

## FS want to take back the Lombard trains, but in Milan not everyone agrees

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**For several weeks, discussions regarding the future of Trenord** in the light of an interest from the FS Group for regional transport in Lombardy. “New investments”, which would mean a greater presence in Trenord of the “state” Trenitalia, at the expense of Ferrovie Nord Milano.

The rail service – both on the FS track and on the FNM one, the old “Nord” – is operated by a single company, **Trenord, which is a company owned in equal shares by Trenitalia** (FS Group) and by **Ferrovie Nord Milano**, a subsidiary of the Lombardy Region (but also publicly traded).

The proposal came from Rome in late September, the new FS leaders, who have not spared harsh criticism of the Lombard rail system. “That Trenord is stuck in **a governance that does not work is evident** ,” **said Renato Mazzoncini**, referring to the society in which FS holds half of the control. “We’ll see if Lombardy intends to benefit from the large investments we are putting in.”

Words that have a glimpse of an interest to sort out Trenord, a move that FS had cherished in the past: Lombardy is perhaps the only region in Italy to have a rail service that covers the entire territory, with trains throughout the entire day, even in the most remote areas (such as the Valtellina, for example). A scenario that is partly comparable to other Italian metropolitan areas but has no real equal: for FS the Lombard area is becoming (again) palatable, *simply* because it is one of the few places in Italy where there are still local trains outside the outskirts of large cities.

Roberto Maroni in 2014 with Vincenzo Soprano and Mauro Moretti, then at the top of Trenitalia and FS Group, which holds a 50% stake in Trenord

With the interest of FS, in the past **Roberto Maroni** had shown some interest, taking into account that – however far the service is extended – local rail transport is always a slippery slope for politics. But the news at the end of September from Mazzoncini had already seen a rather harsh **response from the Councillor for Transport Alessandro Sorte**, of Forza Italy, “Investments for now are just slides.” From the rows of the opposition, the Democratic Party has reiterated that the Trenord governance – owned by the two companies, Trenitalia and FNM, with almost identical dimensions – is unclear.

To re-draw the line is now also the same FNM: “As I repeatedly said, **there does not exist any negotiations aimed at the sale of Trenord shares**,” stressed the president of FNM SpA **Andrea Gibelli**, that in exactly one week (Tuesday, 25th October) will present the strategic plan of Ferrovie Nord Milano (Gibelli reminded that Maroni has been invited). The President of the FNM concludes with a clear message: “The **perimeter of the dialogue with the State Railways** is and will exclusively be in **the interest of Trenord, in terms of investment and short and medium period**, to complete the purchase of rolling stock with the objective of a significant improvement of the rail service in Lombardy “. While in the meantime – different from the “Rome” hypothesis offered by FS – there remains open the possibility of a “Milan” merger, with Trenord and ATM. A scenario which has been discussed for years and became in vogue even in September 2016.

di Translated by Prof. Robert Clarke