

A signature to cancel the “Obscenity”

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The current electoral law is one that (almost) nobody likes, but that Parliament does not want to, or cannot, change. So, voters and activists in the committee promoting the referendum **to abrogate, by public consent, the current electoral law** and force politicians **to approve a new one** are making their voices heard.

It was clear that the Italians did not like the current regulations, when the author, **Roberto Calderoli, called them “obscene”**.

“So, what are they waiting for to change them?” people are wondering.

The problem is that the current electoral law affects **how the people are represented in Parliament**, and the parties, both big and small, have quite different ideas on how this should be done.

There are those that want a French-style law, and those who want something more in line with the Germans; some want parties to have to achieve a high, minimum percentage of the vote, and others favour large alliances. As a result, the big debates never end with concrete results.

However, if the referendum should pass, this will no longer be the case. **Since 1 August**, the promoting committee has been collecting signatures for the “referendum to abrogate the electoral law”. **The demands of the referendum, together with the signatures collected, must be deposited with the Court of Cassation by 30 September.**

If the referendum is accepted, the people will be called to abrogate the current regulations, the Calderoli Law (the “Obscenity”), thereby restoring the previous regulations.

Irrespective of the actual outcome, which, in the event of success, according to the promoters, should be the return of single-member constituencies, as decided by the law, from 1993 (**which was named after its author, Sergio Mattarella**, and which was put into effect following the referendum on 18 April 1993), **the actual and immediate result will be to force politicians to approve a new law.**

Thus, the referendum would become a sword of Damocles over Parliament, by which the people can set an ultimatum: **“Dear politicians, either you change the law by the date of the referendum, or we’ll do it.”**

At that point, the politicians will be forced to respond to the important political question that the people are asking, that is:

“Is it right for a few party heads to decide, behind closed doors, who should be elected to Parliament? Is it right for the electors not to have a say on who they judge to be presentable, and who not?”

Everybody has his own idea on what the form of the new electoral law should be, but all are clear on one thing, that change is necessary.

What can people do? For the moment, they can sign to guarantee acceptance of the referendum. They can do so at **the numerous stalls being set up** over the next few days, in town squares around Italy, or they can visiting **their local town halls**, the general secretariat, or the electoral office or Public Relations Office (URP – Ufficio Relazioni con il Pubblico), and ask to sign.

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