PRESS RELEASE | FUTURE SLOVAKIA FORUM, CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Fico builds a barrier against democracy: a legislative package that stifles political competition in Slovakia

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In the run-up to the feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius, a celebration of cultural and spiritual freedom, Robert Fico's government is putting forward a legislative package that represents the most serious attack on free political competition since the founding of the independent Slovak Republic.

Future Slovakia Forum considers these proposals a direct threat to the fundamental constitutional principles of pluralist democracy. Those principles guarantee a level playing field for political groups and protect citizens' right to associate freely and decide how public affairs are managed.

On 30 June 2025, the Ministry of the Interior submitted the proposal (LP/2025/344) for interministerial consultation. Once the comments have been assessed, the proposal is expected to go to the government over the summer and then to the National Council in autumn 2025. Interior Minister Šutaj Eštok has stated that he intends to secure approval for the legislation this year, with effect from 2026.

The proposals and their expected effects

Proposed change	Expected effect
Cut public funding for political parties when the deficit exceeds 3% of GDP.	Smaller and opposition parties would be hit hardest. It would set a precedent for further politically motivated cuts in the name of fiscal consolidation.
Raise the threshold for state funding from 3% to 5%.	All parties outside parliament would automatically lose funding, making it almost impossible to build a political alternative with a lasting organisational base.
Increase both the electoral deposit and the threshold for its return severalfold.	Smaller and new parties would face a severe disadvantage, effectively restricting their entry into elections.
Restrict parties' freedom to change their names and adapt.	The restrictions would block both opportunistic acquisitions of parties and legitimate reorganisations and reforms.
Restrict political parties' ability to accept donations from citizens.	This would weaken civic support, increase the administrative burden and discourage small donors.
Make technical changes to electoral procedures.	These changes need not be decisive individually, but alongside the other measures they would contribute to centralised control.

The projected effect on state expenditure is a reduction of about €21 million a year from 2027. In this case, however, financial arguments are being used as a pretext to curtail equal competition.

Why the package conflicts with the Constitution

Article 31 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic clearly states that the statutory regulation of political rights and freedoms must allow and protect free competition between political forces in a democratic society.

The legislative steps taken by Robert Fico's government fail to meet that constitutional obligation. They systematically restrict pluralism and free competition.

The government's package is part of a wider concentration of power in one centre, extending from control over prosecutors and the police to public service media and the rules of political competition. Democracy has a proven response: distribute power among independent institutions, ensure regional representation and establish constitutional checks that no single parliamentary majority can bypass.

Our alternative reform proposal: System 2027

While the government's package LP/2025/344 concentrates power and restricts competition, System 2027 distributes power among the regions. It introduces independent institutional checks and ensures that no single parliamentary majority can rewrite the rules of political competition on its own.

After a year of intensive analysis, data simulations and international comparisons, Future Slovakia Forum presents an updated version of System 2027. The proposal:

- Is consistent with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic.
- Is based on equal opportunities for all political groups.
- Seeks to strengthen regional representation and ensure fair representation.

The main features of System 2027

- A bicameral parliament with a 111-member lower house (the National Council of the Slovak Republic) and a 45-member Senate.
- A mixed-member proportional (MMP) system for the lower house: 45 members would be elected directly in single-member constituencies and 66 through one national compensatory tier, preserving proportionality and equal voting power.
- A single map of 45 constituencies for directly elected members of the National Council and for the Senate. Each constituency would have a target population of 121,095. Most constituencies are within ±10% of the target and all are within ±12%.
- A 4% threshold for a party standing alone and a ceiling of 7% for coalitions. Compared with today's 5% threshold, this would reduce the share of votes that do not count towards representation and protect smaller parties.
- A Senate to safeguard constitutional stability: an absolute veto on constitutional and electoral laws and a suspensive veto on ordinary legislation. Its powers would exclude the budget, taxation and confidence in the government.
- Parliament would be strictly limited to between 111 and 125 members to prevent it from expanding indefinitely.
- An independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission of the Slovak Republic would draw constituency boundaries and review them every ten years after the census.

This model distributes power. It brings politics back to the regions through 45 local constituencies, provides a constitutional safeguard through the Senate and removes the government's ability to change the rules of political competition unilaterally.

How System 2027 advances FSF's aim of decentralisation

- **Protecting democracy and preventing authoritarianism.** Sharing power among local representatives and the Senate under independently administered rules is the most reliable safeguard against a central monopoly on power.
- **Connecting politics to the regions.** The 45 local constituencies end the anonymity of centralised politics and create a direct link between citizens and their representatives.
- **Keeping electoral and administrative reform separate.** FSF has deliberately chosen to avoid turning electoral reform and the modernisation of public administration into one political conflict. At this stage the proposal deals exclusively with electoral and institutional reform.

What would guide any later reform of public administration?

Any future modernisation of public administration must proceed separately, gradually and with constitutional safeguards. It should build on shared services in place of compulsory mergers of municipalities, respect for Article 64a of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, subsidiarity and a modern equalisation mechanism between better-off and less well-off areas.

Statement by Future Slovakia Forum

We reject in full the legislative changes proposed by the Minister of the Interior, a nominee of the HLAS–SD party.

We consider these measures a systematic attempt to restrict free political competition, a cornerstone of the Slovak Republic's democratic system. They go far beyond a routine amendment to electoral rules.

Future Slovakia Forum is convening a discussion with experts and the public on changes that would move Slovakia's political system in the opposite direction: closer to citizens, with stronger regional representation and constitutional checks on the abuse of power.

We believe Slovakia's future must belong to freedom, justice and equal opportunities for all citizens. It must never be subordinated to the interests of a single group in power.

More about our work and the System 2027 proposal: www.future-slovakia.eu

Media contact: Dávid Bořuta, Chair of Future Slovakia Forum | +421 911 802 407 | media@future-slovakia.eu