



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on August 28, 2023

Eurosceptic Slovak Party Wants Referendum on NATO

Recently, Milan Uhrík, the leader of the eurosceptic party [Republika](#), announced that his party wants to hold a referendum on leaving NATO in the next four years, according to a [report](#) by Slovakian news outlet TASR.

Republika, which separated from the People's Party Our Slovakia in 2021, is presently supported by nine percent of the voters, placing it in fourth place, based on a recent opinion survey on August 20. Uhrík has hitherto said that Slovakia should maintain a neutral stance toward the conflict in Ukraine and not provide military aid to Ukraine as the incumbent government has done. Pertaining to the EU, Uhrík — who is a member of the European Parliament, [dismissed](#) the EU's positions regarding migration, "climate change", and LGBT ideologies. Instead, he has been promoting an alliance premised mainly on economic collaboration.



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In response to Uhrík's statements, Slovakia's former Prime Minister Robert Fico pledged to keep his country within the globalist EU and NATO were he to be reelected.

Uhrík's Republika, and another nationalist party, the Slovak National Party (SNS) — presently polling at five percent — have been regarded as prospective coalition partners in a Robert Fico-led government.

Fico's party, social-democratic-populist Smer — a member of the Party of European Socialists — is poised to emerge victorious with 20 percent of the votes. Also, Fico has been urging peace discussions to end the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. He previously [stated](#) Ukraine's entry to NATO, a notion backed by many NATO member countries, would not be the guarantor of peace, but the guarantor of World War III.

By objecting to widespread migration to Europe and criticizing the interference of EU institutions and American billionaire George Soros in Slovakia's domestic affairs, Fico has gained the support of conservative allies, including Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary. Responding to a question, Fico said he would not exclude the possibility of establishing a coalition with any party that wins seats in parliament.

Nonetheless, another one of Fico's possible coalition partners, former Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini, leader of social-democratic Hlas — a party that separated from Smer three years ago — declared that it will not have a coalition with Republika. "We will never enter into any electoral coalition with this political party partly due to [Uhrík's] statements and opinions on where Slovakia should be internationally anchored," Pellegrini said, adding that his party will never work with parties that



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question NATO and EU membership. Hlas is currently polling at 14 percent.

Anti-NATO sentiments resonate with a considerable portion of the Slovak population, based on a May survey by non-governmental organization Globsec. The poll revealed that only 58 percent of Slovaks would vote for their country to stay in NATO, while 33 percent would vote to leave. The latter percentage marks the highest ratio among the eight Central European countries polled.

As Slovak daily *SME* [pointed out](#), there may be a way for Smer to set up a coalition that would not include Republika. The Smer-Hlas coalition scenario partially depends on the Slovak National Party, which did not get any seats in 2020, making it into parliament this time. However, Uhrík posited that although Hlas and Smer “say they cannot imagine cooperation with us, that will change after the election.”

An alternative election outcome is that Progressive Slovakia party — supported by 15 percent of voters — could lead the government. In this case, forming a coalition would imply gathering a mismatched grouping of conservative, libertarian, socially democratic, and populist parties, [wrote](#) Euractiv. An [analysis](#) by Hungarian-language Slovakian news website Ma7 argued that the center-right Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) — polling at six percent — and national-conservative Sme Rodina — a member of the current government, polling at five percent — could both be convinced to join either of the two coalitions.

With the elections in Slovakia on September 30 and nearby Poland on October 15, questions have been raised about how a shift in the balance of power could affect the cooperation of the Visegrád Four countries (V4), namely the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. Lately, the stability of the V4 group has been cast into doubt, with Hungary’s stance on the conflict in Ukraine and the current Czech government’s pro-Western stance leading to friction among its members. Time will tell as to what direction Slovakia will take in the “struggle between federalists and sovereigntists.” That being said, opinion polls have hinted that Fico will win the election. Whether he can build a coalition of like-minded parties is debatable, but a political shift, more in sync with Hungary, is possible. Likewise, the ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party in Poland might even be softening its outspoken rhetorical support for Ukraine, as Konfederacja (Confederation), a party objecting to Poland’s unflinching support for Ukraine, is gaining popularity in opinion polls.

Based on leaked messages procured by the Polish press, PiS officials are telling their representatives to tone down public support for Ukraine because “social emotions have changed.” These officials have even approved of their representatives publicly slamming the Ukrainian government under Volodymyr Zelensky for the first time.

Due to historical bad blood with Russia, Poland has been one of the EU’s most outspoken advocates of Kyiv against Russian military actions in Ukraine, having welcomed more than a million refugees and earmarked billions into military support for the Zelensky government, the latter now battling with corruption scandals.

PiS officials are concerned that Konfederacja’s surge, which mainly gains support from young and rural voters, could contest their influence among Polish right-wing politicians as the ruling party is also contested by both the European Commission and liberal opposition politicians in the ongoing election cycle.



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