

Slovakia

Vanderbilt

After the “Velvet Divorce” (the split of Czechoslovakia) at the end of 1992, Slovakia is considered a parliamentary democracy. At the beginning of 1993, Vladimir Meciar became Prime Minister of the newly independent country for the nationalist Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). However, he did not have enough seats to have the majority in the Parliament. As a result, the HZDS made a coalition with the Slovak National Party (SNS). The coalition fell apart in March 1993 and the HZDS ruled as a minority government. This is a minor SOLS change. Shortly thereafter, the SNS rejoined the government, which we code as another minor SOLS change.

By the beginning of 1994, due to internal struggles within the coalition, Meciar’s government was in the minority. On March 1994, President Kovac sent a message to the nation, informing it of the critical situation of the government. At the same time, the opposition party presented a vote of no confidence against the Prime Minister. As a result, Prime Minister Meciar resigned and an interim government headed by Moravcik formed, but this government was also in minority (Henderson 2002, 44 and Skalnik 1996, 194). This is not a SOLS change. Although there is some disagreement on whether this can be called an interim government, there are more than two sources (Henderson 2002, Skalnik 1996, Europa World Yearbook 200, and Jeffries 1996) say this is an interim government, so we code it as such.

In the next election in September 1994, the opposition parties were unable to form a coalition to defeat the stronger HZDS. As such, the HZDS emerged as the main political force in the election, which meant the return of Meciar. He formed a left-right coalition similar to the one that supported him previously, including the SNS and the Association of Workers of Slovakia (ZRS). This is a minor SOLS change since Meciar’s government before and after the interim government was composed of a different coalition.

Meciar governed the country until 1998. One year before, the opposition parties, including the Christian Democratic Party, the Democratic Union, the Democratic Party, the Green Party, and the Social Democratic Party, formed the “blue coalition”. In 1997 they formalized the coalition and formed the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK). In the 1998, election there was some tension because of a possible fraud. HZDS announced they won the election and became the largest party on the parliament. However, they were unable to form a coalition. As a result, the opposition parties announced their objective to form a government. In that stressed situation, Meciar resigned as Prime Minister three days after the election. Consequently, the opposition gained force and formed a government, and Mikulas Dzurinda assumed the role of Prime Minister for the coalition SDK. The change from Meciar to Dzurinda is a SOLS change because they belonged to different parties and formed different ruling coalitions.

By 2000, Prime Minister Dzurinda formed a new party, called Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU). Other parties participating in the SDK coalition separated and ran as independent parties. These two changes in the coalition government are coded as minor SOLS changes.

By 2001, Dzuringa incorporated several other parties into the SDKU and formed a new coalition in order to secure re-election in 2002. In that election, a new party called SMER (Direction) appeared as vehicle of an ambitious politician, Roberto Fico. Dzuringa stayed in office until 2006 when the SMER won and Fico became the new Prime Minister. This last change from Dzuringo to Fico is a SOLS change because they belonged to different parties and coalitions.

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