



**Prochaines élections italiennes :
les joueurs, les favoris et les outsiders**

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On the 25th of September Italians will go to the polls to elect a new Government after snap elections were called in the middle of summer. Political turmoil is not uncommon in Italy and even Mario Draghi was not able to survive the unstable Italian political scene.

The fall of Mario Draghi

Draghi was leading a national unity Government composed of basically every major party in Parliament except Giorgia Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia (ECR). The Premier lost its majority after a crisis started by the 5 Stars Movement (NI) leader Giuseppe Conte, following his threats of pulling out of the Government unless more 5 Stars policies would be included in the agenda. Thereafter, Mario Draghi had to address the Parliament regarding the ongoing crisis. His speech disappointed two other parties in the majority, Forza Italia (EPP) and Lega (ID), which had some complaints about certain passages of Draghi's speech. Lega and Forza Italia, then, proposed to continue with Draghi as a leader of Government but requested in exchange the assurance that the 5 Stars would not be included in the new majority. No agreement was found and as a result the government finally fell.

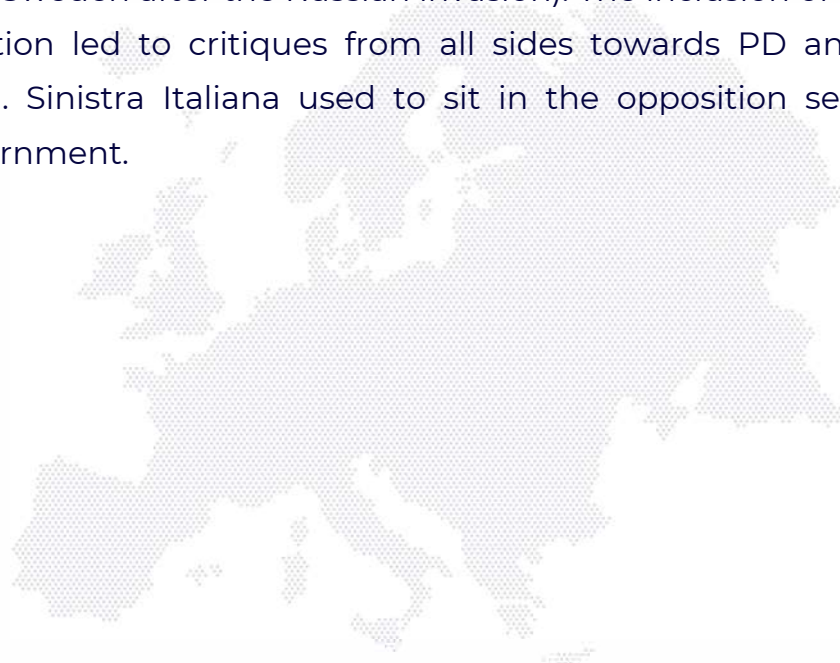


The players

Following the fall of Draghi, the parties scrambled to form alliances and coalitions for the upcoming elections. Two liberal parties (Azione and +Europa, Renew Europe) and socialists (PD + minor parties, S&D) were very close to find a deal to make a coalition in order to have a chance to challenge the center-right bloc and even signed an official agreement to present a common coalition. Shortly after, the liberals from Azione, led by Carlo Calenda, broke off the coalition, while +Europa decided to stay. Following this split, Azione founded an alliance with Italia Viva (RE), the party led by the ex-Premier Matteo Renzi.

PD (S&D) later decided to include some minor far-left parties in its coalition, furtherly positioning itself on the left, making it easier for the liberal coalition to eat out its votes from the center/moderates. PD presented voters with a programme centered on three 'pillars': Sustainable development and ecological and digital transitions; Jobs, knowledge, and social justice; Rights and citizenship.

One of the minor parties included in the socialist alliance is called “Sinistra Italiana”, led by Nicola Fratoianni, known for its far-left positions on economic matters and skeptical views on NATO (opposed to the entrance of Finland and Sweden after the Russian invasion). The inclusion of Sinistra Italiana in the coalition led to critiques from all sides towards PD and its secretary Enrico Letta. Sinistra Italiana used to sit in the opposition seats during the Draghi Government.



Luigi di Maio, the outgoing Minister of Foreign Affairs, left the 5 stars movement earlier before the political crisis caused the fall of the Draghi Government, after some disagreements with Giuseppe Conte on the positioning of the party on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Tens of 5 Stars members of parliament followed Di Maio and left the movement. Di Maio, then, founded a political list called “Impegno Civico” which will be running together with the center-left coalition led by PD.

In the meantime, Giuseppe Conte confirmed that the 5 stars movement will be running alone in the 2022 elections.

This is the best scenario for the centre-right coalition composed by Giorgia Meloni's Fratelli D'Italia, Matteo Salvini's Lega, Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia (EPP) and the centrist list Noi Moderati (EPP). The coalition is consistently polling around 48%, and with the current electoral law the center-right is projected to win a majority in both chambers, Camera and Senato. The center-right coalition has an internal agreement regarding which party will be choosing the name to be proposed to the President to lead the Government. The party which will have the highest number of votes will be choosing the name. With today's percentages, Fratelli d'Italia should be the party nominating the future Premier and Giorgia Meloni is likely to be the candidate.

The favorites

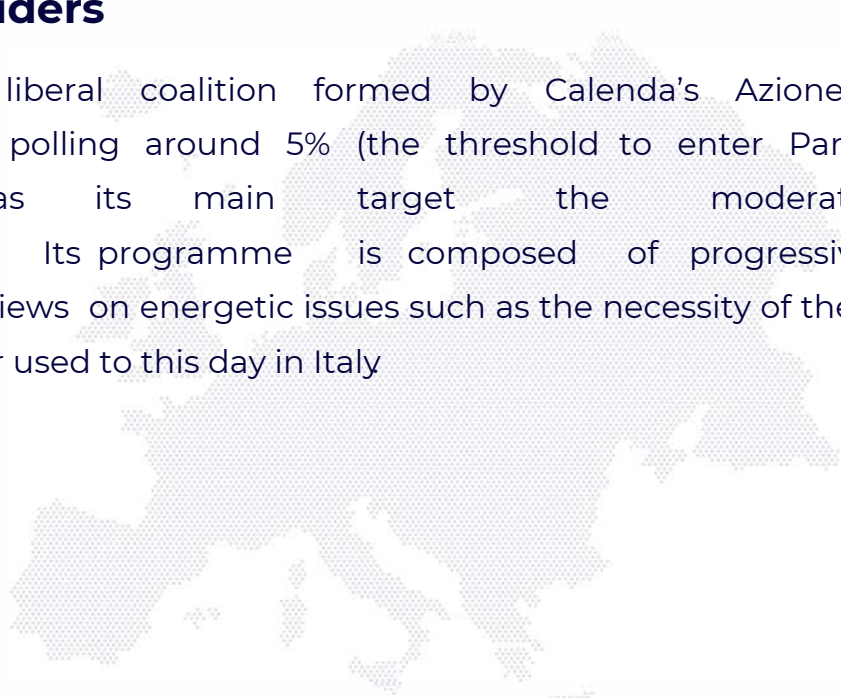
This is the first chance in years for the center-right to regain power after its last government, which was led by Silvio Berlusconi until its collapse in 2011. Eleven years later Berlusconi is ready for his comeback to Italian politics after his election as a Member of the European Parliament in 2019.

While Giorgia Meloni aims for the premiership, Matteo Salvini is focusing Lega's campaign on the security topic and his potential return as Minister of the Interior. Italy has been one of the main targets of illegal crossings and human traffickers through the Mediterranean sea and during this year's summer, the numbers of arrivals have once again skyrocketed and are reaching pre-covid numbers. The center-right coalition presented a common electoral programme, composed of 15 points. The initial point concerns the international positioning of Italy, defined as "fully part of Europe, the Atlantic Alliance and the West", and with the setting of a "foreign policy focused on the protection of the national interest and the defense of the homeland".

The document deals with various topics, including tax and justice reforms, passing through the review of certain welfare issues, the fight against illegal immigration, and environmental protection. The programme also includes a "revision of the PNRR (Recovery Plan) according to the changed conditions, needs and priorities" and the proposal of a reform of the Constitution, resulting in the direct election of the President of the Republic and the increase of regional autonomies.

The Outsiders

The liberal coalition formed by Calenda's Azione and Renzi's Italia Viva is polling around 5% (the threshold to enter Parliament is 3%) and has as its main target the moderate centrist electorate. Its programme is composed of progressive points and pragmatic views on energetic issues such as the necessity of the use of nuclear energy never used to this day in Italy



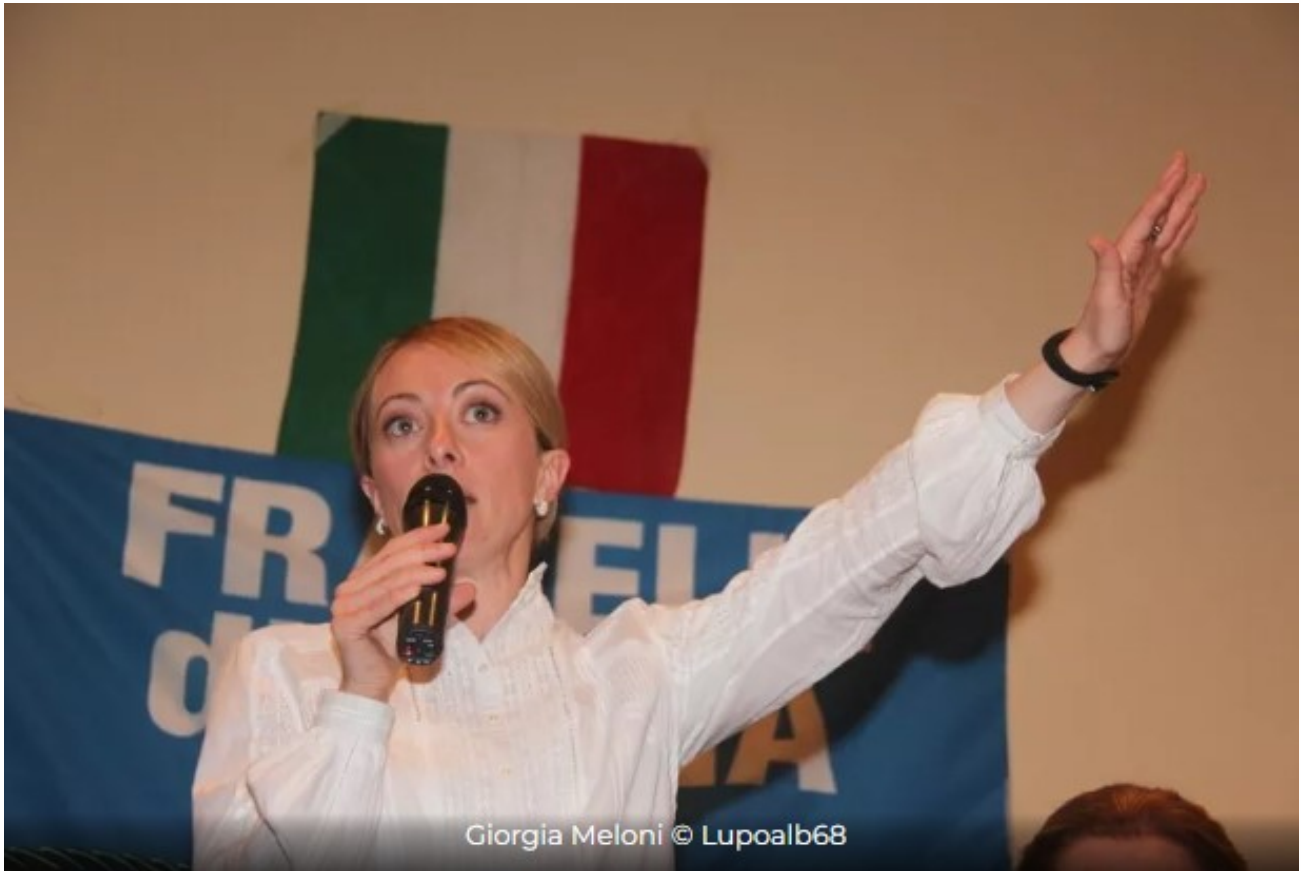
On this point, the liberal coalition converges toward the center-right. The energy crisis is one of the main topics being discussed during this election campaign which worries the most Italian voters. The high utility bills are already claiming victims among companies, the price increases will also weigh heavily on households. The center-left coalition and the 5 Stars are strongly against the use of nuclear energy, while the liberal coalition and the center-right are strongly in favor of its use and believe that any environmentally clean tool should be used to fight the energy crisis and move towards the energetic autonomy of Italy.

What to expect after the 25th of September

The center-right is projected to win, but what can we expect from the newborn Government? The conservatives will have to deal with one of the major crises in our recent history, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, surging gas prices, and inflation. Furthermore, Brussels will be watching and will expect Italy to maintain the promises made during the Draghi Government. What will be the situation of Italian Government during one of the hardest winters in decades in Europe?



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