

Polity IV Country Report 2007: Slovak Republic

Score:	2006	2007	Change	<p style="font-size: small;">The graph shows a line representing authority trends from 1993 to 2007. The y-axis ranges from -10 to 10. The line starts at approximately 7 in 1993, remains flat until 1994, then rises to 8 in 1995, 9 in 1996, and reaches 10 in 1997. It remains at 10 through 2007.</p>		
Polity:	10	10	0			
Democ:	10	10	0			
Autoc:	0	0	0			
Durable:		14				
Tentative:		No				
SCODE	SLO	CCODE	317	Date of Report	1 November 2008	
Polity IV Component Variables						
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP	
3	3	4	7	5	5	
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)						
End Date		16 June 2006		Begin Date		17 June 2006
Polity Fragmentation: No						
Constitution						
		1993 (1998, 2001)				
Executive(s)		President Ivan Gašparovic (formerly HzD); directly elected 3 and 17 April 2004, 59.9% Prime Minister Robert Fico (Smer-SD); appointed by the president as the leader of the majority coalition in parliament, 4 July 2006				
Legislature		Unicameral: National Council of the Slovak Republic (150 seats; proportionally elected; most recent elections, 17 June 2006) Direction – Social Democracy (Smer-SD): 50 Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKU): 31 Slovak National Party (SNS): 20 Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK): 20 People's Party – Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (LS-HZDS): 15 Christian Democratic Movement (KDH): 14				
Judiciary		Constitutional Court; Supreme Court				

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)

The Czechoslovakian federation split at the end of 1992 despite polls showing that the majority of the population did not support the breakup. The 1993 Slovak Republic constitution called for executive

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authority to be divided between a president and a prime minister, both of whom were selected by parliament. Early politics were characterized by a rivalry involving President Michal Kovac and Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar, both members of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). Meciar was forced out of the premiership in 1994 following a series of scandals but returned to office only six months later. At the end of President Kovac's term in office, the parliament was unable to agree upon a successor. A constitutional amendment was passed in 1998 that changed the recruitment of the president to direct popular election. The May 1999 presidential elections featured six candidates and Rudolf Schuster defeated Meciar in a runoff ballot. Mikulas Dzurinda of the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) became prime minister as leader of the parliamentary majority coalition, formed by the SDK, SDL, SMK, and SOP parties; the HZDS and SNS allied in opposition. Both the presidential and legislative elections were declared free and fair by the OSCE. Presidential elections held in April 2004 brought Ivan Gašparovic, formerly of the Movement for Democracy party (HzD), to power. Robert Fico, a reform communist, became prime minister in July 2006 as leader of a coalition government with Vladmir Meciar's HZDS and a right-wing party.

Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)

The president is commander of the armed forces and appoints the prime minister, who is head of the government. The Slovak Information Service (SIS), an independent organization reporting directly to the prime minister, is responsible for all civilian security and intelligence activities; several scandals emerged in the mid-1990s amid allegations that Meciar used the SIS to intimidate his opponents. The unicameral legislature is empowered to adopt and revise the Constitution, establish ministries, and approve or reject proposals to call referenda. The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, although it may be susceptible to influence from the government's Ministry of Justice.

Political Participation: Competitive Participation (10)

For much of the initial independence era, political parties in the Slovak Republic were fluid and subject to sometimes intense factional impulses. Tensions between economic reformers and Slovak nationalists, led by HZDS head Vladimir Meciar, contributed to a polarization of politics around two opposing blocs. As a result of the September 2002 general elections (and the breakup of the SDKU-KDH coalition party), Meciar's HZDS party became the majority party in the legislature. However, Meciar was unable to form a government and SDKU-leader Dzurinda regained the Prime Minister post upon formation of a new coalition government. Since this time, popular support for both Meciar and the HZDS has faltered. Meciar lost his bid for president in 2004 and the HZDS came in a distant fifth in the 2006 parliamentary elections. With the demise of popular support for the nationalist bloc, the factional tension inside the Slovak Republic has been significantly weakened. While the main political cleavage in the immediate post-independence era revolved around the nationalist (and somewhat authoritarian) policy of HZDS, in recent years the dominant cleavage has been over the pace and depth of economic reforms (principally between Direction - Social Democracy and Slovak Democratic and Christian Union - Democratic Party).