

Who will succeed Borut Pahor in Slovenia?

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ANALYSIS

On 20 July 2022, Slovenians were told that they would be called to the polls on 23 October to elect a successor to Borut Pahor, who has been President of the Republic since 2 December 2012. The head of state cannot stand for re-election as he has served two consecutive terms, having been re-elected to his post on 12 November 2017 with 53.09% of the vote, against 46.91% of his opponent Marjan Sarec, Mayor of Kamnik.

The election campaign started on 22 September and will end on 21 October. Slovenians are allowed to vote ahead of time between 18 and 20 October. If no candidate wins an absolute majority in the first round of voting, a second round will be held on 13 November.

The elected President of the Republic will be sworn in on 23 December. Local elections are also being held in Slovenia on 20 November and 4 December.

THE CANDIDATES IN THE RUNNING

7 people are candidates for the presidential election:

- Natasa Pirc Musar, lawyer, Information Commissioner (Ombudsman) between 2004 and 2014. She stands as an independent and likes to emphasise that she has never been a member of a political party. She is nevertheless supported by former heads of state Milan Kucan (1991-2002) and Danilo Turk (2007-2012). Her candidacy is also supported by Igor Jurisic's Youth Party-European Greens (SMS) and the Pirate Party, which believes that she has been able to defend the values of transparency, right to information, protection of privacy and whistleblowers, freedom of speech and fundamental human rights. She highlights her 25 years of experience in the fight for human rights and the rule of law. The candidate has made health, pension reform, security and ecological transition her priorities;

- Milan Brglez, MEP (S&D), is running as an independent but is supported by Prime Minister Robert Golob's Freedom Movement (GS) and by the Social Democrats (SD), of which he is a member. He renounced his candidacy for the vice-presidency of

the SD to be able to run in the presidential elections (the Freedom Movement had expressly demanded it to support him). Last June, the party of the head of government had chosen to present Marta Kos, vice-president and former Slovenian ambassador to Germany and Switzerland, for the presidential election. However, she withdrew from the race at the end of August for personal reasons;

- Anze Logar (Democratic Party, SDS), MP and former Minister of Foreign Affairs (2020-2022) in the government of Janez Jansa (SDS);

- Janez Cigler Krajl (New Slovenia, NSi), MP and former Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (2020-2022);

- Miha Kordis (The Left, Levica), MP. *"This country needs a President of the Republic who will defend it, who will speak out in defence of the health system, housing, the environment, the elderly, workers and not a new politician who works for big business, banks and who defends the interests of the arms lobby or stretches his personal image in social networks,"* he said;

- Vladimir Prebilic, mayor of Kocevje (south) since 2010, professor at the University of Ljubljana. He is supported by Vesna-Green Party (VESNA) of Uros Maceri and Ursa Zgojznic;

- Sabina Sencar, gynaecologist, supported by Resnica, a populist party led by Zoran Stevanovic, opposed to the restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to the latest opinion poll conducted by the Dnevnik Institute on 28 and 29 September, Anze Logar is expected to lead in the first round with

Presidential election in Slovenia

23rd October 2022

28.2% of the vote, followed by Natasa Pirc Musar with 23.6%. Milan Brglez is estimated to win 18.9% of the vote and would therefore not be able to qualify for the second round. Each of the other 4 candidates is expected to get less than 5% of the vote. On 13 November Natasa Pirc Musar could beat Anze Logar.

Slovenia has been governed since the general elections of 24 April 2022 by a coalition comprising the Movement for Freedom (GS) of Prime Minister Robert Golob, the Social Democrats (SD) led by Tanja Fajon and The Left (Levica) led by Luka Mesec. The government won the confidence of parliament on 1 June by 53 votes to 28.

Improving the health system, depoliticising the police force, refocusing on green energy and establishing greater freedom of expression in the media are the priorities of this new government team.

THE PRESIDENTIAL FUNCTION

The Slovenian Head of State is elected by direct universal suffrage and majority system (2 rounds) for a 5-year term, renewable only once. In Slovenia, the

presidential function is essentially honorary but the head of state is nevertheless a figure of authority. He is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and can intervene if the Drzavni Zbor (National Assembly), the lower house of parliament, is prevented from meeting and declare a state of emergency and mobilisation of the army. His decisions must, however, be ratified by Parliament as soon as it is able to sit again. The Head of State appoints certain senior state officials and ambassadors and has the right of pardon.

All presidential candidates must be at least 18 years old and have the support of at least 10 deputies or one or more political parties or collect the signatures of 5 000 voters.

Since the country's independence on 25 June 1991, all presidents of the Republic of Slovenia have been from the left.

Reminder of the results of the presidential election 22 October and 12 November 2017 in Slovenia

Turnout: 43.57% (1st round) and 41.84% (2nd round)

Candidates	Number of votes won (1st round)	Percentage of votes won (1st round)	Number of votes won (2nd round)	Percentage of votes won (2nd round)
Borut Pahor (independent)	348 507	47.07	378 307	53.09
Marjan Sarec Marjan Sarec List	184 873	24.97	334 239	46.91
Romana Tomc Democratic Party	101 714	13.74		
Ljudmila Novak New Slovenia	52 973	7.15		
Andrej Sisko United Slovenia Movement	16 440	2.22		
Boris Popovic Slovenia Forever	13 266	1.79		
Maja Makovec Brencic Modern Centre Party	12 724	1.72		
Suzana Lara Krause Popular Party	5 711	0.77		
Angela Likovic Voice for Children and Families	4 269	0.58		

Source : [Electoral Commission](#)

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