

VareseNews

In a week, the vote on the unification of small municipalities

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✘ **Varese Province is about to undergo a change in its political geography**, with a reduction in the number of its municipalities, from 141 to 135, over a few months; in exactly one week, the mergers that have long been spoken about, will experience an important moment of participation involving thousands of people. On 1 December, in 8 towns in the north of Varese Province, the people will vote in a **consultative referendum** that is anything but symbolic; if the yeas win, two new municipalities will almost certainly be created.

One of them will be the result of the unification of three towns in the far north of the Province, on the Swiss border: **Maccagno, Veddasca** and **Pino sulla Sponda del Lago Maggiore**; not surprisingly, the new municipality will be called "**Maccagno con Pino e Veddasca**".

The choice of voters in five other municipalities (**Mesenzana, Grantola, Masciago Primo, Ferrera di Varese, and Cassano Valcuvia**) will be more complex. The territory is very large (see the panoramic **photo**, above) and lies between two valleys. In addition to deciding on the unification, the electors will also have a range of names for the new municipality to choose from. The list includes "**San Martino in Valle**", "**Rocca San Martino**", "**Valle di Mezzo**" e "**Comune della valle del Margorabbia**".

But, how are these communities getting ready to vote, next Sunday?

There have been several public events to discuss these themes. Starting with the last group of municipalities mentioned, differing opinions were expressed by a council group **in the town hall of Mesenzana**, who, on more than one occasion, had doubts over the danger of giving more importance to one municipality to the detriment of another, not to mention the reservations over the names. And so, the referendum will help to settle the different positions.

"All of the Mayors wanted to focus a lot on the information," explained Silvano **Ronzani (see photo)**, the Mayor of **Grantola**, where the **new town hall will have its "headquarters"**, and where the office of the Mayor, the office of the town clerk, the accounting department and the branch of the record and general registry office will be. For this reason, public meetings were organised and, in the five municipalities, three information offices were set up to explain to the people what it is all about. Last Thursday, in Ferrera di Varese, there was an extremely well-attended public meeting, in which people under the age of 23 too part; on Friday, another, more political, high pitched meeting took place, in Mesenzana. In short, everyone has had the opportunity to express himself, and everybody will have the opportunity again next Sunday."

To conclude with the logistics of the new municipality, we should add that the operating office will be in Mesenzana, where the technical office, local police station, general registry and record office will be; in the other municipalities, Cassano Valcuvia, Ferrera di Varese, and Masciago Primo, there will be the record and general registry office, where people can request documents and identity cards; these offices will be open to the public, at least 2 days a week.

But how will these elections, which are so unusual for our Province, take place? First of all, the vote only has a consultative value, which means it will serve merely as “advice” (technically it will not decide anything) for the choices to be made on this topic. “However,” Ronzani added, “each of the five municipalities involved has made a commitment, with a resolution voted on by the town council: if the nays win, Lombardy Region will be formally asked to step back, and give up the plan for the merger.”

The polling stations will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.: they will be set up in the usual places and in the same way as for all other elections: the president, secretary, and scrutineer, with the whole procedure of counting the votes and transmitting the data, which, for this type of election, **will probably be able to make the results known soon after 10.30 p.m. on Sunday, barring any snags.**

And then? After the vote, Lombardy Region will take note of the results of the referendum, and the matter will go back to the regional council, where the final vote will take place, which will be published in the **BURL**, a sort of official gazette of Lombardy Region. At this point, the Prefecture will appoint an interim administrator (around the end of February), who will deal with the ordinary administration of the municipalities until the new elections, which will probably be at the same time as the European elections, next May (there may already be the date: from 22 to 25 May 2014).

And what is happening further north? “The feeling is that, after all, the people aren’t just interested, but actually excited about this project,” said **Fabio Passera (see photo), the Mayor of Maccagno**, who is also looking forward to the result, next week. “I was afraid there’d be no interest in this matter, but then I noticed that people had understood something: with this vote, and with the subsequent decisions, the future of these communities is at stake.”

Here, in the north, how will the system of mergers be? **“Maccagno will become the headquarters and operating office of the new municipality,”** concluded the Mayor, “but offices will be kept open in Pino and Veddasca.”

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