

Scirocco - Latest News from Italy

31.07.2026: Majority without a majority: Meloni's bumpy attempt to reform the electoral law

After the disappointment over the failed judicial reform at the beginning of the year, Meloni is taking the next step: an electoral reform. It is the [third attempt](#) in Italy in recent years to change the electoral law, following the failures in 2014 and 2017. If Italy's Prime Minister remains in office until September, she will have the longest tenure as Prime Minister since the end of the Second World War. Confident of victory ahead of next year's parliamentary elections, Meloni now wants to further expand the reach of her government. To this end, she has drawn up a draft law for an electoral reform, which the opposition has dubbed the "Melonellum." On [July 17, the Senate already voted in favor of the draft](#), and in September the Chamber of Deputies will decide. Should the Chamber make changes to the content, the bill will go back to the Senate for another vote and then back to the Chamber, until implementation can take place.

To understand the possible effects of such a change in the law, it is first necessary to take a brief look at Italy's current electoral system.

Rosatellum:

Italy currently uses a mixed system of majority and proportional voting. According to this, [37%](#) of members of parliament are elected directly in constituencies, while the majority, [61%](#), enter parliament via fixed party lists ([parties decide on the order](#) of their candidates). The remaining percentage is determined by [voters living abroad](#). Currently, a party can only receive an additional bonus by winning in direct constituencies.

Melonellum:

After four years in office and just ahead of the next elections, Meloni now sees the ideal moment to fundamentally change the electoral law. Rather than stabilizing the government, as officially stated, such a reform would more likely cause democratic stability to crumble.

At the core of the reform is a shift to a purely proportional voting system with a substantial majority bonus. Direct constituencies, which [often favor the opposition](#), particularly in the south of the country, would be abolished. Under the reform, parties would receive shares of parliamentary seats solely according to the percentage of votes they win. If a party or coalition reaches the [set threshold of 42%](#) of the votes, it is meant to secure a stable majority by automatically receiving bonus seats. A full [8% extra](#) is provided for this purpose.

1. Effects on the Chamber of Deputies:

If a party or coalition reaches 42% of the vote, under the current electoral system this would translate into 150 of a total of 400 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Under the bonus provided by the planned reform, they would automatically be entitled to [an additional 70 seats](#) in the Chamber. Even though 58% would have voted for a different party, they would still hold a clear majority.

2. Effects on the Senate:

The situation in the Senate would be similar: of a total of 200 Senate seats, 42% amounts to 78 seats. With the addition of the bonus, [35 seats are added](#), which would likewise secure the majority.

The threshold clause plays a critical role here. This is because the threshold for the majority bonus is not calculated based on a coalition's total vote count, but exclusively on the valid votes of the individual lists [that clear the threshold clause](#). Votes for coalition partners that remain below the 3% threshold are generally [not taken into account at all](#), with the exception of the strongest list among these excluded parties.

As a result, a coalition that wins, for example, a total of 45% of the vote could, for the purposes of calculating the bonus, effectively drop to 40% or less if several of its smaller partners narrowly fail to clear the threshold clause. In an extreme case, even the coalition with the most actual votes could [fall behind another coalition](#) in terms of the bonus calculation and [lose its claim to the majority bonus](#). This aspect would particularly affect [Italy's center-left camp](#), which is traditionally more fragmented and more often runs in alliances.

Rejection of Preference Voting:

Another element originally intended to be part of the reform was the introduction of preference voting. Under this provision, voters would in future be given the opportunity, instead of relying on fixed party lists, to vote for [individual candidates within a party](#) regardless of their position on the list. With [at least 50 votes missing](#), the Chamber of Deputies already voted against this addition to the reform on July 14. This was a bitter defeat for Meloni, since the dissenting votes included people [from within her own ranks](#).

In this significantly smaller, internal, yet still notable setback, the Prime Minister overlooks what it reveals about the stability of her position. The vote shows that the right-wing trio of Fratelli d'Italia, Forza Italia, and La Lega is [no longer as invincible](#) as they long believed. The rise of the fascist party Futuro Nazionale under former Lega member Roberto Vannacci is also causing the [staged balance to wobble](#), presenting Meloni with a [challenge](#). Whether she can reach her desired majority without a coalition with Futuro Nazionale is questionable, yet such a coalition would itself be an extreme step and could cost her standing (at the European level) as well as important voter support.

Whether Meloni will continue to push the reform through without the introduction of preference votes remains uncertain. According to [internal sources cited by Repubblica](#), Meloni is said to be planning a renewed vote, in which, similar to [the evening before](#) the first defeat, she is threatening her MPs with snap elections should they reject it again, which [would mean the loss of a parliamentary pension they are entitled to from February 2027](#).

So although it remains uncertain whether the electoral reform will ultimately be pushed through, the danger of its implementation must be kept clearly in view. According to experts, several parts of it are considered [unconstitutional](#). Meloni's goal with the reform is evidently to expand her own power base, which would mean a further worsening of social [inequality, a deterioration of the healthcare system, and the weakening of marginalized](#) groups in Italy. Once again, Meloni forgets her role as a representative of the Italian people. Rather than acting in the interests of the population, she is once again focused on developing strategies to obstruct political groups. In addition, she is clearly disregarding one of the core problems of Italian elections and the resulting representation deficit: [steadily declining voter turnout](#), which stood at [under 64%](#) in 2022. Still, the first defeat in the vote on the proposed amendment makes clear that an active opposition exists, offering hope for further defeats for Meloni.