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Italy - Rifondazione statement on election outcome

Rifondazione "will support a Prodi government and take part in it"

- News from around the world -

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The result of our party is excellent: Rifondazione has increased its votes everywhere, both in percentage and in absolute votes: from 5% achieved at the 2001 election to 5.8% at the Chamber of Deputies or lower house (from 1,867,712 votes to 2,229,604) and 7.4% at the Senate, the upper house (from 1,707,175 to 2,518,624).

41 MPs will represent our party in the lower house (instead of 11) and 27 senators at the Senate (instead of 3). This is the largest parliamentary representation ever achieved by Rifondazione.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/bertinotti7.jpg>] Fausto Bertinotti

We are, moreover, the second-largest party in the lower house and the third-largest one at the Senate within the Union coalition.

On last 9 and 10 April elections for the lower house and the upper house (for voters over 25) took place with about 47 million Italians eligible to vote. The turnout was very high: 83.6%, which is the largest participation in the past fifteen years.

Under new election rules introduced in December, in the lower house each party is able to elect a certain number of MPs depending on the number of votes it takes according to proportional representation (PR).

But the new system favours party coalitions, so that parties belonging to a coalition have to get more at least 2% of the vote to be represented in the parliament. Moreover, the winning coalition is automatically granted a so-called "majority award", that is a minimum 340 of the 630 seats for a working majority.

For the Senate, the new rules are still a PR system, but the number of Senators (for a total number equal to 315) allocated to parties depends on the vote reported in each single Italian region and a regional "majority award".

Furthermore, for the first time Italians residing abroad (about one million) had the possibility of casting their vote in Italian consulates, representing six Senate seats and twelve deputies in the lower house. Polls and a large majority of commentators predicted that the centre-left coalition, L'Unione (the Union), led by Romano Prodi, was due to win easily over Berlusconi's ruling right coalition, "Casa delle Libertii" or "House of Freedoms".

After a long night counting, where the vote seemed to contradict what polls had predicted, there came a very close victory: the Union won over the centre-right coalition in the Senate thanks to the votes cast by the Italians abroad (4 senators for the Union, 1 for the right coalition, one independent, who has declared he will support the winning coalition).

So, in spite of a majority of votes for the right coalition, the Union is granted a Senate majority - 159 seats, as against 156 seats allocated to the "House of Freedoms".

The situation at the lower house has been clearer and favourable for the Union, although the centre-left won by 49,8% to 49,7% by a very small margin, equal to 25,000 votes. However, the Union now has a majority of 340 enabling it to rule the country, according to the programme the coalition parties wrote together.

During the next few weeks the MPs' agenda will include the installation of the new parliament which is to elect a new

president of the republic, and finally, the new government has to be formed.

We will support a government with Romano Prodi as a prime minister and our party will take part in it.

A very important step has been made: we defeated Berlusconi. Now we intend to rule Italy towards a change and to help the rise of a new political subject of the alternative left in Italy, which is now stronger after this election outcome and commits us to building an Italian European Left section.

Rome, 11 April 2006

Editors' note: As this article was posted (17 April) there was growing speculation that PRC leader Fausto Bertinotti would be appointed President of the Italian parliament's lower house. Going into a meeting with Romano Prodi, Bertinotti commented that this was a position that he "could no longer refuse".