

Border-workers are like rats, revolt against the Swiss campaign

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The advertisement against border-workers has become a government matter. Already two politicians have raised the issue; one is the Mayor-MP for Verbania, **Marco Zacchera**, and the other is the Senator for Como, **Alessio Butti**, both of the "Popolo della Libertà". The two MPs are asking for action to protect the Italian workers in the Swiss Canton Ticino, who are the subject of a nasty advertising campaign, on the Internet, and on roadside billboards, depicting them as rats taking from a round of cheese, or rather, from the coffers of Switzerland. The group "**Bala i ratt**" (this is the name of the website and of the campaign) has **more than 540 friends** on Facebook (only last Monday, there were few more than 100), and it has attracted the attention of the Italian and Swiss media.

The creators of this bright idea are still unknown, although a few names did emerge yesterday; like that of **Pierre Rusconi**, the leader of the UDC party in Canton Ticino (this party has very different positions from those of the Italian UDC), and of the company **Ferrise Comunicazioni** in Locarno (which is already known to the Italian press because of another controversial advertisement), but other people are also involved.

"We know **the people responsible for this 'pleasant' provocation**, whose purpose is to raise a few of the issues that are most important to the people." This is what appeared on the website of **Il Mattino**, which is close to the Ticino League. "What are the names? Is it a political party? We'll tell you tomorrow. In the meantime, we're sending it to everyone that was immediately offended, to make it clear that employment and reduced salaries **are topics that are important to most of the people from Canton Ticino**."

"Of course," the article continues, "we are not seeking to condemn or criminalise border-workers (as the Socialists are trying to make out), we are highlighting objective data. We haven't just invented the number of 45,000 border-workers! And the fathers of families in

Canton Ticino, including foreign residents who live, work and pay taxes in this country, know perfectly well what we're talking about! **This is not racism, but a pure and simple description of the situation!**" However, the Ticino State Council issued an official note yesterday saying that there is nothing "pleasant" about this story, that its contents are "offensive", and reiterated the importance of border-workers to the local economy. The Ticino trade unions agree, including the OCST, who defined the message as "disconcerting", as do the Italian trade unions, who have spoken of a wretched attack against honest workers.

For a long time, harsh judgements have been made by some political forces in Canton Ticino against border-workers. The worst moment was reached a few months ago, when the tax shield came into force, when the border-workers found themselves in a situation that was confusing with respect to the Italian inland revenue, that culminated with a protest in Lugano, and subsequently resolved, albeit with "retaliation" threatened by the Ticino League.

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