

# Back to elections? Porcellum would generate ungovernability again

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There is a problem that several protagonists of the Italian politics and financial markets have not completely understood yet. Nowadays, Italy is in worse conditions than Greece of the most recent past. After an unavailing electoral round, Greeks went back to voting in very short time with the same electoral system, and they managed to form a government. In Italy, it is not possible to do the same. Voting again without changing the electoral law applicable to the Senate is tantamount to betting on roulette. The ball could end up in the right pocket of the wheel, but it could also end up in the wrong one. Still, the likelihood of a negative result is much higher than that of a positive result. So what do we do? Do we keep on voting until luck smiles on us?

This is the third time that we have voted with the so-called *Porcellum*, and only in one circumstance—in 2008—has the system produced a real winner at the Senate. Back then, Berlusconi's coalition got 174 seats. It managed to get such a result because the competition was substantially two-faceted, and *Il Cavaliere*, with his allies, obtained 46.9% of the votes against 37.9% of Walter Veltroni's coalition. This asymmetry in the results was the decisive factor, even if not the only one, that allowed neutralizing the lottery's effect of the 17 regional bonuses. For these last elections, the scenario has been completely different. The competition has been four-faceted, and there has not been a pole that clearly outdistanced the others. On the contrary, three out of four poles were of pretty similar dimensions.

It has gone like this: If one returned to voting in a few months, would the political scenario be that of 2008 or more likely that of last February 24–25? And on which basis could one imagine that the vote produced a different outcome? Is it possible that the political offer and the Italian's preferences changed so drastically in such a short time as to

allow for the creation of a new majority at the Senate too? Maybe this is what Beppe Grillo thinks; he already sees himself as the winner for all the 17 regions. And this is also the belief of people who trust Matteo Renzi to do what Veltroni did not manage to do in 2008. These are two hypotheses that one cannot exclude *a priori*. But today, in a situation in such a state of flux, it is legitimate to raise some doubts about the possibility of this happening.

The main road toward governability is another. Before going back to new elections, the electoral reform and much more need to be done. Which reform and with which majority? These are questions that, at this very moment, have no answer. Introducing a bonus to be taken at the national level for the Senate would be the simplest thing to do. But this change alone would not be enough because in order to avoid the risk of having two different majorities in the two Houses of the Parliament, the right to vote should also be given to the 18-year-old people—a reform that should have been introduced a long time ago. This is a constitutional reform. Can it be approved in a short time? It is difficult. But again, even if one could do it, how could people go back to voting again with a system full of many other faults besides that of the regional bonuses?

The simplest path is not always the best. In order to set the foundations of a true governability, one should make clear choices on the voting system, the form of government, and bicameralism. These are things said over and over again. It is time to choose between the Italian model and the French model. The first is that of the communes, provinces, and regions: direct election of the leader of the executive power (with one or two shifts) and majority of the seats granted to the winner (thanks to the majority's bonus). The second is based on a double election: direct election of the president of the republic with two shifts and election of the parliamentarians in single-member constituen-

cies with a two-round system. In both cases, one has to cut the number of parliamentarians and go beyond a perfect bicameralism, leaving the vote of confidence to the government to the Chamber of Deputies alone. On the electoral level, the Italian model has an advantage compared with the French model: it creates a majority in any condition of fragmentation of the parties. It is majority assuring. The advantage of the French model, on the other hand, is the majoritarian single-member constituency.

Is it possible that the present crisis generates a government capable of facing issues like these? Let us hope so. Stability and functionality of our democracy depend on what the parties will be able to do with regard to the political and institutional reforms. These decisions cannot be postponed any longer. Also, M5S must assume its responsibilities under this respect. The alternative is to keep on betting on the roulette. And at the end, we—including the croupier—will all lose.

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