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THE 2020 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC FROM A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE³

Abstract

The subject of this article is the analysis of the 2020 parliamentary elections in the Slovak Republic from the point of view of the regional success of individual political entities. The authors refer the strong and weak areas of support for individual political parties, which gained more than five percent of the votes on a nationwide scale. As the Slovak Republic is considered as single constituency in the parliamentary elections, the results themselves do not literally indicate the areas with the strongest or weakest voter support. It is interesting to observe the extent of influence of the residence of the electoral leader, the ethnic composition of the population or the religiosity on the electoral behaviour. Equally interesting is the observation of the stability of electoral preferences, as we have witnessed largely different results in the 2020 parliamentary elections compared to the 2019 elections (presidential elections, as well as the European Parliament elections).

Key words: parliamentary elections, Slovak Republic, electoral gain, National Council of the Slovak Republic, regions.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The 2020 parliamentary elections in Slovakia brought several interesting results - not only at the national level, but at the regional level as well. The aim of this article is to look at these results in terms of the distribution of political entities at the level of higher territorial units and especially the districts. Thus, to describe the regional stratification while pointing out the strong and weak regions of individual political parties which were running in these elections.

The results of these parliamentary elections brought a fundamental change in the current distribution of political powers. If we observe this while taking the results of all individual parliamentary elections since the 1993 establishment of independent Slovak Republic into account, we will find that although it was the eighth election, the winner was only the third political entity. After HZDS and SMER-SD, the third winner was an entity which does not share many common features with classic political parties (Brix 2018, Horváth, 2017). The winning political entity itself had a complex structure. Officially, it was a group consisting of OBYČAJNÍ LUDIA a nezávislé osobnosti (further only OĽANO), NOVA, Kresťanská únia (KÚ) and ZMENA ZDOLA. Thus, 150 names met together on the list of candidates, while their political identity was too broad and difficult to define. For the first time ever, a political entity which did not place itself within any of the classic political party families was the winning one. In essence, their list of candidates has merged the independent candidates, who were connected only by the effort to obtain a parliamentary mandate. Hence, even in the previous elections in which they participated; their parliamentary group was not a stable entity at all (Mikuš, 2018). As the primary aim of this article is not to address the ideological distinctiveness of running political entities, it is sufficient to mention that the chairman of the OĽANO party and the future prime minister did not run from the first, but deliberately from the last place on the list of candidates (150th place).

Table 1 Results of the 2020 parliamentary elections (% of gain and number of seats), electoral gain over 3%

Name	Electoral gain (%)	Number of votes gained	Number of parliamentary seats gained	Position after elections
OĽANO-NOVA-KÚ-ZMENA ZDOLA	25,02	721 166	53	government, prime minister
SMER-SD	18,29	527 172	38	opposition
SME RODINA	8,24	237 531	17	government
Kotlebovci – Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko	7,97	229 660	17	opposition
PS/SPOLU Coalition	6,96	200 780	0	outside NR SR
SaS	6,22	179 246	13	government
ZA ĽUDÍ	5,77	166 325	12	government
KDH	4,65	134 099	0	outside NR SR
MKÖ – MKS	3,90	112 662	0	outside NR SR
SNS	3,16	91 171	0	outside NR SR
DOBRÁ VOĽBA	3,06	88 220	0	outside NR SR

Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

If we take a closer look at Table 1 we can say that in addition to the new winner, the last parliamentary elections brought the new situation as well - when political entity which gained over 5 percent of votes did not win any seats in parliament for the first time in the history of Slovak political system. This is due to the electoral clause for the candidate coalition, which is set for an electoral gain over seven percent (Bardovič, 2018). For example, the victorious political party demonstrated the overcome of this increased limit. It should be emphasized here, that the fact that PS-SPOLU coalition did not make it into parliamentary seats had caused that more than 200,000 votes were discarded - which is unparalleled in electoral history of our parliamentary elections. It is interesting to note that in 2019 the elections of the President of the Slovak Republic and the elections to the European Parliament took place, where the winner of both elections was the coalition

of Progresívne Slovensko and Spolu. This coalition gained more than 20% of the votes in the May 2019 European elections, and OĽANO remained just above the electoral threshold (5.25%). After nine months, their positions were practically reversed. Similarly, KDH did not defend its position (9.69% vs. 4.65%). On the contrary, for the SME RODINA party, the key nomination was the party chairman Boris Kollár (3.23% vs. 8.24%). The look at Table 2 will certainly be interesting, as it gives an overview of the previous winners of the parliamentary elections in Slovakia since the establishment of the Slovak Republic (Blašková, Košťál, Novák, 2020).

Table 2 Overview of the winners of the elections to the National Council of the Slovak Republic (% of gain and number of seats) in the years 1994 – 2020

elections	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2012	2016	2020
voter turnout in %	75,66	84,25	70,07	54,67	58,54	59,11	59,82	65,80
elections winner	HZDS-RSS	HZDS	HZDS	SMER-SD	SMER-SD	SMER-SD	SMER-SD	OĽANO
gain in %	34,96	27,00	19,50	29,14	34,79	44,41	28,28	25,02
gap between the first two places	24,55	0,67	4,41	10,79	19,37	35,39	16,18	6,73
number of seats	61	43	36	50	62	83	49	53
% of seats	40,67	28,67	24,0	33,34	41,33	55,33	32,67	35,33
position after elections	government	opposition	opposition	Government	opposition	government	government	government

Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

The 2020 elections resulted in the fourth highest turnout since 1993, the second highest in this century. The winning political entity had the second lowest electoral gain, with literally every fourth participant voting for them. Accordingly, the difference between the first and second most successful entity was the third lowest. Due to the exclusion of the results of the PS/SPOLU coalition, the winning political party had a higher share of seats in parliament compared to its real electoral gain by 10 percent. Based on these results, a coalition majority of the parties OĽANO, SME RODINA, SaS and ZA ĽUDÍ was formed in the National Council of the Slovak Republic, which even had a constitutional majority with 95 seats out of 150 in total.

2 VOTER TURNOUT

One of the important parameters of the legitimacy of election results of the parliamentary elections is the participation of eligible voters themselves. The level of turnout expresses the interest of citizens in the administration of public affairs. On the one hand, the parameter of high turnout of eligible voters reflects an interest in the elections as an institute. On the other hand, it also reflects an increased degree of voter dissatisfaction with current development. Hence, it is no coincidence that the highest voter turnout so far was reported in the 1990 national parliament elections. These first democratic elections since 1946 reported a turnout of over 95% of eligible voters. All in all, participation essentially had a declining trend since then. (1992 - 84%, 1994 - 75%, 1998 - 84%, 2002 - 70%, 2006 - 54%, 2010 - 58%, 2012 - 59%, 2016 - 59%) (Horváth, 2017).

Therefore, if we look at the voter turnout in the 2020 parliamentary elections, the level of 65.80% is the highest number amid the last five elections. Thus, political entities running in these elections were able to increase citizens' interest in the administration of public affairs. Even at the end of the election campaign, these elections became a referendum on the operation of SMER-SD party, which has been dominant since 2006 - with the exception of 2010 – 2012 period and had always held the post of Prime Minister (Robert Fico and Peter Pellegrini). Such question about the current government, respectively about the main political party within, was also the reason of increased turnout in 1998 elections for example - dispute over HZDS and Vladimír Mečiar, as well as SDKÚ and Mikuláš Dzurinda in 2002 elections. We are not taking the natural increase of interest in the first two elections into account, the 1990 and 1992 parliamentary elections. It was the winning political entity of Igor Matovič (the coalition around OĽANO), which gained the most from this clash as a result (Richvalský, Machyniak, Gut'an, 2020).

Table 3 Voter turnout in 2020 parliamentary elections from the point of view of self-governing regions

Self-governing region	Turnout (%)
Bratislava Region	73,05
Trnava Region	66,93
Trenčín Region	69,49
Nitra Region	63,23
Žilina Region	70,45
Banská Bystrica Region	62,53

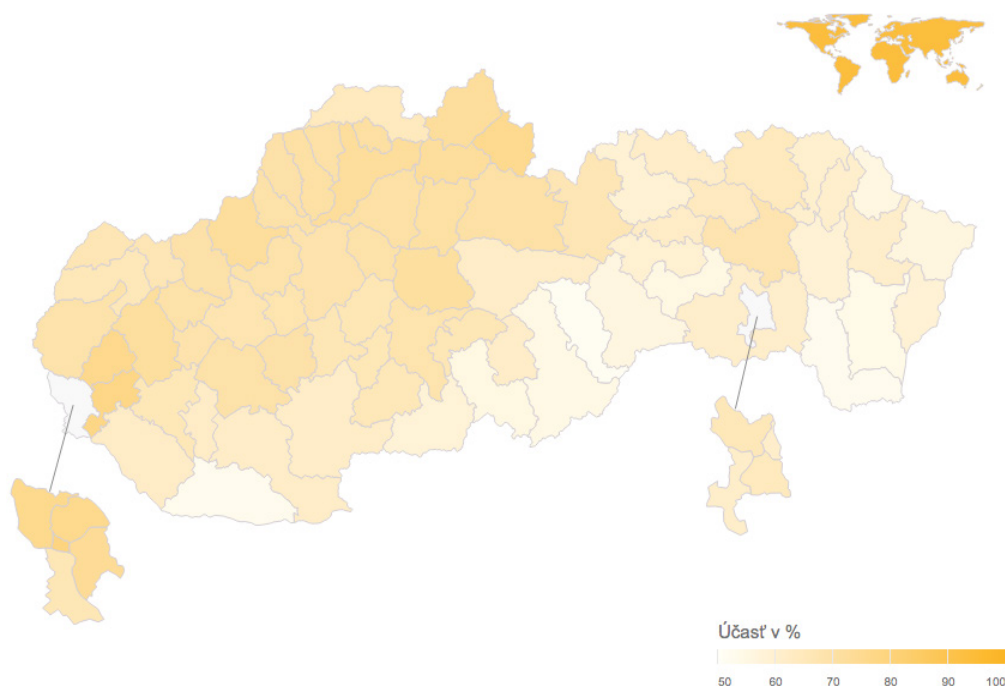
Prešov Region	62,99
Košice Region	58,65
SR	65,80

Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

As seen in Table 3, differences in voter turnout can be observed at the level of individual regions. The three of four regions in western Slovakia are above the national turnout (except Nitra), and the highest turnout was in the agglomeration of the capital itself. In terms of the gain of political parties, this region was the most successful for the parties PS/SPOLU, SaS and ZA ĽUDÍ. Perhaps surprisingly, the second one was the Žilina region, which may be related to the fact that in addition to parliamentary political entities in this region, the parties SMER-SD (district of Čadca), KDH (districts of Námestovo, Tvrdošín and Dolný Kubín) and ĽSNS (district of Čadca) had great support as well. The third one in terms of voter turnout was the Trenčín region, where the parties SMER-SD (districts of Partizánske, Prievidza and Bánovce nad Bebravou) and SME RODINA (districts of Bánovce nad Bebravou and Prievidza) achieved above-standard election results. The Trnava region was also above the national average by more than one percent, becoming the electoral base of the winning political entity. In this region we also find the three districts with the strongest electoral support for this political entity within entire Slovak Republic, the districts of Skalica, Trnava and Senica – in this order. No other parliamentary political entity had an increased share of electoral support in this region. If we look at the electoral gain of parties and coalitions in the range of 3 - 5 percent (i.e. without seats in parliament, but with financial compensation for votes obtained), the MKÖ-MKS party received the highest support in this region, especially in the district with large group of population reporting to the Hungarian nationality - Dunajská Streda (the highest support for this entity within the districts in the whole Slovakia). The lowest voter turnout in terms of regions was reported in the Košice region (58.65 percent). Even in this case, however, it was the participation of an absolute majority of all eligible voters in the territory (more than a half), which does not deviate from the positive trend in the end. Despite the fact that the Košice region is bordering with the territory of Hungary and Ukraine, only in the district of Rožňava was the MKÖ-MKS party successful above the standard.

Hence, if we are to summarize the turnout from the point of view of individual districts, the highest turnout was in the district of Bratislava I (78.75%), the second and third place were taken by the neighbours of the capital - Senec (76.94%) and Pezinok (75.70%). The fourth and fifth places

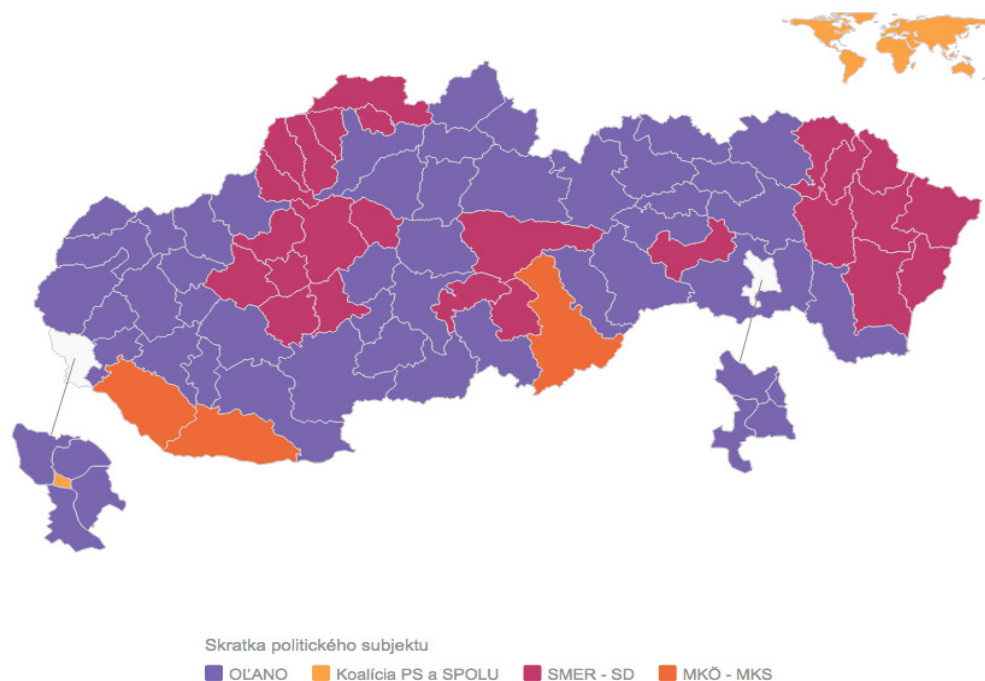
were taken by the districts within Bratislava again - Bratislava IV (75.61%) and Bratislava V (75.60%). On the opposite end of the table we found four districts from eastern part of Slovakia, the worst being the district of Revúca (51.34%), followed by Trebišov (52.24), Rimavská Sobota (52.42%) and Michalovce (53.82%). Among them, the Komárno district finished in the fourth and worst place (52.75%).



Source: Štatistický úrad SR

3 ELECTION RESULTS

Table 1 shows the election results at the national level. In the next part of the article, we will take a closer look at these results in terms of individual regions and regional cities. We will also define the most important electoral bases for each relevant political entity, as well as the least successful districts in terms of ballots obtained.



Source: Štatistický úrad SR

Map 2 shows the winners of the parliamentary elections at the level of individual Slovak districts. Although there was a clear winner in these elections in the form of OĽANO, it was not such uniform in the individual districts. Up to four political entities shared the status of a winner at this level. Certainly the most interesting moment was the victory of non-parliamentary coalition PS/SPOLU with gain of 23.61 percent in the district of Bratislava I, which forms the historical center of the capital. Less surprising are the results in districts of Dunajská Streda (43.01%), Komárno (41.09%) and Rimavská Sobota (17.16%), where the political entity representing the Hungarian minority is regularly very successful. For the SMER-SD party, the districts of the Trenčín and Žilina regions were the electoral bases. However, in eastern Slovakia, the districts bordering with Poland and Ukraine - which belong to the least developed regions of Slovakia, were in such position. The district of Medzilaborce was the most successful one (34.22%). In central Slovakia, within the Banská Bystrica region, the districts of Poltár (27.75%), Detva (26.27%) and Brezno (22.55%) were the most successful ones for this political party.

Table 4 Results of 2020 parliamentary elections – votes sent from abroad

Political entity	Electoral gain (%)
PS/SPOLU	33,30
ZA ĽUDÍ	27,11
OLANO	14,11
SaS	8,75
Kotlebovci – Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko	4,52
KDH	2,82
SMER-SD	2,37
VLAŠŤ	2,03
SME RODINA	1,46

Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

In these parliamentary elections it was also interesting to watch the results of voting from abroad. Despite a relatively strong media campaign, only 3 825 voters actively participated in this process. Paradoxically, in this partial vote, the entity which got no seats in the National Council won with a share of one third of votes - the PS/SPOLU coalition. The party ZA ĽUDÍ was in the second place, which hardly got into the parliament in the classic form (27.11%) The overall winner OLANO was in the third place (14.11%). If the votes sent from abroad decided exclusively, the parties SMER-SD, SME RODINA and ĽSNS would remain outside the gates of parliament.

Table 5 Results of 2020 parliamentary elections on the regional level – entities over 5%

Region	OLANO	SMER-SD	SME RODINA	ĽSNS	PS/SPOLU	SaS	ZA ĽUDÍ
B.Bystrica	21,68	20,41	9,25	10,62	6,27	5,47	4,85
Bratislava	26,32	12,04	6,42	4,62	14,24	12,26	9,18
Košice	26,28	17,54	8,36	7,76	5,46	5,19	6,51
Nitra	23,03	17,76	8,28	7,36	5,16	4,95	4,32
Prešov	25,63	20,99	8,39	8,50	4,37	4,08	6,15
Trenčín	23,97	23,44	9,82	9,23	6,57	5,64	4,55
Trnava	28,08	14,58	7,37	6,59	5,98	5,35	4,67
Žilina	24,94	20,58	8,52	9,71	6,02	5,59	4,72

SR	25,02	18,29	8,24	7,97	6,96	6,22	5,77
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Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

In the following part, we will look at the results of the 2020 parliamentary elections from the perspective of political entities which gained at least 5 percent (we also include the PS/SPOLU coalition here, with a gain of 6.96%, although this coalition did not get any seats in parliament due to the electoral clause in the end), taking the results of all eight regions into account. Here we will also find the reasons for the success/failure of individual candidates in more detail. Although the PS/SPOLU coalition did not get over the required electoral threshold of seven percent very closely, it is no longer such an optimistic result with regional results taken into account. Only in one region (Bratislava) did this coalition topped this threshold - in all the other regions it was unsuccessful from this point of view - whether more (Prešov, Nitra) or less (Trenčín, Banská Bystrica). The most balanced results were achieved by OĽANO, with a total electoral gain of 25.02%. The variance is very small - the least in Banská Bystrica region with 21.68%, the most in Trnava region with 28.08%. Thus, in each region, the winner of the election received the largest number of ballots from the voters. The candidate from the second place, SMER-SD party, has not gained this position in every region. The smallest difference between the first two entities was in the Trenčín region (only 0.53%), while the largest difference was already in the Bratislava region (14.28%). The SMER-SD was altered in the second place by two opponents at the regional level - the right-wing parties PS-SPOLU (by 2.2%) and SaS (by 0.22%), which were more successful in the Bratislava region. Apart from Bratislava, Sme rodina party from the third place was also less successful in the regions of Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Žilina (being always outrun by ĽSNS). Thus, the overall order of success of parliamentary entities has remained same in the cases of Nitra, Trenčín and Trnava regions (although in some regions, some political parties did not obtain the required 5%).

Table 6 Results of 2020 parliamentary elections in the regional cities – entities over 5%

Regional city	OĽANO	SMER-SD	SME RODINA	ĽSNS	PS/SPOLU	SaS	ZA ĽUDÍ
B.Bystrica	23,53	20,13	8,46	6,74	10,90	9,26	7,55
Bratislava	24,25	11,53	5,61	4,13	16,22	13,49	10,04
Košice	28,31	14,19	8,40	5,47	8,64	8,38	9,67
Nitra	25,81	19,69	8,05	7,67	7,96	8,77	6,30
Prešov	28,35	16,44	7,88	5,71	7,68	6,44	8,32
Trenčín	26,81	18,27	7,96	5,52	9,91	8,61	7,68
Trnava	34,26	17,34	7,10	7,06	8,38	7,65	5,26
Žilina	27,09	17,55	7,43	6,76	8,99	9,04	6,91

SR	25,02	18,29	8,24	7,97	6,96	6,22	5,77
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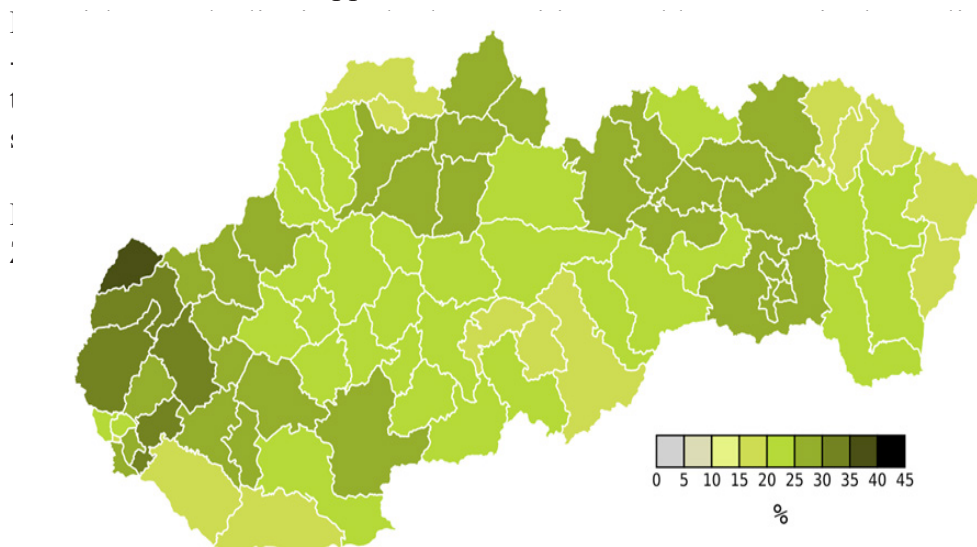
Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

The look at the results of 2020 parliamentary elections through the electoral gain of individual political parties at the level of regional cities will be interesting as well. Despite the fact, that only one fifth of all Slovaks live within them (20.64%), regional cities are the natural centers of regions. Significant economic, educational and cultural capacity of the country is concentrated within them. Therefore, it will be interesting to monitor similarities and differences between the regional results and the results of regional city itself (Table 5). Comparing the last two tables – Table 4 and 5, we can state that there is no difference considering the winner of 2020 parliamentary elections, the entity won at both examined levels. The victorious entity was most successful in the regional city of Trnava, with electoral gain of 34.26%. However, this result was quite logical, as the city of Trnava is home of the most prominent representatives of this entity (Igor Matovič as current Prime Minister, as well as his cousin Jozef Viskupič, who won the chair of the self-governing region in last regional elections). For the first time in the modern political history of Slovakia, the winning political entity had its headquarters outside the capital (sports hall in Trnava) during the count of the votes casted at the parliamentary elections. The results from the regional level were confirmed in the case of the capital city (Bratislava) as well, where the SMER-SD party placed fourth. of The results of the eventually extra-parliamentary coalition PS/SPOLU at the level of regional cities are equally interesting. Being successful in single region at the regional level, at the level of regional cities it always topped the required 7% threshold. In Bratislava and Banská Bystrica it was a double-digit result, in the case of Trenčín slightly less. The lowest electoral gain of this entity was in the cities of Prešov and Nitra. Taking all regional cities into account, it gained more votes than the ĽSNS party and, apart from Nitra, more than SME RODINA as well. Returning to the overall second political entity, SMER-SD, its results are also interesting. Although the regions of Trenčín and Prešov are the main electoral bases on a regional level, at the level of regional cities they gained the most votes in the cities of Banská Bystrica and Nitra. Less surprising is their gain in the capital. In comparison with the regional level, SME RODINA party had smaller share of votes in each regional city. On the contrary, the parties SaS and ZA ĽUDÍ gained a larger share of votes in each regional city than at the level of entire region.

4 RESULTS OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL POLITICAL ENTITIES IN 2020 ELECTIONS AT THE LEVEL OF DISTRICTS

OEANO, NOVA, Kresťanská únia (KÚ), ZMENA ZDOLA

The winning political entity in the 2020 parliamentary elections has gained above 15% of votes in every district in Slovakia. From the geographical point of view, we can divide its highest and lowest support within the axis of the westernmost and easternmost districts of Slovakia, but also into the districts with practically none, i.e., lowest representation of the Hungarian minority. The three districts of the Trnava region, Skalica (38.69%), Trnava (34.01%) and Senica (32.12%), finished within the first five places with the highest support. The other two places were taken by the districts from the Bratislava region, Malacky (32.05%) and Senec (30.24%). On the contrary, the lowest share of valid ballots was recorded in the east of Slovakia - in the district of Medzilaborce (15.26%), while the district of Snina finished in fifth place (17.93%). The districts of Dunajská Streda (16.12%), Rimavská Sobota (16.96%) and Komárno (17.61%) placed second to fourth within the districts with lowest support for OEANO. It can be noted here that in the



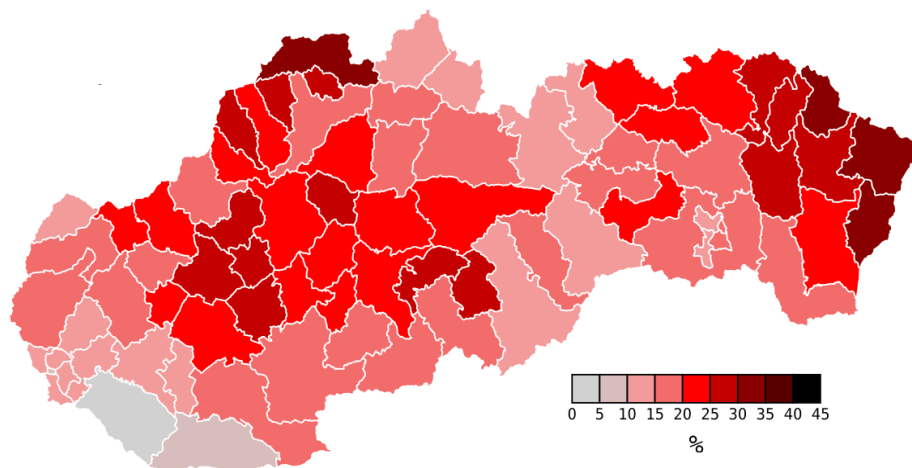
Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

SMER – sociálna demokracia

The strongest entity in the previous governing coalition, the SMER-SD party, has entered the election campaign as a relatively clear favorite to overall

victory. However, during the campaign it lost a lot in a strong anti-campaign from virtually all other entities, thus failing to defend the continuous electoral victories from 2006, 2010, 2012 and 2016 elections. In the end, this party was victorious in 25 districts. It remains interesting that it gained the largest electoral victory in the Medzilaborce district (34.22%), where the winner of the election, OĽANO party, gained the least ballots of all districts. The second and third places amid the most successful districts were also taken by the easternmost parts of Slovakia - by districts of Snina (33.19%) and Sobrance (31.66%). In two other places, there were the districts of Čadca (in north) and Nitra (in the Topoľčany region). The Topoľčany region (28.95%) is also the birthplace of the party's chairman Robert Fico. On the contrary, this party was least successful in Dunajská Streda district (3.92%), which was also the single Slovak district where the party would not get any seats in parliament. The districts of Komárno (6.23%), Bratislava I (9.04%), Senec (10.07%) and Bratislava III (11.38%) belong to the five least successful districts as well.

Map 4 Electoral gain of SMER-SD party on the level of districts



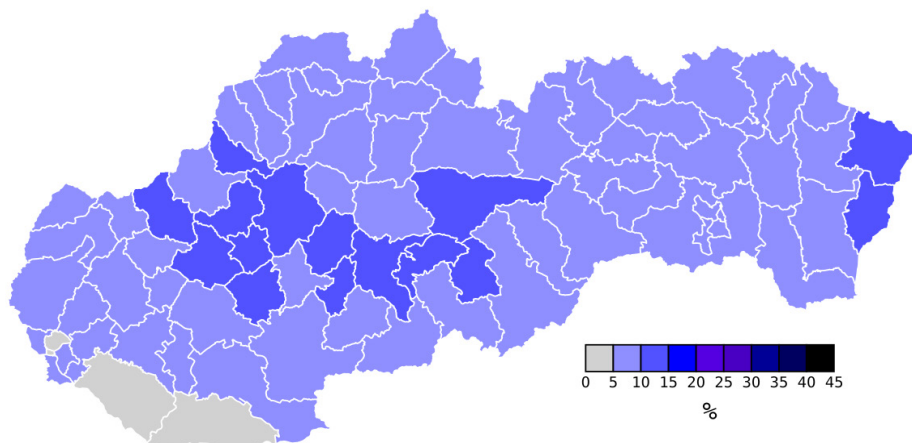
Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

SME RODINA

Boris Kollár's party SME RODINA has become the third most successful political entity. This entity defines itself as a non-standard political party, whose only interests are citizens and traditional family especially. This is probably related to the fact, that among its prominent representatives are also politicians who actively participated in the unsuccessful referendum

on the preservation of the traditional family concept. The 2019 presidential elections brought a clear proof, that chairman Boris Kollár is main dominant figure within this party and no other politician from this entity has sufficient political position (ZDROJ: DAJO, Blašková). In terms of the results, this party has a relatively balanced representation in individual districts, yet weaknesses in the capital - the weakest result was recorded in the first district of Bratislava (3.43%), followed by southernmost districts of western Slovakia Dunajská Streda (3.66%) and Komárno (3.67%). This party ended out of the parliament in another district of capital city as well - Bratislava III (4.81%). The five least successful districts are completed by the district on the opposite side of Slovakia, Medzilaborce (5.54%).

Map 5 Electoral gain of SME RODINA party on the level of districts



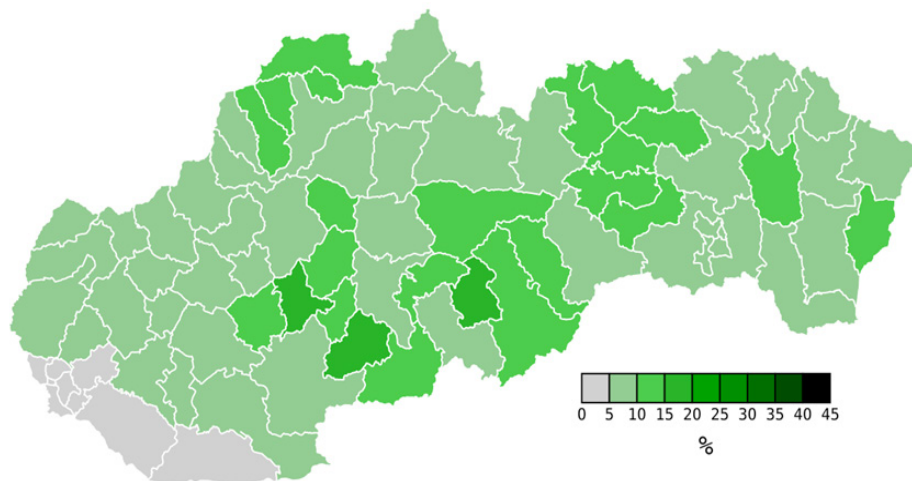
Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

Kotlebovci - Eudová strana Naše Slovensko

Probably the only parliamentary political party with coalition potential at the zero levels in a long-term is the party of Marián Kotleba. Practically, the only significant political success of this party was the obtaining of the chairman mandate of the Banská Bystrica region in the period of 2013 - 2017. In this region as well, the party has the strongest support, together with two eastern districts (Snina and Sobrance). The highest share of votes was gained in Krupina (17.03%), Poltár (15.14%), Žarnovica (15.14%) and Gelnica (14.45%). The fifth place was occupied by the district in the north of Slovakia - Čadca (13.53%). On the contrary, the least support was received in

the districts of the capital city and in the south of western Slovakia. The least amount of votes for this entity was received in following districts, under the parliamentary threshold of 5 percent in all cases - Dunajská Streda (1.41%), Komárno (2.91%), Bratislava I (2.96%), Bratislava II (3.86%) and Bratislava III (4.01%).

Map 6 Electoral gain of Kotlebovci – Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko party on the level of districts

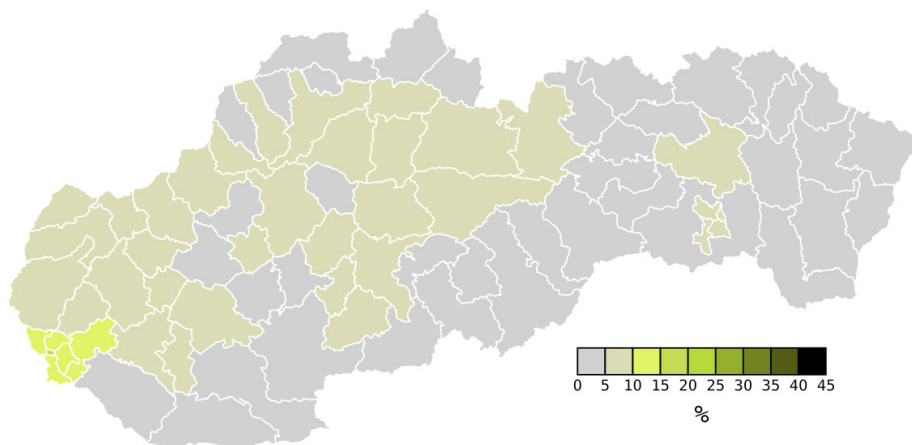


Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

Sloboda a Solidarita

Liberal political entity SaS has been regularly successful in parliamentary elections since its establishment in 2009. Coincidentally, similarly to the non-parliamentary PS/SPOLU coalition, this entity was most successful in the capital city, where all five capital's districts were the most successful constituencies at the same time - Bratislava I (15.03%), Bratislava III (13.91%), Bratislava II (13.74%), Bratislava IV (13.27%) and Bratislava V (12.54%) in respective order. The only district outside the Bratislava with double-digit support was the Senec district (11.19%). Thus, it has been shown again, that capital city is a stable political base of right-wing political entities. On the contrary, the three least successful districts were districts in the east - Sobrance (2.28%), Trebišov (2.48%) and Vranov nad Topľou (2.50%). Other regions were Revúca (2.51%) and Námestovo (2.60%). Results remained below the three percent mark in the districts of Komárno (2.82%) and Dunajská Streda (2.95%) as well.

Map 7 Electoral gain of SaS party on the level of districts

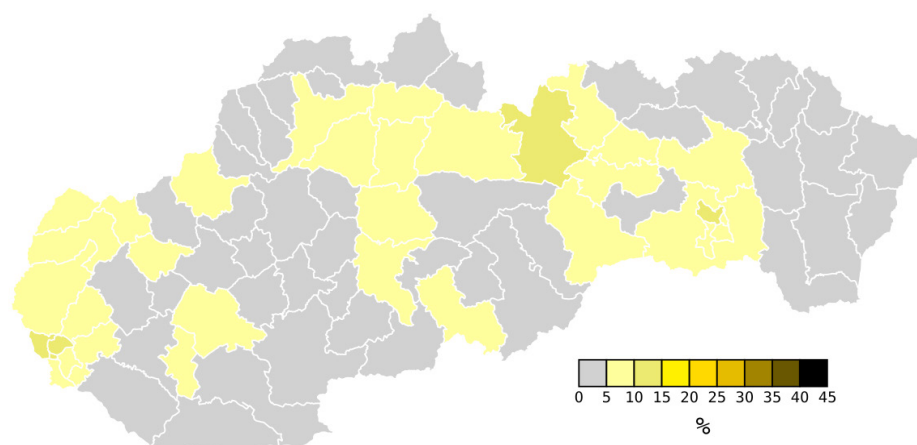


Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

ZA ĽUDÍ

The party ZA ĽUDÍ was a political newcomer in the 2020 parliamentary elections, impaired by limited management of its election campaign. In the end, its most significant advantage - the party's founder Andrej Kiska (president of the Slovak Republic in the period of 2014 - 2019), had ultimately also become its most significant burden. There was a very strong anti-campaign against him, especially by his former political opponent in the 2014 presidential elections, Robert Fico. Although it is relatively difficult to grasp the ideological definition of this party, it can be characterized as a right-wing subject rather inclined to traditional values - although several representatives and current members of parliament can be classified as a liberal-oriented. From a geographical point of view, this definition was reflected in the fact that the greatest support was registered in the district of Bratislava I (12.67%), followed by the birthplace of party chairman Andrej Kiska in Poprad (10.79%) and traditional bases of right-wing entities as well - respectively Bratislava III (10.33%), Bratislava IV (10.23%) and Košice I (10.14%). The least successful districts are interesting due to the fact, that all of them belong to the regions of central Slovakia - Čadca (2.43%), Kysucké Nové Mesto (2.62%), Bytča (3.05%), Topoľčany (3.06%) and Rimavská Sobota (3.15%). It is certainly interesting that in the aforementioned southern district of Dunajská Streda they gained more votes than the SMER-SD party (4.04 vs. 3.92%).

Map 8 Electoral gain of ZA ĽUDÍ party on the level of districts



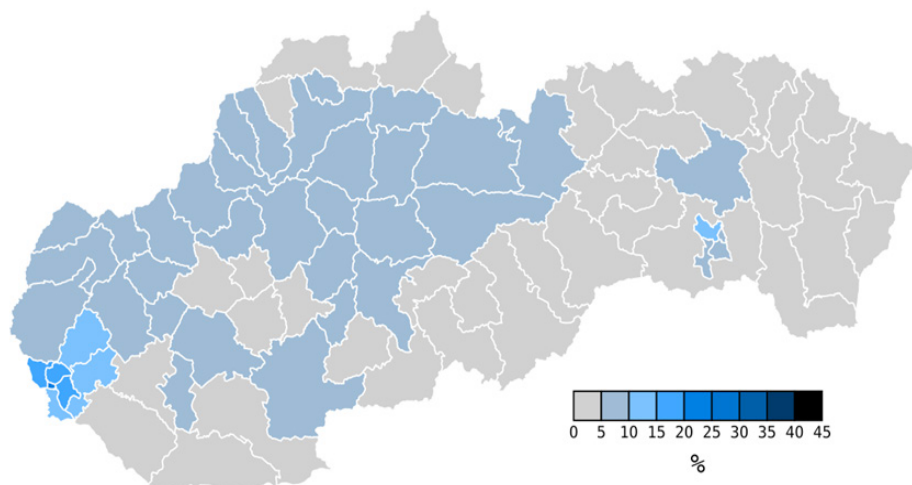
Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

Progresívne Slovensko and SPOLU – občianska demokracia coalition

The 2020 parliamentary elections have shown the first case of a particular situation - when running political entity gained more than five percent of the ballots, yet did not get any parliamentary seats. The PS/SPOLU coalition had to obtain at least seven percent of the votes, because it did not create the type of electoral political party which would be created ad hoc for the purpose of entering parliament at the level of five percent. The political leaders of both entities, Michal Truban and Miroslav Beblavý, did not manage their positions well and relied mostly on the success of the 2019 presidential election (overall victory of PS vice-chair Zuzana Čaputová), as well as the success in 2019 European Parliament elections, which brought them a total of 4 seats. The fragmentation of political powers and the failure to form a great coalition with the KDH and ZA ĽUDÍ parties, along with less convincing election campaign, had ultimately resulted in a drop of 200 780 votes. Their electoral success was largely impaired as the increased electoral support was registered only in the Bratislava and Košice regions. In the district of Bratislava I, they were the most successful political party in general - with a gain of 23.61%. The five most successful districts were exclusively the five districts of the capital city (ranging between 17.08 - 13.98%). The first most successful district outside Bratislava was the district of Pezinok (11.31%), where the head of state lived. They also obtained a double-digit result in the districts of Košice I (10.53%) and Senec (10.33%). On the contrary, a significant drop

was recorded in the east of Slovakia, where they received the least votes, such as: Sobrance (2.48%), Trebišov (3.03%), Stará Ľubovňa (3.05%), Vranov nad Topľou (3.07%) and Snina (3.12%).

Map 9 Electoral gain of PS/SPOLU coalition on the level of districts



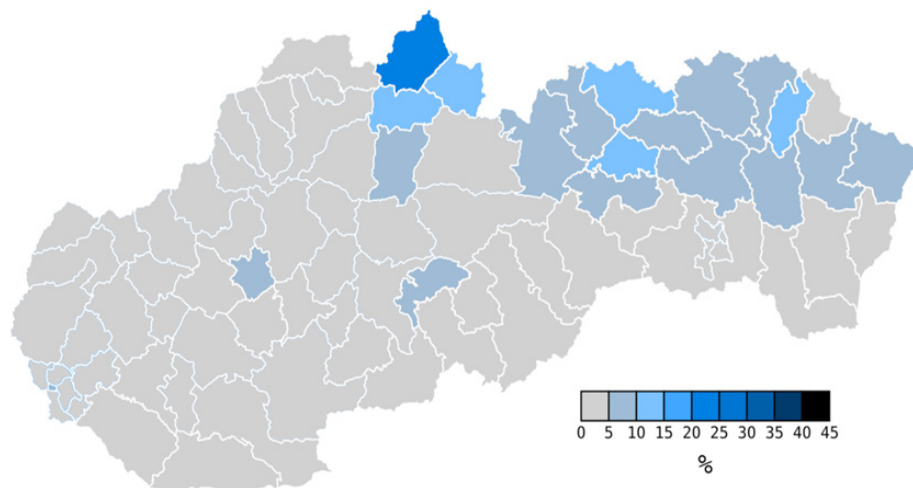
Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie

The KDH party was another political entity that did not repeat the relative success of the 2019 European elections (winning 2 seats). Although there may be several causes, two of them are the most important. The first one is the political ambiguity of former party chairman Alojz Hlina, who did not sufficiently explain the long-term „relations“ with the more liberal-oriented PS/SPOLU coalition. This whole project eventually failed and KDH joined the elections as a traditional representative of conservative values. The second reason was the unmanaged election campaign, which was impaired by fights with former party colleagues who joined OĽANO. In addition, the OĽANO leader Igor Matovič was constantly trying to gain the voters of KDH, which was successful in the end. KDH was also harmed by losing its traditional voter bases, such as the districts of Trnava and Nitra. They only remained accordingly successful in the Orava region and in the north of eastern Slovakia. The most successful district was Námestovo (22.35%), followed by Tvrdošín (13.50%), Levoča (12.5%), Stará Ľubovňa (11.35%) and Dolný Kubín (11.06%). However, it especially failed in southern Slovakia - the weakest results were obtained in the districts of Komárno (0.46%), Dunajská Streda

(0.59%), Rožňava (0.99%), Rimavská Sobota (1.07%) and Myjava (1,21%).

Map 10 Electoral gain of KDH party on the level of districts

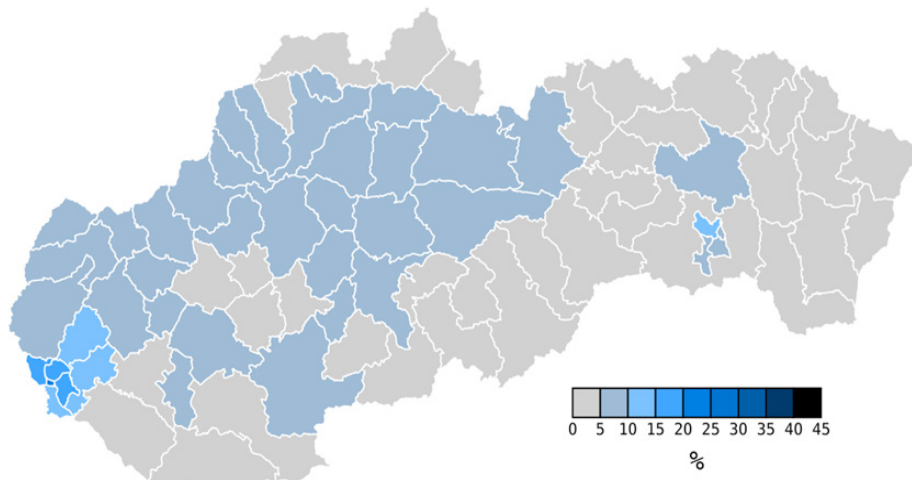


Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

Magyar Közösségi Összefogás - Mad'arská komunitná spolupatričnosť

The MKÖ-MKS is a typical political party representing the interests of a certain minority, in this case the citizens of Hungarian nationality. Therefore, their geographical distribution of voter support is strictly linked to the areas where this minority is present. The inability of the Hungarian minority leaders to form a mutual entity resulted into the absence of a political party belonging to the Hungarian minority in parliament for the first time. Although the MKÖ-MKS party was more successful than Béla Bugár's MOST-HÍD in the end, it does not change the electoral failure. In terms of success, it can be stated that they became the absolute winner in the territory of three districts - Dunajská Streda (43.01%), Komárno (41.09%) and Rimavská Sobota (17.16%). The five most successful districts are completed by the districts of Nové Zámky (17.74%) and Rožňava (16.26%). On the contrary, only 1 vote was gained in the district of Stropkov, 2 votes in the districts of Bánovce nad Bebravou and Gelnica, and 3 votes in both Stará Ľubovňa and Snina (ranging between 0.00 - 0.01%).

Map 11 Electoral gain of MKÖ-MKS party on the level of districts

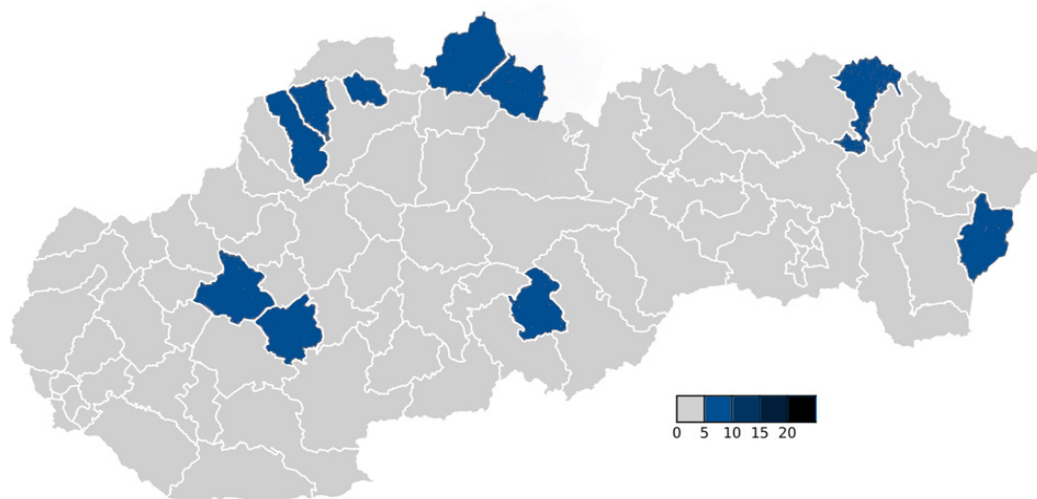


Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

Slovenská národná strana

The SNS is the last political party that managed to gain five percent of ballots in at least one district. However, this historically oldest political party did not gain the necessary support and despite its position in the former government, it was unable to defend the status of a parliamentary political party. Even with this entity, we can see a fundamental difference in support between the northern and southern part of Slovakia. They fought regionally in the traditional regions of Orava and Kysuce – the districts of Tvrdošín (6.89%) and Kysucké Nové Mesto (6.67%). The five most successful districts are completed by Svidník (6.45%), Bytča (5.61%) and Považská Bystrica (5.43%). On the contrary, the SNS party was the least successful in the south of western Slovakia and in the capital city – the districts of Dunajská Streda (0.47%), Komárno (0.90%), Bratislava I (1.57%), Senec (1.78%) and Bratislava II (1.83%). It is also worth mentioning the fact that this party did not manage to gain at least four percent of the votes in any regional city.

Map 12 Electoral gain of SNS party on the level of districts



Source: data processed according to Štatistický úrad SR

5 CONCLUSION

The February 2020 parliamentary elections brought had several interesting results. The election campaign itself significantly affected the election results of individual parties. About a month before the parliamentary elections, research agencies predicted a relatively major victory of the most successful political party after 2000 - SMER-SD. At that time, its support was more than 20%, with other political entities staying far behind. However, at the beginning of February, the oncoming winner led by OĽANO had begun to gain popularity, with Igor Matovič being its prominent face. We have not yet seen such a radical turnaround during the last month before elections in Slovak political realities. Igor Matovič's movement managed to win in the end, with almost seven percent lead over the second SMER-SD party, thus becoming only the third entity which managed to win the parliamentary elections (formerly HZDS and SMER-SD). The end of the campaign did not go well for the SMER-SD party, which fell short of its electoral expectations, occupying only the position of the strongest parliamentary opposition entity after the elections. Until the last moment, SaS and ZA ĽUDÍ had to worry about their position as well. However, they managed to cross the necessary threshold of five percent in the end, and formed a government coalition with a constitutional majority in the National Council of the Slovak Republic together with OĽANO and SME RODINA parties. A big surprise was the

final result of the PS/SPOLU coalition, which was 0.04% short from reaching the 7% threshold required for a two-party coalition. Their electoral success/failure must have hurt all the more because in 2019 they managed to dominate the European parliament elections, as well as the presidential elections. Other unsuccessful participants within these elections were the political parties with a long tradition, KDH and SNS. For the first time ever, a political party defending national minorities was not represented in the parliament. The fragmentation of the Hungarian parties meant a significant drop in the government's Most-Híd support and a poor election result for the MKÖ-MKS. Nevertheless, they proved their dominant position in the districts of southern Slovakia. The election result in these parliamentary elections was certainly disappointing for the DOBRÁ VOĽBA party, led by Tomáš Drucker. This entity had passed the 3% limit in the end, thus getting a subsidy for the votes gained at least. On the other hand, as they have not passed the 5% threshold in any district, their political future is more than questionable.

In these elections, we also observed a historical number of discarded ballots. More than 28% of the ballots represent more than 820 000 voters, whose votes were not taken into account in the end - during the distribution of powers in the new parliament. In terms of voter turnout, these elections can be described as relatively successful, as the turnout level of 65.81% was circa 6% higher than in the previous parliamentary elections. We recorded the highest turnout mainly in the western parts of Slovakia, while the eastern regions stayed significantly behind. We can represent this on two districts – the district of Bratislava I with turnout at almost 79%, and the district with the lowest turnout (Revúca) on the other side, where only circa 51% of all eligible voters found their way to the ballot boxes. Although compared to the previous elections, the number of abroad voters participating by mail was three times higher, these are still extremely low numbers. Thus, the question remains whether this figure would not increase with the possibility of voting via the Internet for example.

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