



By: TA | AP Brief

Slovak referendum on lifelong payments for Prime Minister Fico fails



A referendum held in Slovakia on Saturday to decide whether to cancel lifelong payments for populist Prime Minister Robert Fico and other leaders after their terms in office expire failed to produce a valid result due to low turnout.

With the votes from 99.5% of all polling stations counted by the Slovak Statistics Office, turnout was 16.1%, far less than the required 50%.

The Slovaks were also voting on whether to reopen the office of the special prosecutor and the National Criminal Agency, which both dealt with major crime and corruption.

The referendum followed a petition organized by the Democrats, a non-parliamentary pro-Western opposition party, and was signed by more than 350,000 citizens in the nation of 5.4 million, the threshold required by law.

Only one of the 10 referendums in Slovakia's history – the 2003 vote on the country's European Union membership – was successful. Others failed due to low turnout.

Slovak prime ministers and parliament speakers who served at least two terms in office are entitled to receive a lifelong payment – a monthly sum that equals the salaries of lawmakers in Parliament – as part of measures to boost **security for leading politicians**.

Special prosecutors's office

The payments were introduced following a 2024 **assassination attempt** on Fico, who was shot and gravely wounded after a government meeting, shocking the small country and reverberating across Europe. The benefit was provided only to former presidents before 2024.

Earlier in 2024, Slovak lawmakers approved a plan by Fico's coalition government to abolish the **special prosecutors' office**, which handles serious crimes such as graft, organized crime and extremism and the government also dismantled the police unit dealing with such

crimes.

A number of people linked to Fico's party faced prosecution in corruption scandals

The legislation faced sharp criticism at home and abroad, and thousands of Slovaks repeatedly **took to the streets** to protest the law.

A number of people linked to Fico's party faced prosecution in corruption scandals.

Fico has been a divisive figure since returning to power in 2023. His pro-Russian and other policies prompted **numerous protests**.

Fico did not vote in this referendum.