hlas activists had a part in it while they were still members of Smer). Depending on the post-election arithmetic, it is conceivable that the We are Family party, which favours generous social spending and whose leader has sent contradictory signals on the matter, would also be included in the coalition. Although Republika is far from being Smer's preferred partner, talks with it could serve as a tool to put pressure on other possible coalition partners. It is also possible that Republika could support the government in exchange for programme concessions or positions in the government. Already in 2016, Fico proved that he is capable of non-obvious alliances, bringing together the left, the nationalists and the liberal Hungarian minority party.

A much less likely scenario is a broad governing coalition of the centre-right and liberal camp. For this to happen, a number of conditions would need to be met. First and foremost, as many actors on the scene as possible would have to cross the electoral threshold – currently only one can be certain of this: Progressive Slovakia. They are not helped by the fact that, of those who indicated they say they may still change their decision on the election day, KDH and We are Family voters are the least convinced they will vote for those party – with almost 30% and 22% expressing doubt, respectively.<sup>7</sup> For Smer and Republika, this percentage is only 5% and 9% respectively. The second condition is the acceptance of Hlas into this camp, which would be very difficult for OĽaNO since it sees this grouping as another incarnation of Smer. The third requirement is deep compromises by potential coalition members, especially on moral, but also on social or economic policy issues. Ultimately, personal concessions would also be necessary, so that such a government would probably not include the leaders of the co-founding groupings.

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<sup>7</sup> Survey *Ako sa máte, Slovensko?* carried out in August/September 2023 by MNFORCE and Seesame in cooperation with the Slovak Academy of Sciences, [sociologia.sav.sk](http://sociologia.sav.sk).

## APPENDIX

Table. Main actors of the Slovak political scene and their support levels

Grouping	Profile; EU affiliations	Leader	Support		
			February 2020 election	One year before the election*	Latest polls*
<b>Smer</b> Social Democracy**	left-wing, nationalist; PES	Robert Fico	18.29%	15.0–15.3%	18.9–19.4%
<b>PS</b> Progressive Slovakia <i>In 2020 it ran in coalition with the Spolu party, now on its own.</i>	left-liberal; ALDE	Michal Šimečka	6.96%	9.6–10.0%	16.5–18.2%
<b>Hlas</b> Social Democracy**	centre-left; PES	Peter Pellegrini	-	19.3–20.3%	14.6–15.1%
<b>Republika***</b>	far-right; none	Milan Uhrík	-	5.2–7.8%	5.2–8.0%
<b>Saska/SaS</b> Freedom and Solidarity	liberal, eurosceptic; ECR	Richard Sulík	6.22%	8.2–12.9%	5.1–7.4%
<b>OĽaNO</b> Ordinary People and Independent Personalities <i>Currently – OĽaNO and Friends, running in coalition with two other parties: Christian Union and For the People (resulting in the need to cross the 7% electoral threshold).</i>	anti-corruption, pro-social; EPP	Igor Matovič	25.02%	7.2–7.9%	6.3–7.0%
<b>SNS</b> Slovak National Party	far-right; none	Andrej Danko	3.16%	3.9–4.2%	6.0–6.4%
<b>KDH</b> Christian Democratic Movement	centre-right; EPP	Milan Majerský	4.65%	6.2%	6.0–6.2%
<b>Sme rodina</b> We are Family	Pro-welfare state, anti-immigrant; ID	Boris Kollár	8.24%	7.0–7.6%	4.9–5.3%
<b>Democrats</b> <i>Based on former activists from OĽaNO, For the People and Spolu.</i>	right-liberal; EPP	Eduard Heger	-	-	3.5–3.7%
<b>Szövetség – Aliancia</b> <i>Founded in 2021, based on SMK-MKP activists (the 2020 result relates to the latter grouping).</i>	centre-right; EPP	Krisztián Forró	3.90%	2.7–4.6%	2.9–3.6%
<b>ĽSNS</b> People's Party Our Slovakia***	far-right; none	Marian Kotleba	7.97%	2.3–2.9%	0.6–1.8%
<b>MM</b> The Blues (Modrí), Most-Híd <i>Established in May this year, the 2020 result relates to the Most-Híd party.</i>	centre-right; EPP	Mikuláš Dzurinda	2.05%	-	1.4–1.5%
<b>Za ľudí</b> For the People <i>It is currently running in coalition with OĽaNO.</i>	centrist; EPP	Veronika Remišová	5.77%	2.3–24%	-

\* According to survey research, September 2022 and September 2023 respectively (carried out in both cases by the AKO and Focus agencies).

\*\* Smer ran in the 2020 elections, after which some activists left it in autumn 2020 to found Hlas.

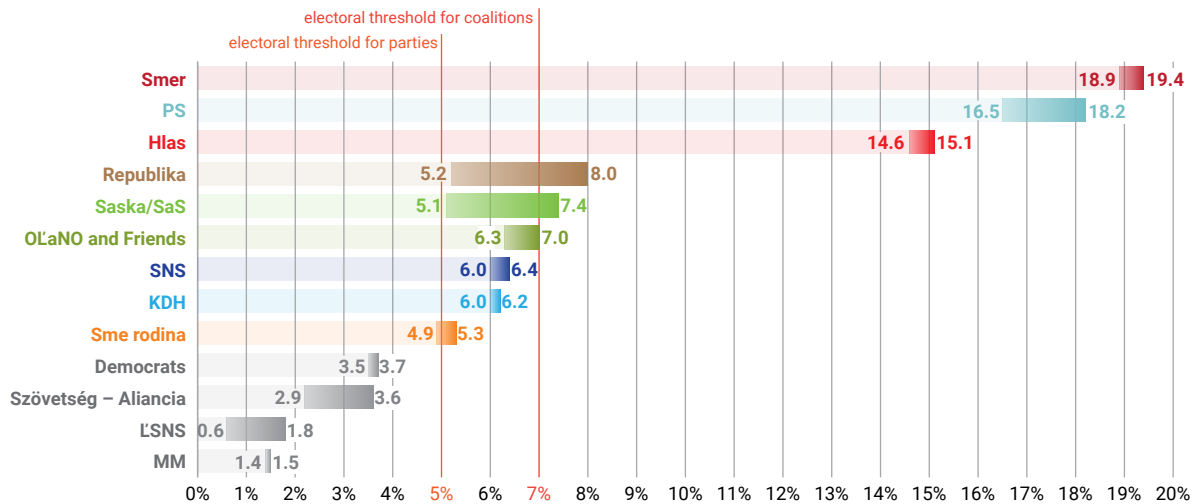
\*\*\* ĽSNS ran in the 2020 elections, after which some activists left it in March 2021 to found Republika.

The parties taking part in the ruling coalition formed after the 2020 elections and in September 2022 are highlighted in colour.

PES – Party of European Socialists, ALDE – the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party, ECR – Party of European Conservatives and Reformists, EPP – European People's Party, ID – Identity and Democracy Party Chart 1. Results of the latest pre-election polls



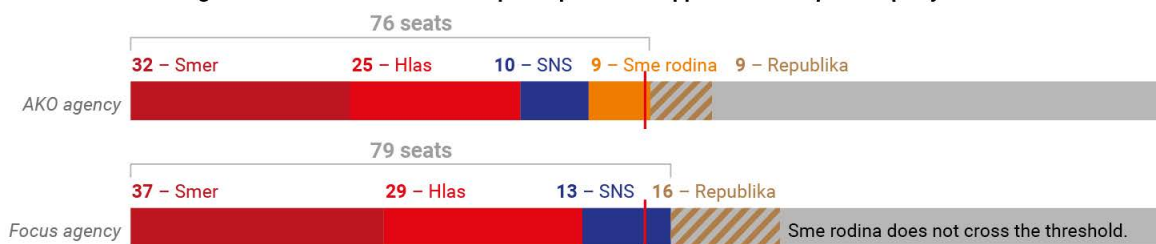
**Chart 1. Results of the latest pre-election polls**



Source: research by the AKO and Focus agencies from September 2023.

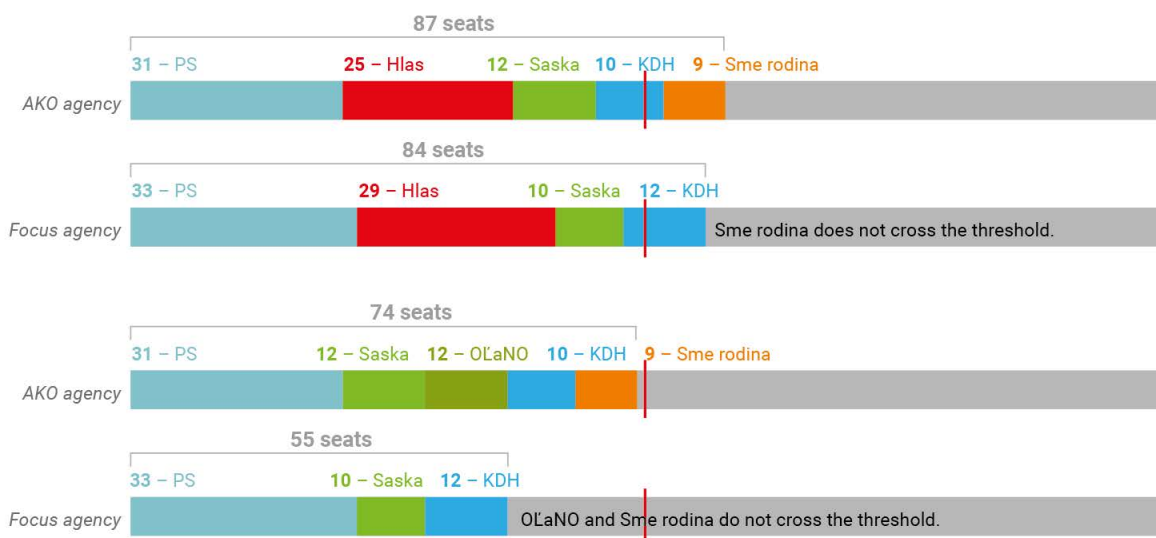
**Chart 2. Potential post-election coalitions**

**1. Coalition under the aegis of Smer without or with the participation or support of the Republika party**



The option with the support/entry into coalition of the Republika party is more likely in the event of SNS or Sme rodina not entering parliament.

**2. Broad coalition of centre-right and liberal parties with or without Hlas's participation**



According to recent polls, the centre-right and liberal parties have no chance of garnering a majority in the National Council without the participation of Hlas (which is increasingly distant from them), even with the possible participation of OLaNO. Such a coalition, even without Hlas, would have been difficult to form due to significant programme differences and personal disputes among activists, and the option with Hlas would certainly not have been accepted by OLaNO.

Source: author's compilation based on calculations of estimated seat allocation from recent party preference surveys by the Focus and AKO agencies.