



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

## SLOVAK REPUBLIC

### EARLY PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

10 March 2012

### OSCE/ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

23-26 January 2012



Warsaw  
17 February 2012

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In December 2011, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic invited the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) to observe the 10 March early parliamentary elections. The OSCE/ODIHR undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) to the Slovak Republic from 23 to 26 January 2012. The OSCE/ODIHR NAM included Robert Krimmer, OSCE/ODIHR Senior Adviser on New Voting Technologies, Lusine Badalyan, OSCE/ODIHR Election Adviser, and Marc Carillet, Deputy Director of Administration with the International Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

The purpose of the mission was to assess the pre-election environment and the preparations for the early parliamentary elections. Based on this assessment, the NAM was to recommend whether to deploy an OSCE/ODIHR election-related activity for the forthcoming elections, and if so, what type of activity best meets the identified needs. Meetings were held with officials from state institutions, the election administration, as well as with representatives of political parties, media, and civil society. A list of meetings is annexed to this report.

The OSCE/ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their assistance and co-operation in organizing the visit. The OSCE/ODIHR would also like to thank all of its interlocutors for having taken the time to meet with the mission and sharing their views.

## **II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Early parliamentary elections were called for 10 March 2012, following a vote on the ratification of the European Financial Stability Facility that was combined with a vote of no confidence in the government. In the upcoming elections, 150 members are to be directly elected under a proportional system with a preferential element in one nationwide constituency.

Elections take place against the background of economic and political crisis. In the weeks prior to the elections, the political discourse has been dominated by a scandal involving alleged high-level state corruption. OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed their opinion that in these circumstances, the level of voter apathy is high. They also raised corruption and the economic crisis as the main campaign issues.

The legal framework governing the parliamentary elections comprises the Constitution, the election law and a number of other legal acts. At the beginning of 2011, the government initiated an electoral reform process to codify the electoral legal framework. However, due to the collapse of the government and the early elections, this process has not been completed and the elections will be held under the old framework. Most of the parties met by the OSCE/ODIHR NAM mentioned their intention to continue the reform after the March parliamentary elections.

The parliamentary elections are administered by a number of different institutions, including the Ministry of Interior and the Statistics Office, and a three-level system of election commissions formed on a temporary basis prior to each election. Commission members are appointed by electoral contestants. There is no centralized voter register and municipalities are responsible for voter registration based on the registers of permanent residence.

All registered political parties and movements can nominate candidate lists. The Central Election Commission (CEC) has registered all 26 nominated candidate lists. Independent candidates cannot stand for elections to the parliament, which is not in line with OSCE commitments. The electoral campaign is largely unregulated. The election law does not specify a date for the official start of the campaign, but stipulates that paid political advertisements can only be broadcast starting from 21 days before election day.

The media environment is pluralistic, with a wide variety of public and commercial broadcasters, as well as print media. The previously separate public radio and television have been merged as Radio and Television of Slovakia in 2010. Most OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors opined that this was a political decision, intended to address previous concerns about bias and impartiality of public television and its dependence on the ruling coalition, as well as to tackle financial problems that the television was facing.

Political parties receive funds from a wide range of sources and there are no limits to campaign expenditures. Parties are required to submit annual party finance reports, and interim and final campaign expenditure reports. Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors were concerned that campaign financing lacks independent oversight and would benefit from greater transparency.

The use of ethnic stereotypes in the campaign was raised as a concern by interlocutors, but has not yet featured in the discussion in this campaign. The Criminal Code has been amended to criminalize vote-buying, in response to a widely held perception that this is a pervasive phenomenon. Voter information will be provided in minority languages for the upcoming elections to comply with recent amendments to the Language Law.

The OSCE/ODIHR NAM noted a marked confidence of the majority of its interlocutors in the integrity of the electoral process and in the professionalism and impartiality of the election administration. No significant concerns were expressed relating to the respect for fundamental freedoms, the transparency of the electoral process, candidate registration, media access and election day proceedings. Slight concerns were expressed regarding party and campaign financing, the campaign environment, and the participation of national minorities in elections.

During its assessment of the 2010 elections, these areas were specifically assessed by the OSCE/ODIHR EAM and a set of recommendations was provided. The OSCE/ODIHR NAM also noted that certain positive changes were introduced which are in line with previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations. However, many OSCE/ODIHR recommendations from 2010 remain unaddressed. As no major changes have taken place since the 2010 parliamentary elections, an observation activity would not add significant value in the current context. Therefore, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM does not recommend an election-related activity for the 2012 early parliamentary elections. Efforts to harmonize and codify the electoral legislation should continue after the parliamentary elections. The OSCE/ODIHR stands ready to engage with the Slovak authorities in a follow-up process and to assist them in addressing these outstanding recommendations.

### III. FINDINGS

#### A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

On 11 October 2011, the Slovak parliament failed to ratify the European Financial Stability Facility. The vote on this anti-crisis instrument was linked to a vote of confidence in the government, which felt as a result. Consequently, early parliamentary elections were called for 10 March 2012.

The National Council (parliament) is elected for four years and consists of 150 members. The head of state is the president, who is directly elected for five years. Most executive power lies with the prime minister, who is usually the leader of the party that gains the most votes in parliamentary elections and is responsible for forming a coalition in parliament.

Following the 2010 parliamentary elections, the president initially invited Robert Fico, the leader of the Direction – Social Democracy (SMER) party that won most seats in the parliament, to form the government. Since Mr. Fico failed to form a new government, the opportunity passed to the leader of the second largest party in the parliament, the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKU), led by Iveta Radičová. She formed a governing coalition of four centre-right parties: SDKU, Freedom and Solidarity (SaS), the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and *Most-Híd* (Bridge). Ms. Radičová became the country's first female prime minister. SMER and the Slovak National Party (SNS) comprised the opposition in the outgoing parliament. Aside from the parliamentary parties, a newly established movement 'Ordinary People and Independent Personalities' has emerged and intends to contest the elections. The movement portrays itself as a new force not linked to established parties and its candidate list includes certain prominent figures.

The OSCE/ODIHR has observed five elections in Slovakia since 1998. The Election Assessment Mission (EAM) for the 2010 parliamentary elections concluded that the elections "were conducted in a pluralistic environment characterized by general respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, equitable campaign conditions and a high degree of public trust in the impartiality of the election administration."<sup>1</sup>

#### B. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The legal framework regulating the parliamentary elections includes the Constitution and the Law on Election to the National Council of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter, election law). There are a number of other applicable legal acts: the Act on Broadcasting and Retransmission, Act on Limitation of Expenditure of the Political Parties on Advertising before Election to the National Council, Act on Political Movements and Political Parties.

Following its assessment of the 2010 parliamentary elections, the OSCE/ODIHR recommended in its final report that consideration be given to revising all electoral laws in order to eliminate inconsistencies and harmonize electoral practices governing different types of elections and referenda. At the beginning of 2011, the Slovak authorities announced their intention to codify all laws regulating different types of elections into a unified Electoral Code. A working group under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior was formed, including parliamentary party

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<sup>1</sup> All OSCE/ODIHR election observation and election assessment mission reports for the Slovak Republic are available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/slovakia>.

representatives, experts and civil society. Representatives of the ministry indicated to the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that previous ODIHR recommendations were considered during the discussions. Due to the collapse of the government and the upcoming early elections, however, the reform was not completed. Most political parties met by the OSCE/ODIHR NAM stated their intention to continue the reform process after the March parliamentary elections.

The Criminal Code has been amended to criminalize vote-buying, in response to seemingly widely-held perceptions that is a pervasive phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> The Criminal Code now provides for sentences of up to two years imprisonment for those who offer and up to one year for those who take bribes.<sup>3</sup> This amendment is in compliance with the OSCE/ODIHR recommendation to introduce an explicit reference to vote-buying as an electoral violation in order to provide the legal basis to prosecute and punish those who seek to unduly influence voters' choices through buying their votes or applying pressure on voters.

The election law provides for international observers, as well as the possibility to observe the voting and counting process for anyone who expresses interest. However, the law does not provide details on the rights of observers or the accreditation procedure, which the OSCE/ODIHR had previously recommended could be stipulated in law.

Parliamentary deputies are elected in one nationwide constituency on the basis of proportional representation with a preferential element. Political parties have to receive at least five per cent of valid votes to get mandates.<sup>4</sup> In addition to selecting a party list, voters may also indicate preferences for particular candidates, but to a maximum of four. Candidates who obtain at least three per cent of preferential votes are automatically elected. The remaining mandates are allocated to candidates in their ballot list order.

### C. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Elections are administered by a number of different institutions, including the Ministry of Interior and the Statistics Office, and by election commissions formed on a temporary basis before each election. For the upcoming parliamentary elections, commissions at three levels are formed: a Central Election Commission (CEC), 50 District Election Commissions (DECs) and 5,956 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs) at polling station level.<sup>5</sup> The 26 political parties contesting the elections have the right to nominate members to all three levels of election commission; 25 parties nominated members to the CEC. The OSCE/ODIHR NAM was informed that it may be difficult to train the potentially large number of commission members in lower-level commissions.<sup>6</sup> An electoral officer with an advisory vote is also appointed to each commission to support its work.<sup>7</sup>

The election law does not explicitly stipulate that sessions of the CEC are open to the public; however, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM was informed that anyone who wishes could attend. It is a

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<sup>2</sup> Criminal Code, Article 336a.

<sup>3</sup> Article 336a.3 stipulates that the sentence can go up to five years if the bribe is conducted by a public or state official or publicly.

<sup>4</sup> Coalitions of two to three parties have to overcome a seven per cent threshold, while coalitions of four or more parties need to exceed ten per cent.

<sup>5</sup> Each PEC serves a maximum of 1,000 voters.

<sup>6</sup> The Ministry of Interior informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that it had requested additional funding for the reimbursement of commission members, due to the large number of parties contesting these elections.

<sup>7</sup> The CEC electoral officer is appointed and recalled by the government, the DEC electoral officer by the head of the district administrative office, and the PEC officer by the respective mayor.

long-standing OSCE/ODIHR recommendation that the legislation should stipulate that CEC sessions are open to observers.

The Ministry of Interior holds primarily responsibility for organizing elections due to the temporary nature of election commissions. The Ministry oversees preparations and technical organizational aspects, and supports the work of the CEC. The Ministry is responsible for printing election materials, training election commissioners, and conducting voter education.

The Statistics Office is responsible for processing and tabulating election results. It establishes summarization units composed of experts in the CEC and in each DEC, providing personnel, hardware, and software. The computer network connecting the CEC with the DECs supports the transfer of the election results. Election results are published continuously and are broken down by PEC on the website of the Statistics Office.

The majority of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed full confidence in the professionalism and impartiality of the election administration bodies. No particular concerns were raised regarding the technical preparations and conduct of these elections.

#### **D. VOTER REGISTRATION**

Voter lists are compiled and maintained by municipalities based on the registers of permanent residence. The number of voters is about 4.3 million, according to information from the Ministry of Interior. The voter registration system is passive and decentralized. Voter lists are updated on an ongoing basis, based on the information received from state bodies or other municipalities, the municipalities' own records, or results of complaints or requests by voters. Voters can access voter lists to verify and potentially correct their own data. On election day, a voter can be added to voter list upon presenting an identity card and proving his/her residency.

Voters who do not have permanent residence in the Slovak Republic are, upon their request, included in a special voter register.<sup>8</sup> The special register is maintained by the municipality of Bratislava-Petrzalka. The mayor of this municipality establishes a polling station for voters included in the special voter register.

The legislation provides voters with the possibility to vote in person in polling stations, by absentee ballot, by post or by mobile ballot box. Absentee voting is available to voters who are away from home on election day. Postal voting is only available to citizens who are abroad on election day and is based on the principle of active registration. Mobile voting is allowed for serious health reasons at the request of the voter.

#### **E. REGISTRATION OF CANDIDATE LISTS**

On 19 December, the CEC registered all 26 nominated candidate lists. Candidate lists can be nominated by registered political parties and movements.<sup>9</sup> Political parties must pay an electoral deposit of 16,596 EUR, which is returned to a party or coalition that receives at least 2 per cent of valid votes. Political parties may form a coalition and submit a joint candidate list, however there were no coalitions nominated for these elections.

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<sup>8</sup> The request should be submitted no later than 50 days before election day. During the 2010 parliamentary elections, it contained 565 names.

<sup>9</sup> The Ministry of Interior informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that 62 parties and movements are registered in the Slovak Republic.

Independent candidates cannot stand for elections to the parliament, which is not in line with paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.<sup>10</sup> The OSCE/ODIHR previously recommended introducing a provision to allow independent candidates to stand in parliamentary elections.

## F. ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND MEDIA

The upcoming elections take place against the background of economic and political crisis. The political discourse is dominated by the so-called Gorilla case. 'Gorilla' files are alleged transcripts of secret recordings of discussions between senior officials, politicians and businesspeople that are professed to indicate high-level state corruption in 2005-06. The files were posted on the internet after the collapse of the government. OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised corruption and economic crisis as the main campaign issues. They opined that following the corruption scandals the level of dissatisfaction and apathy among the voters is high, which might significantly affect the turnout on election day.

The election campaign is largely unregulated. The election law does not specify a date for the official start of the campaign. The law only stipulates that paid political advertisement can be broadcast starting from 21 days before election day. Municipalities should designate places for political parties to post their election posters no earlier than 21 days before election day. However, parties can also purchase places for outdoor campaigning and there is no time restriction for posting billboards and posters.

At the time of the OSCE/ODIHR NAM, some of parties had already started campaigning, mostly using commercial billboards and meeting with voters. A paid advertisement for one of the parties was broadcast by two of the main private TV channels. The party stated that the advertisement was social rather than political in nature. An official complaint over the ad was filed with the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission,<sup>11</sup> which informed the OSCE/ODIHR NAM that they have already initiated administrative proceedings.<sup>12</sup>

The media environment is pluralistic with a wide variety of commercial and public broadcasters as well as print media. In December 2010, the parliament adopted a law to merge public television, *Slovenská Televízia* (STV) and public radio, *Slovenský rozhlas* into the Radio and Television of Slovakia (RTVS). Most OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors opined that the merger was a political decision to, among other things, address concerns regarding the bias and impartiality of STV and its dependence on the ruling coalition. It was also noted that the merger aimed at tackling STV's financial problems. The main private broadcasters in terms of viewership are *Markiza* and *JOJ*. The following daily newspapers compete in Slovakia's print media market: tabloids *Nový Čas* and *Plus 1 Deň*, and daily papers *SME* and *Pravda*.

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<sup>10</sup> In Paragraph 7.5 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document the OSCE participating States commit to "respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination".

<sup>11</sup> The Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission consists of nine members appointed by the parliament.

<sup>12</sup> After its visit, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM learned that the Council fined TV *Markiza* 100,000 EUR and issued a warning to TV *JOJ* for violating legislation by broadcasting the ad. The Council reasoned this different approach by stating that it was the fourth case of similar nature for *Markiza*, while for TV *JOJ* it was the first case.



According to the Law on Broadcasting and Retransmission, broadcast media should ensure the universality of information and plurality of opinion, as well as objectivity and impartiality of news and current affairs programmes. The election law regulates the activities of broadcasters during the election campaign, according to which broadcasters, both public and private, should not allocate more than 30 minutes of paid time to each contesting party. In total, that time should not exceed 10 hours for all contesting parties. It should also be clearly marked as paid advertising. In addition, RTVS should allocate ten hours to parties for discussion programmes.

The Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission oversees broadcasters' activities and is responsible for ensuring objectivity and impartiality in news and current affairs programmes. The Council can act upon complaints as well as upon its own initiative. Complaints regarding equality in the allocation of broadcasting time, scheduling of paid ads and participation in debates are dealt with by the CEC. Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors thought the legal framework has gaps, which they thought might affect the Council's activities. It was particularly pointed out that although the Council is to ensure the objectivity of media, the law does not define 'objectivity' and, at times, the Council appeared to have been subjective in its decision making. Despite an OSCE/ODIHR recommendation from 2010 that the Council publicize its decisions, the Council informed the NAM that it continues not to do so.

Print media are self-regulating and have no restrictions during the campaign. In a positive development in 2011, the Press Act that required the publication of a rebuttal if an article contained facts that impinged on the honour, dignity or privacy of a person was amended. This act was criticized both by national and international organizations since it obliged media to publish reactions regardless of their truthfulness. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media recently commended Slovakia for having adopted important changes in the Press Act and mentioned that the amendments were "a significant improvement over prior legislation".<sup>13</sup>

## **G. PARTY AND CAMPAIGN FINANCING**

There are no limits on campaign expenditure. Political parties may receive revenues from a wide range of sources, including state subvention, private donations, bank loans, and membership fees. The financing of political parties is regulated by the Act on Political Movements and Political Parties.

Parties may receive state funding under certain conditions: contributions for votes received, contributions for party activity, and for seats in parliament. A political party that receives more than 3 per cent of the total number of valid votes is entitled to receive a state subvention for each vote received that is equal to 0.75 per cent of the average nominal salary. Parties eligible should also receive funding for party activity equivalent to this first sum. A party is also entitled to receive a yearly subvention for each parliamentary seat.<sup>14</sup> Parties can also receive private donations and free services. There is no limit to private donations.<sup>15</sup>

Political parties are required to submit interim and final reports on election-related expenses and annual party income and expenditure reports.<sup>16</sup> The interim report is submitted to the

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<sup>13</sup> See report of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Regular Report to the OSCE Permanent Council, 24 November 2011, at <http://www.osce.org/fom/85336>.

<sup>14</sup> For each seat up to the first 20, the party receives 30 times the average salary. For every subsequent seat the party receives 20 times the average salary.

<sup>15</sup> A 5,000 EUR cap on private donations refers only to donations received in cash.

<sup>16</sup> Annual reports are submitted to parliament every year by 30 April.

Ministry of Finance at least 21 days before election day and covers the period between the day of the announcement of elections and 30 days before election day. A final report is submitted to the Ministry of Finance within 30 days after election day and covers the period between the day of announcement of elections and election day. Reports are verified by the Ministry of Finance before publication. In case of failure to submit interim, final, or annual reports or to remedy identified deficiencies, the Ministry of Finance can impose a fine of 3,319 EUR on the party.

At the end of 2010, the Council of Europe's Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) in its interim compliance report on the Slovak Republic concluded that "no tangible progress has been achieved by the Slovak Republic" with regards to political party and campaign financing.<sup>17</sup> Among GRECO's recommendations that have yet to be addressed are the following: to require candidates to disclose all donations they have received in relation to their political activities; to provide a single body with a mandate and adequate resources to supervise and investigate party funding and election campaign finances; to introduce proportionate disclosure rules for expenditure incurred by entities outside the party structure, related directly or indirectly to the party, in connection with election campaigns.

Some OSCE/ODIHR NAM interlocutors opined that campaign financing lacks independent oversight and would benefit from greater transparency, especially in light of the current corruption scandal. Concerns were expressed by interlocutors that parties do not provide complete campaign finance data in their reports and that third-party expenditures during the campaign are not accounted for and lack regulation.

## H. PARTICIPATION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

According to the 2001 census, the largest minorities are Hungarians with 9.7 per cent of the population (over 520,000 people) and Roma with 1.7 per cent (about 90,000). However, according to some estimates, the actual number of Roma may be from 350,000 to 600,000.

Ethnic Hungarian parties are active in politics and two Hungarian parties are contesting these elections: *Most-Hid* and the Party of Hungarian Coalition (SMK). Roma are less involved in politics; one Roma party is running in these elections and eight Roma candidates are included in the candidate lists of other parties.

The use of ethnic stereotypes in campaigns, instances of intolerant rhetoric, and alleged vote buying in Roma communities were dominant in the 2010 elections. Many interlocutors voiced concern that Roma voters, who are exposed to poor socio-economic conditions, often low levels of education and social exclusion, continue to be linked to allegations of vote-buying.

After the 2010 parliamentary elections, the OSCE/ODIHR recommended that consideration be given to providing election-related information in minority languages, which would enhance overall understanding of the electoral process. The OSCE/ODIHR NAM was informed by the Ministry of Interior that for the upcoming elections, voter information will be also provided in minority languages. This is to comply with the 2011 amendments to the Language Law, according to which municipalities with more than 20 per cent minority population, official information should be available in the respective minority languages. The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities stated that "the latest amendments constitute a

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<sup>17</sup> See GRECO Third Evaluation Interim Compliance Report at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/greco/evaluations/round3/GrecoRC3%282010%293\\_Interim\\_Slovakia\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/greco/evaluations/round3/GrecoRC3%282010%293_Interim_Slovakia_EN.pdf).

considerable improvement. They alter the overall spirit of the Law, reduce unwarranted restrictions and limit the scope for the application of penalties.”<sup>18</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The OSCE/ODIHR NAM noted a marked confidence of the majority of its interlocutors in the integrity of the electoral process and in the professionalism and impartiality of the election administration. No significant concerns were expressed relating to the respect for fundamental freedoms, the transparency of the electoral process, candidate registration, media access and election day proceedings. Slight concerns were expressed regarding party and campaign financing, the campaign environment, and the participation of national minorities in elections.

During its assessment of the 2010 elections, these areas were specifically assessed by the OSCE/ODIHR EAM and a set of recommendations was provided. The OSCE/ODIHR NAM also noted that certain positive changes were introduced which are in line with previous OSCE/ODIHR recommendations. However, many OSCE/ODIHR recommendations from 2010 remain unaddressed. As no major changes have taken place since the 2010 parliamentary elections, an observation activity would not add significant value in the current context. Therefore, the OSCE/ODIHR NAM does not recommend an election-related activity for the 2012 early parliamentary elections. Efforts to harmonize and codify the electoral legislation should continue after the parliamentary elections. The OSCE/ODIHR stands ready to engage with the Slovak authorities in a follow-up process and to assist them in addressing these outstanding recommendations.

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<sup>18</sup> See the statement of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities to the 837th Plenary Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council at <http://www.osce.org/hcnm/73715>.

## **ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS**

### **State and Electoral Authorities**

#### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

Igor Bartho, Director General of Legal and Consular Affairs and Public Services

Juraj Priputen, Director of Human Rights, Council of Europe, OSCE and Minorities Department

Peter Bircak, Human Rights Department

#### **Ministry of Interior**

Lívia Škultétyová, Director of the Department of Elections and Referenda

#### **Statistics Office**

Štefan Tóth, Director General of the Section of Methodology and IT

Igor Lorenc, Director of Information Systems

Stefan Navratil, Crisis Management, IT Security and Classified Information

#### **Central Election Commission**

Péter Nyilfa, Chairperson of the CEC

#### **Ministry of Finance**

Milos Nosal, Director of Public Administration Budget Department

Martin Zemko, Public Administration Budget Department

### **Political Parties (in alphabetical order)**

#### **Christian-Democratic Movement (KDH)**

Pavol Kossey, Executive International Secretary

#### **Direction – Social Democracy (SMER)**

Robert Zanaly, member of the election campaign team

#### **Freedom and Solidarity Party (SaS)**

Juraj Droba, Vice Chairperson of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee

#### **Most-Híd Party**

Edita Pfundtner, Vice Chairperson of the Party, Member of the Parliament

Zoltan Bara, Foreign Affairs Advisor

#### **Ordinary People and Independent Personalities Movement**

Jozef Viskupič, Member of Parliament

Helena Mezenská, candidate

Miroslav Kadúč, candidate

Braňo Masarovič, campaign team

#### **Slovak Democratic and Christian Union – Democratic Party (SDKÚ)**

Lubica Nadasska, International Secretary

**Slovak National Party (SNS)**

Andrej Danko, First Vice Chairperson of the Party  
Rafael Rafaj, Member of Parliament, Party Faction Chairperson

**Media**

**Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission**

Ľuboš Kukliš, Head of the Office

**Radio and Television Slovakia (RTVS)**

Anna Sámelová, Director of News Centers of Radio and TV  
Slavomíra Kubíčková, Head of International Relations Department

***Markiza TV***

Lukáš Diko, Editor-in-Chief of Newsroom

***TV JOJ***

Roland Kubina, Editor-in-Chief of Newsroom

**SME newspaper**

Matúš Kostolný, Editor-in-Chief

**Civil Society**

**Civic Eye**

Peter Novotny, Election Expert

**Fair-Play Alliance**

Zuzana Wienk, Director

**Institute for Public Affairs**

Grigorij Mesežnikov, President  
Oľga Gyarfášová, Program Director, Senior Research Fellow

**MEMO 98**

Rasťo Kužel, Executive Director  
Ivan Godársky, Media and Legal Consultant

**Roma Institute**

Klára Orgovánová, Director