Proposed reform of the electoral law for the election of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Italian Republic

by Alessandro Mannarini

The **current electoral law** is now considered by many as **inconsistent and not suited** to fully express the will of the people, being those unable to choose candidates directly, both in **ensuring a unique and undisputed majority** in parliament because of the different method of allocation of seats in force between the Chamber and Senate. Furthermore, it requires a reduction of the elect to bring a saving of expenditure policy, without prejudice to the maintenance of an adequate representation. This is a new electoral law must solve these **three problems**.

First, in the logic of a federal system in recent years is going progressively rising, we must **abandon the perfect bicameralism** which until now has characterized the parliamentary structure with the establishment of a **Federal Senate of the Regions and local government** elected with **second degree consultations** subsequent to the election of regional assemblies reflecting so the its political composition. The new Senate so elected will serve as a place to legislate and redeem disputes in connection with matters of a local nature. So the federal Senate will **not be called to put more confidence** in the government and vote the laws of national character, only tasks left to the Chamber of Deputies. However, the Senate will be called to **approve international treaties** after the approval by the Chamber.

Second, **will be returned to the preferences** in the election of the Chamber of Deputies, giving full power to the voters to express both towards a policy list and a specific candidate.

Finally, **third**, the reform provides for the **overall reduction of the representatives of the people**, bringing the elect to the **Senate at 200** and for the **Chamber at 500**.

Election of the Senate:

The **Federal Senate of the Regions and local governments**, as mentioned above, will be elected in **elections of the second degree** by regional councils, after the renewal of the same and then **hooking the election of the Senate in the regional elections**. The distribution of seats will be made according to the **formula of 60/40**, i.e. assigning senators to 60% of the majority and the remaining 40% opposition on a regional basis. The total number of **elected representatives in the Senate will be 200**, prorated between the regions by assigning one every 300,000 inhabitants, according to the diagram below.

REGION	N# ELECTED	REGION	N# ELECTED
Piemonte	15 (9 M/6 O)	Liguria	5 (3 M/2 O)
Valle d'Aosta	1 (1 M/0 O)	Emilia-Romagna	15 (9 M/6 O)
Lombardia	32 (19 M/13 O)	Toscana	12 (7 M/5 O)
Trentino-Alto Adige	4 (2 M/2 O)*	Umbria	3 (2 M/1 O)
Veneto	16 (10 M/6 O)	Marche	5 (3 M/2 O)
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	4 (3 M/1 O)	Lazio	19 (11 M/8 O)
Abruzzo	4 (3 M/1 O)	Basilicata	2 (1 M/1 O)

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Molise	1 (1 M/0 O)	Calabria	7 (4 M/3 O)
Campania	19 (11 M/8 O)	Sicilia	17 (10 M/7 O)
Puglia	14 (8 M/6 O)	Sardegna	5 (3 M/2 O)

Legend:

M: majority, O: Opposition;

* Due to the special legal nature of this region, consisting of two autonomous provinces, the elect will be divided equally between these past.

Election of Chamber of the Deputies:

As part of the abandonment of perfect bicameralism, as stated at the beginning, **will be the only Chamber of Deputies to express confidence in the Government** and approval of most legislative proposals, leaving the Senate only formulation and approval of those regarding the matters their regions and local authorities.

The Chamber of Deputies shall be composed of 500 members.

The principal novelty of this proposal for electoral reform is based on the method chosen for the election of the Chamber of Deputies. Without prejudice to the **reintroduction of preferences** will be **introduced a double round on a proportional basis** to ensure greater political representation can without, however, prevent the formation of a solid majority by the coalition or single party resulting winner.

The **first round**, which will be called for the **Election for the Representation**, elect **50 deputies**, so that each party will have exceeded **2% of the votes** of scale National will be entitled to elect to meet the quota comply with the relevant percentage achieved. There will be no distinction between parties occur coalesced or individually. However, if in a coalition several parties did not reach the quorum of 2%, the sum of their votes will go to added to that of the parties of same coalition that have passed the quorum in proportion to the electoral weight of these parties within the coalition itself by helping to increase their share of the vote and thus elect.

In the **second round**, called the **Election for Governance**, which will elect the remaining **450 deputies** will compete the **two parties or coalitions of parties** who have obtained the **highest number of votes** on a national scale **in the first round**.

Even in the Election for Governance will be applied to the **formula 60/40** for which the party or coalition of parties in the second round will 50% plus one of the valid votes shall be entitled to elect 60% of that added to the elect of the first round will form the majority, the party or coalition party came second will have the remaining 40%. The **allocation of seats will include all the parties of the coalition in the first round will exceed 1% of the vote.**

To make it more streamlined and light as the voting **preferences to determine the elect will be expressed only in the first round of voting**; Therefore, the lists of individual parties already contain a sufficient number of candidates to cover the entire amount of 500 eligible. In **the first round** will be **elected the candidates** who obtained the **greatest number of preferences** within their list. In the **second round** you should not express, the voter, no preference but **only indicate the party or coalition chosen**, elected in the second round will be the stand as a candidate in that scale will have won more votes in the first round after the first electies.

To clarify the proposed new mechanism in this reform is shown below a **simulation** that is based on the **results of last elections** 02/24-25/2013. (Source: Website of the Ministry of the Interior)

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Election for the Representation

Coalition or single party *Coalition parties*	Votes	Percentage	Seats
Center-left	**10047808**	**29,55%**	**15**
PD	*8644523*	*25,42%*	*14*
SEL	*1089409*	*3,20%*	*2*
CD	*167072*	*0,49%*	*-*
OTHERS C.LEFT	*146804*	*0,43%*	*-*
Center-right	**9922850**	**29,18%**	**15**
PDL	*7332972*	*21,56%*	*13*
LEGA	*1390014*	*4,08%*	*2*
FRATELLI D'ITALIA	*665830*	*1,95%*	*-*
LA DESTRA	*219769*	*0,64%*	*-*
GRANDE SUD-MPA	*148552*	*0,43%*	*-*
OTHERS C.RIGHT	*165713*	*0,47%*	*-*
Movimento5Stelle	**8689458**	**25,55%**	**13**
Center	**3591607**	**10,56%**	**6**
SCELTA CIVICA	*2824065*	*8,30%*	*6*
UDC	*608210*	*1,78%*	*-*
FLI	*159332*	*0,46%*	*-*
Rivoluzione civile	**765188**	**2,25%**	**1**
Fermare il declino	**380756**	**1,11%**	**-**
Others	**648575**	**1,80%**	**-**
Cards blank and void	**1269017**	**3,59%**	**-**
Total	**34002524**	**100,00%**	**50**

Election of Governace

Coalition or single party	Vots	Percentage of seats allocated	Seats
Center-left	**About 17000000**	**60,00%**	**270**
PD	*-*	*(80,00%)**	*216*
SEL	*-*	*(20,00%)**	*54*
Center-right	**About 16500000**	**40,00%**	**180**
PDL	*-*	*(78,00%)**	*141*
LEGA NORD	*-*	*(15,00%)**	*27*

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FRATELLI D'ITALIA	-	*(7,00%)**	*12*
Total	**About 33500000**	**100,00%**	**450**

Note: Ratings are based on an estimate derived from the data of the first round.

* Percentage of the votes of the entire coalition.

Total distribution of seats in the Chamber of Deputies

Coalition of single party	Seats
Center-left	**285**
PD	*230*
SEL	*55*
Center-right	**195**
PDL	*154*
LEGA NORD	*29*
FRATELLI D'ITALIA	*12*
Movimento5stelle	**13**
Scelta civica	**6**
Rivoluzione civile	**1**
Total	**500**

As you can see from the table above with the electoral reform proposal would have a **clear majority** in the last election, in this case, the center-left, obtained by a clear vote and legitimized by the voters **in the second round**, while ensuring a **fair representation** for **minority political forces** proved both the first and the second round but deserving to be able to compete with their seats to a serene and constructive opposition in the parliamentary life of the legislature.

In contrast, the current electoral law gave disproportionately victory to a political line-up strong of only a small majority of votes, not supported for another by the same response to the Senate because of the known distortions regulations, thus eliminating the possibility of establishment of a solid quickly and fully legitimate government.

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