

What's going on in Slovakia?

Types

- mandatory referendum (Art. 93.1), to confirm a constitutional law on entering into an alliance (state bond) with other states or on withdrawing from that alliance
- non-mandatory referendum (Art. 93.2.), to decide on other important issues of public interest.

Problems

- Excluded areas (cannot be subject of referendum): basic rights and freedoms, taxes and levies, state budget
- Participation: every citizen of the Slovak Republic who has the right to vote in elections of the National Council (Parliament)

Called by

- Non-mandatory referendum is called by President if:
 - requested by a popular initiative signed by a minimum of 350,000 (11% of eligible voters) citizens,
 - on the basis of a resolution of the Parliament (can be requested by MPs or by Government)

Table 1. Popular initiatives submitted to the president to call a referendum (1993-2019)

Date	Subject	Organized/ supported by political parties	Valid signatures ****	Turn out (%)	Yes/No votes (%)*****	Validity	Further legislative actions
Feb 1994	Recall of MPs who left the political parties that originally nominated them	Yes/Yes	232,957 (no referendum)	-	-	-	No
24 May 1997	Direct election of the president*	No/Yes	495,241	?	?	?	1999 constitutional amendment
26-27 Nov 1998**	Stop privatization of strategic industries	Yes/Yes	550,000	44.06	84.30/15.70	Not valid	No
Aug 1999	Q1: Slovak as only language in official communications Q2: No privatization of strategic industries	Yes/Yes	381,529 (no referendum)	-	-	-	No
11 Nov 2000	Early parliamentary elections	Yes/Yes	639,991	20.03	92.74/4.8	Not valid	No
03 Apr 2004	Early parliamentary elections***	No/Yes	557,282	35.86	86.78/11.93	Not valid	No
18 Sep 2010	Q1: Abolishment of TV & radio broadcasting fees Q2: Abolishment of misdemeanour immunity of MPs Q3: Decrease of number of MPs from 150 to 100 Q4: Procurement of vehicles for public institutions only up to maximum price of €40,000 Q5: E-voting for parliamentary elections Q6: Abolishment of right to reply in press law for state officials	Yes/Yes	401,126	22.84	Q1: 87.24/9.02 Q2: 95.4/1.70 Q3: 92.76/3.85 Q4: 88.84/6.16 Q5: 70.46/22.22 Q6: 74.93/13.44	Not valid	Q1,2,6 included in 2010 cabinet's manifesto
7 Feb 2015	Q1 Definition of marriage, only man and woman Q2 Same-sex couples should not be allowed to adopt and raise children Q3 No sex education without parent's approval	No/Yes	400,000	21.41	Q1:94.5/4.13 Q2:92.43/5.54 Q3:90.32/7.34	Not valid	2014 Con. amendment, Q1

* Referendum was held but the data are missing. See more in part three, Marred referendum in 1997. ** The referendum took place during the parliamentary elections. *** The referendum took place during the first round of presidential elections. **** Total number of voters varies from 4,023,191 in 1998 to 4,369,553 in 2010. ***** Invalid votes not included

Problems

- No consensus on role of direct democracy in Slovakia
- Referendum as another instrument of political parties
- Unclear constitutional provisions
- High voter quorum (50% turnout) distorts free and democratic competition

