

Editorial Team: Grzegorz Gil (Director of ICE), Anton Saifullayeu (Deputy Director of ICE), Agnieszka Zajdel (Editorial Assistant), Spasimir Domaradzki, Bartłomiej Krzyszczan, Damian Szacawa, Agata Tatarenko

No. 1602 (107/2026) | 29.04.2026

ISSN 2657-6996
© IEŚ

Aida Topić*

From Election Results to Political Uncertainty: Coalition Formation after Slovenia's 2026 Elections

The 2026 parliamentary elections in Slovenia failed to produce a clear winner, thereby opening space for complex coalition negotiations. The narrow margin between the two leading parties, Svoboda and SDS, combined with their substantial ideological differences, constrains viable coalition options and contributes to heightened political uncertainty.

Election Results. According to the Slovenian Constitution, parliamentary elections are conducted under a proportional representation system, while the Prime Minister is elected by an absolute majority in the National Assembly¹. This institutional framework renders coalition governments a structural necessity rather than an exception. The most recent elections, held on 22 March 2026, illustrate both the fragmented nature of the Slovenian party system and the practical challenges of government formation. Official results indicate that the Freedom Movement (Svoboda) secured the largest share of votes (28.63%) and 29 seats, closely followed by the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), which obtained 27.95% and 28 seats. Several smaller parties also entered parliament with more limited representation: the NSi-SLS-Fokus bloc gained nine seats; SD and Demokrati secured six seats each; while Levica, Vesna, and Resni.ca each obtained five seats. These results account for 88 seats, which, together with two additional seats reserved for representatives of the Italian and Hungarian minorities, bring the total to 90. Consequently, a governing coalition must secure at least 46 seats to command a parliamentary majority.

The Strongest Parties in Slovenia. The 2026 elections were characterized by a highly competitive contest between broadly defined liberal (Svoboda, SD, Levica, Vesna) and conservative (SDS, NSi, SLS, Resni.ca) blocs, ultimately resulting in a complex and uncertain coalition-building process². A closer examination of party programmes reveals clear ideological distinctions. Svoboda promotes a liberal, inclusive, and pro-European agenda centered on individual freedoms, social responsibility, and sustainable development. In contrast, SDS combines economic liberalism with a strong emphasis on national identity, traditional values, and the role of an efficient state within the European framework³. Historically, SDS under the leadership of Janez Janša has held parliamentary dominance for approximately eight years across three non-consecutive terms (2004–2008, 2012–2013, and 2020–2022). Meanwhile, Robert Golob, leader of Svoboda, has served as Prime Minister since 2022, following his party's electoral victory⁴.

Post-Election Coalition Challenges. Recent scandals and shifting alliances have further reduced the number of viable coalition configurations, rendering some arrangements politically "almost impossible"⁵. Notably, the so-called "Black Cube" affair emerged shortly before the elections. It involved allegations that operatives of a private intelligence company – linked to the dissemination of compromising materials concerning Golob's government – had contacts with opposition leader Janez Janša. This episode deepened mistrust among political actors and

¹ Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, Art. 111

² Reuters. (2026, March 19). *Slovenia election pits liberals against populist right in tight race*.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/slovenia-election-pits-liberals-against-populist-right-tight-race-2026-03-19>

³ Gibanje Svoboda. (n.d.). *Vrednote in program*. <https://gibanjesvoboda.si/vrednote-in-program/>; Slovenska demokratska stranka. (2025). *Program Slovenske demokratske stranke*. <https://www.sds.si/program/program-slovenske-demokratske-stranke/>

⁴ Vlada Republike Slovenije. (n.d.). *Pretekle vlade*. <https://www.gov.si/drzavni-organi/vlada/o-vladi/pretekle-vlade/>

⁵ NI. (2026). *Rezultati izbora Slovenija: nemogoče opcije i političke okolnosti*. <https://n1info.rs/region/rezultati-izbora-slovenija-nemoguce-opcije-afere-black-cube/>

reinforced the reluctance of center-left parties to cooperate with SDS. Based purely on ideological alignment, potential coalition scenarios would likely emerge either within the center-left bloc (Svoboda, SD, Levica and/or Vesna, potentially with Demokrati) or within the center-right bloc (SDS together with NSi, SLS, Fokus, and possibly Resni.ca). However, coalition formation in practice is not determined solely by ideological proximity; strategic considerations and political rivalries play an equally important role. In reality, certain coalitions appear highly improbable. A partnership between SDS and major center-left parties, such as Svoboda, SD, or Levica, remains politically unfeasible, as these actors have explicitly rejected cooperation with Janša due to longstanding conflicts and ideological incompatibilities. The previous government, a center-left coalition led by Svoboda in alliance with SD and Levica, initially appeared a plausible model for continuation. However, post-election developments reveal the limitations of this option. On 20 April, Robert Golob confirmed that he had failed to secure sufficient support, particularly from center-right actors, to achieve a parliamentary majority⁶. The NSi party, for instance, categorically rejected participation in a Golob-led coalition, declaring that its nine MPs were “not available” for such an arrangement⁷. The fragmented distribution of seats enhances the importance of smaller parties. While the NSi–SLS–Fokus bloc (nine seats) is generally oriented toward cooperation with SDS, pivotal roles are played by smaller actors such as Resni.ca and Levica (five seats each), as well as Demokrati (six seats). The latter remains internally divided and is widely regarded as a potentially decisive actor capable of shaping multiple coalition scenarios. Following Golob’s unsuccessful efforts, the initiative to form a government has effectively shifted to SDS. Nevertheless, Janša has adopted a cautious stance, signaling no urgency to finalize a coalition and leaving open the possibility of early elections should a stable majority prove unattainable. These developments demonstrate that electoral outcomes in Slovenia do not automatically translate into effective governance; rather, they serve as a starting point for protracted negotiations that ultimately determine the composition of government.

Practical Implications. The implications of the election outcome extend beyond domestic coalition dynamics, particularly when contrasting the potential leadership of Janez Janša and Robert Golob. Golob’s continuation in office would signal policy continuity, especially in terms of Slovenia’s pro-European orientation and cooperative political style⁸. Conversely, a government led by Janša would likely mark a return to a more confrontational and polarized approach, both domestically and within the European Union. A key concern raised by various observers, including Golob himself, is that a stable Janša-led coalition could pursue policies reminiscent of those associated with Viktor Orbán, particularly in relation to tensions with EU institutions over rule-of-law issues. As a result, such a development has been described by some actors as a potential challenge to EU cohesion⁹. This polarization has been evident throughout the electoral campaign, effectively framing the main contenders as ideological opposites: one advocating a nationalist and confrontational approach, the other promoting a liberal, pro-European, and cooperative direction. Empirical observations further support this distinction. For instance, reports by Freedom House highlight differences in media conditions across successive governments. In the case of RTV Slovenia, earlier assessments pointed to political interference, restructuring of editorial governance, and declining journalistic independence under Janša, whereas subsequent evaluations indicated a comparatively improved media environment and a less confrontational climate under Golob’s administration¹⁰.

Conclusion. In sum, the outcome of Slovenia’s 2026 elections will be determined less by the electoral results themselves than by the dynamics of coalition negotiations. While the continuation of a center-left coalition

⁶ Le Monde with AFP. (2026, April 20). *Slovenian liberal Golob fails to form government*. Le Monde. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2026/04/20/slovenian-liberal-golob-fails-to-form-government_6752626_4.html

⁷ Božič, A. (2026, March 31). *Kdo bo sestavljal prihodnjo vlado – Golob, Janša ali kdo tretji?* 24ur. <https://www.24ur.com/novice/slovenija/kdo-bo-sestavljaj-prihodnjo-vlado-golob-jansa-ali-kdo-tretji.html>

⁸ Government of the Republic of Slovenia. (n.d.). *Dr Robert Golob*. <https://www.gov.si/en/state-authorities/prime-minister/dr-robert-golob/>

⁹ Politico. (2026, March 8). *The man who wants to kick off the fight against right-wing populism*. <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-fightback-right-wing-populism-slovenia-hungary-election/>

¹⁰ Freedom House. (2023). *Nations in Transit 2023: Slovenia*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/slovenia/nations-transit/2023>; Freedom House. (2024). *Nations in Transit 2024: Slovenia*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/slovenia/nations-transit/2024>

remains theoretically possible, recent developments suggest that this scenario is increasingly unlikely. Golob has acknowledged his inability to secure a parliamentary majority and appears prepared to transition into opposition.

At present, a center-right coalition led by Janez Janša appears the more plausible outcome, largely due to the support of the NSi-SLS-Fokus bloc. However, even this scenario remains contingent on the backing of smaller parties, particularly Demokrati and Resni.ca. Consequently, while SDS is best positioned to attempt government formation, its success ultimately depends on its capacity to secure sufficient support from these pivotal actors.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in the guest commentaries are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or official position of the Institute of Central Europe.

* Aida Topić is a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and European Studies. Currently, she is enrolled at the University of Maribor, completing her Master's degree in European Legal Studies. At the same time she is acting as an Intern at the Institute of European Studies at the University of Wrocław.