

My name is Marco Fedi and I'm currently your representative in the Italian Parliament and a candidate for the Chamber of Deputies, in the Democratic Party ticket, proposing Walter Veltroni to the Prime Ministership of Italy.

This early election is **not** what I wanted, it is not what we wanted, as Democratic Party, and I believe it is not what Italy needs but nevertheless it is with us and we have to do our best to make sense of it.

In 2006 we had a dream. Change Italy by forming a united front of parties that had in common a very broad political program, a leader, Romano Prodi and an opponent, Silvio Berlusconi.

The Union – a broad coalition of parties aligned with the centre left – what used to be the Olive tree coalition – told voters that Italy could have been managed by such a broad program and such a broad coalition. **We failed.**

After the 2006 election-win we have witnessed, in rapid succession, the collapse of L'Unione as a coalition, the internal arguing and fighting within the coalition and the final act of treason: a Minister, Senator Clemente Mastella, elected with votes from l'Unione, resigning and then withdrawing its support for the Government. Prodi had no alternative but to resign.

An attempt to form a transitional government – in order to reform the electoral law and the Constitution and change some old fashioned parliamentary rules – was rejected by the centre right.

But it would be simplistic to say that we failed ONLY because of our internal fighting: the Italian political system failed because we did not deliver a strong Government, the opposition failed because they only acted in the most obstructive way, Parliamentary democracy failed because we – Government and opposition – were not capable to resist a populist call to reduce the cost of politics, bear in mind, politics NOT Government, which seem to be a common trend in modern economies, **but reducing the cost of politics**: it is like saying that we can reduce the cost of democracy! Democracy, instead, can never be compromised.

In the rough sea of Italian politics we have witnessed two other important elements: many small parties did not wish for change, especially in relation to the electoral law, which was passed by the Berlusconi majority just before the last election, which is a terrible piece of legislation that would still potentially deliver an unstable Senate; and the second element, the birth of the Democratic Party.

A NEW PARTY, committed to a simplified political system, where the role of the majority and the opposition complement each other and make it possible for the political system to make decisions. Italy is not moving towards a two-party system of Government but Italy needs urgently a dramatic change: a centre left main party and a centre right main party with a unified left and a unified right. The problem today is that Berlusconi has not produced a new party but an old style coalition and to maximize the opportunity to win has shifted the centre right to the right: they may win the election but Italy will lose again! The only true change in this election is the Democratic Party and its strong decision to run

on its own strength and with those who were willing to accept to be part of a single Parliamentary group (Italia dei valori and the radical party).

We said no to broad, divided coalitions, we said no to MP's who have been in parliament for more than 3 mandates (15 years), we have said no to candidates who have been sentenced in a court of law, we have a 50% quota of women who can and will be elected in the proportional system.

I never, for one second, regret having supported the Prodi Government and I'm proud of what we did in a very short time, less than two years (18 months to be precise). We realigned our economy to the Maastricht parameters that keep Italy within the monetary union, we have been achieving important results in terms of fighting tax evasion and avoidance **and** in the 2008 budget we started giving back to ordinary citizens: a pension increase, called fourteenth payment, that we also extended to pensioners living abroad, together with the partial exemption, up to 300 Euros, for the council property tax called ICI, **and I presented** two - of a total of four new bills - which are very important to us:

one to reopen the possibility to reacquire Italian citizenship and one for the overpayment amnesty for INPS pensions. The proposed changes to the Italian citizenship legislation would have made it possible for those who lost their Italian citizenship to regain it and the Government - in this year's budget - had found and allocated the resources for the Consular Network. We were **ONLY** six months away from achieving this goal - very dear to me and many families in Australia.

We have gone thorough incredible turmoil: dramatic changes at the party level and a consequent difficulty to have in place, in our own territory, a party structure; the cost of

politics debate – fomented by the centre right and popular figures like Beppe Grillo – has stopped any talk about additional resources for the overseas MP's and – most importantly – we had to face – particularly during the Constitutional reform debate – strong opposition from the Communist Refoundation and the Socialists in relation to the very principle of an overseas representation in the Italian parliament. A very negative debate that wasn't certainly new – those positions were known – but doubled by a similar strong resistance to a concept that has been our political aim since our election: parity of treatment and opportunities for Italians – no matter where they live!

What we stand for:

Strong, reliable and stable Government in a parliamentary system that values the contribution of the opposition and produces reforms. Starting from a transparent system, where rules are applied immediately: for example, a mayor of a city with more than 25,000 residents, could not stand for election without resigning, but if he/she does not resign, because of a loop-hole in the legislation that leaves him/her ample space to do it when he/she feels like it: Veltroni resigned before the election. It is a simple matter of principle but shows why we need such reforms today.

A strong platform for Italians abroad: citizenship – written in black and white by Veltroni, additional resources for services and social security, promotion of the Italian language abroad through a reform of both the legislation and the funding system to enti gestori, reform of the Italian institutes of culture, quality information through Rai International, exchange programs like visto-vacanze-lavoro, extended to the professional development areas.

A strong economy and strong European role, starting to tackle tax evasion and avoidance at the EU level as well as in Italy.

Multilateralism when it comes to International peace keeping and international affairs: we would not, ever, replicate IRAQ while Berlusconi and his potential ministers have said that they will.

400 extra Euros a year for pensioners on top of what we did last year with the 14th payment for Italians abroad as well.

Tax relief for workers and tax brackets reduction of 1 point percentage per year for three years

A family bonus of 2500 Euros for dependent children

A tax deduction for rent paid by lower income earners

The biological will – the capacity to determine your own medical destiny – and to recognize the rights of people who live together, they are art of the PD political program

AND let me tell about the most important innovation – unmatched by others – a minimum wage for young people so that **they can** start aspiring to a normal life and some sort of independence when they start working (a measure to fight la precarietà as it is called nowadays)

and we are building a strong party, even abroad, and we will organize primaries to find suitable candidates for the next elections and have a “positive action” policy in order to achieve a 50% of women in Parliament.

I conclude by saying that to bring about these reforms we need political parties, strong, reliable parties that recognize the contribution of Italian communities abroad and bring together, bind together, our expectations and aspirations. New political parties that will have a very intense internal political life – like with the labour party – but then will make decisions and bring about positive change.

In order to bring about these changes we need a presence in the Italian parliament – therefore a vote **to the Democratic party, a party that will have representation in the Italian parliament** – no matter who wins the seat in this division. Do not waste your vote.

And we need suitable and capable candidates. This is why we – Nino Randazzo for the Senate and I for the Chamber of Deputies – are asking you to support us and vote for us.

On. Marco Fedi
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