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Semi-Presidentialism in Italy: From Taboo to Taboo?

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Synopsis

As a result of Italy's political crisis, the introduction of semi-presidential government became a real possibility in the mid-1990s, after being kept of the political agenda for decades. This draft paper briefly outlines: a) the taboo on strong government which kept executive reform off the agenda for so long; b) the similarities and differences between the French transition to the Fifth Republic and the current situation in Italy; c) the history of proposals for semi-presidential government in Italy; d) the revival of concerns about reinforcing the executive given the concentration of powers of Berlusconi's leadership of the government since 2001. It concludes by observing that the evolution of Italy's state crisis and, in particular the continuing anomaly of Berlusconi's accumulation of powers, makes the introduction of semi-presidential government in Italy highly contentious, if not yet clearly once more taboo.

'... constant reference to, if not imitation of, French models is part of the Italian constitutional tradition.' (Fusaro, 1998a: 43 – with reference to the 1848 and 1948 constitutions, the organisation of public administration, the Council of State and the system of administrative justice; Italy's 1951 provincial electoral legislation and 1952 parliamentary electoral reform)

'The choice of form of government ... is probably decisive for the future of the country ... the principal question [is]: direct election of a president with governing powers, or of the premier ... do [opponents] really think Mr. B wants to start, here, in 2006, on a despot's career? ... what is needed is a constitution for a state made to measure for Mr.B. But with an exclusion clause.' (Cavalli, 2003).

'... the aims the reformists set themselves [in the early 1990s] ... they have largely achieved ... the problem of [Berlusconi's] concentration of ... interests ... remains and continues to poison the normal functioning of Italian democracy ... to imagine a system in which all the prerogatives of the presidential system are conferred on a single person would lead to the definitive deviation of the Italian case from the democratic seabed, leading it towards south American shores ... (Ignazi 2003: 85)

Semi-Presidentialism in Italy: From Taboo to Reality?

The debate on strong government – a collapsed taboo

By the late 1970s, the idea that Italian government was so weak that effectively it did not exist had become such a cliché that explicit rebuttal seemed necessary (Cassese, 1980). Nevertheless, until the early 1980s, mainstream discussion of the shortcomings of Italy's political system, and especially proposals for radical change à la De Gaulle, were taboo (Chiarini 1994). Critics, who usually sought strong government in one form or another, were labelled 'anti-system' - and often Fascist. Right through to the mid-1990s presidential forms of government were still dubbed unacceptably dangerous by leading politicians, usually communists or former Christian Democrats. For 40 years the parties kept executive reform off the political agenda and even scholarly debate was minimal, marginalised by an awareness of the delicacy of Italy's political situation and the authority of the political parties in intellectual domains. For the Christian Democrats (DC), reform challenged the system they had built and dominated, and was dangerously destabilising. For the Communists (PCI), the major opposition party, strong government meant reinforcing the DC regime and reasserting the PCI's exclusion from state-level decision-making. Italy's third mass party, the socialist PSI, was dominated by either the DC or the PCI until the 1980s. The remaining parties were of little consequence, being very small allies of the DC (the PSDI, PRI and PLI) or anti-system (the MSI).

By the early 1980s, the PSI was vociferously proclaiming its emancipation from the two dominant parties by challenging a range of taboos including that on government efficacy (others included conscription, with the PSI proposing to replace the deeply unpopular 'people's army' with smaller, professional armed forces). Some minor institutional reforms were made during the 1980s, but no 'grand reform' was forthcoming. In the 1990s, the taboo appeared to collapse as the political context was transformed. The changing tempo of the debate can be seen in the series of parliamentary inquiries on constitutional reform (1983-85, 1993-94, 1997-98). Both internal and external causes can be identified for the acceleration of debate in the early 1990s. Externally, the collapse of 'actually existing communism' had a major impact on the party system whilst the acceleration of European integration via the Maastricht Treaty reinforced the need for effective government. Internally, the declining hold of the Catholic and Marxist sub-cultures and the acceleration of corruption together with the associated transformation of the parties and the economic difficulties of the late 1980s pushed Italy towards political innovation. Arguably, the first signs of this had been seen in legislation for the referendum in 1970 and the subsequent policy successes of the Radical Party. However, whilst the 1990s brought radical change in the party system, extensive reform of local and national electoral systems, a consequently changed relationship between governments and both parliament and the electorate, as well as a series of reforms to the country's public administration, what was not forthcoming was macro-institutional change regarding the form of government. The reform of Italy's several electoral systems and their impact on government has not been constitutional in a formal sense, excepting that the direct election of the president of the ordinary regions, effective since 2000, did require constitutional amendment. Where fundamental constitutional change linked to the current transformation of Italian politics is under way is with regard to the form of state, rather than the form of government. This change involves federalisation, is still very much in the process of being implemented, and is regarded by many as being quite chaotic.

Regarding the reform of government, a key debate regards that between widely differing proposals for 'semi-presidentialism' and proposals for the direct election of the Prime Minister (formally, President of the Council of Ministers), the roots of which can be traced to Duverger's criticisms of the constitution of the Fifth Republic in France (Fusaro, 1998a). However, some argue that macro-constitutional change regarding the form of government has become obsolete. Broadly, there are two versions of the argument. The first argues that policy change has been so successful in some spheres, notably in reversing Italy's long trend of growing GDP to public debt ratio and enabling Italy to join the Euro in the first wave of adherents in 1998, that change is irreversible. Explanation here focuses on cognitive change within policy communities and the construction of 'latent institutional capacity' via apparently minor reforms in the 1980s which in the 1990s were able to sustain substantial change in economic policy regimes (Radaelli 2002: 214-15, 229). Thus, developments in the 1980s such as the appointment of the first non-Christian Democratic Prime Minister in 1981 provoked new perspectives on government as well as bringing real institutional changes and, jointly, these created the potential for later, more radical change. The second approach emphasises the changing relationship between governments and their majorities, parliament and the electorate in the 1990s (Donovan 2003; Ignazi 2003). Thus, an opportunity for a radically different government-majority relationship enabling major policy innovation presented itself in the autumn of 1992, by which time the delegitimisation of the parliamentary parties by the media's coverage of judicial investigations in to political corruption was advanced. The Prime Minister, Giuliano Amato, used Italy's expulsion from the ERM to exploit the weakness of the parties in parliament, seconding the invocation of crisis in order to exploit it and to begin the transformation of Italy's political economy and with it Italy's mode of governance. In short, a 20-30 year trend of deficit spending was reversed, bringing the public debt under control; and, in a series of key policy areas, government became the dominant actor in parliament, rather than parties and in particular party secretaries (who were usually not even in the cabinet), arguably bringing Italy into line with other parliamentary democracies (Capano and Giuliani, 2001: 32).

Has the prospect of semi-presidential reform disappeared, despite the taboo on serious discussion and even the tabling of proposals in parliament? Very possibly, but not yet definitively. It is not yet irrelevant to political debate. Many analysts believe it remains essential (e.g. Cavalli 2003) and in both his 2001 and especially his 2002 Christmas addresses, Prime Minister Berlusconi not only adopted a marked presidential style but also proposed major constitutional reform. In 2002, he specifically admitted to a presidential ambition – albeit presenting it as a further personal sacrifice that he was prepared, if necessary, to make. Many suspect Berlusconi of seeking to become the Right's candidate for direct election as President in 2006. Such speculation further casts Gianfranco Fini as a potential Prime Minister, bringing spoils sharing in Italian public life to new heights. Rather than speculate on the likelihood of such reform, the following sections outline the similarities and differences between France's transition to the Fifth Republic; the history of proposals for presidential reform in Italy, and their apparent burial in 1998; and the debate between proponents of semi-presidential reform and the direct election of the premier.

Similarities and Differences of Italy's Transition and France's (based on Pasquino, 1995)

Since 1989-93, Italy can be seen as undergoing a major regime change within democracy, the only other example of which is the transition from the Fourth to the Fifth Republic in France. The similarities are not only of the transition

itself, but also of the quasi-assembly nature of the French fourth republic and Italian government, 1948-92, as well as of Italy's constitutional tradition (Fusaro 1998a: 41, n.40). Similarities of the transition can be summarised, thus (Pasquino, 1995: xi-xii):

- a) A strong and diffuse demand for institutional and constitutional change focusing on: a reinforced executive, a changed relationship between parliament, parties and government; a redefinition of competences, including that of the judiciary
- b) total restructuring of the parties and the party system
- c) political reorganisation of society and linkages with government: clientelism and parentela (government - interest group links via a privileged party) no longer acceptable

Possibly, one might add: d) the French opposition took 10 years to give itself a leadership, and 23 to win a presidential election, and the Italian Left is deeply divided and unlikely to win an election in 2006 at least.

The differences can be summarised thus (Pasquino, 1995: pp. x-xi):

- a) The Italian transition process is a long one, the French one was rapid. The reasons for this perhaps lie in other differences which can all be linked to de Gaulle:
- b) The French transition had a leader, de Gaulle, who
- c) established a movement which he then let develop independently, inspired by and referring to him ['working towards' him, one might say]
- d) had a practical vision – he had a set of experts draft a constitution, and he had a vision of what France was, the institutions it needed, the political evolution needed; and he implemented this practical vision. In Italy, notwithstanding the 2nd Joint (or bicameral) Constitutional Committee (1993-94), there is only limited support for parliamentary reform or reform of the form of government, change has focused on electoral mechanisms. [Since 1995 there has been a third JCC (1997-98), one of whose four sub-committees did look at the form of government. It opted for, and proposed to parliament, a form of semi-presidentialism. However, none of the Committee's proposals were adopted. The focus of reform has since shifted towards devolution, from 1997, and federalism since 2001.]

Semi-presidential initiatives

Semi-presidentialism can be said to have become a real possibility from late 1995. Prior to that, a brief 'pre-history' can be sketched (Fusaro, 1998a: 101, n. 130 ff.):

- a) In the mid-1940s, the Action Party (a flash party, at best, as it turned out), proposed an American style presidential system
- b) In the early 1960s, Rinaldo Ossola of the Italian Republican Party (PRI) sought to pursue the Gaullist path, split with his party, and was widely branded an authoritarian and even Fascist, despite his anti-Fascist background.
- c) In the 1970s, some anti-communist Christian Democrats opposed to the rapprochement with the PCI (Communists) were inspired in this direction by the political scientist Antonio Lombardo.
- d) In the late 1970s and through the 1980s, the Socialists (PSI) led by Bettino Craxi talked of a 'grand reform' and semi-presidentialism, inspired by Mitterrand's success in reorganising the Left and getting elected as president.
- e) In 1990, a Liberal (PLI) proposal

- f) In December 1994, on the eve of the resignation of Silvio Berlusconi's government, a proposal by Gianfranco Ciaurro in the Institutional Reform Committee chaired by Roberto Speroni (LN).

The last of these saw a division between those promoting the direct election of the Prime Minister, and those supporting semi-presidentialism. The former was promoted by Serio Galeotti who had first made the suggestion in 1966, inspired by Maurice Duverger's (and the Club Jean Moulin) criticism of the Fifth Republic's constitution – criticisms that Fusaro regards as having been proved correct in the long run. The semi-presidential proposal was made by Gianfranco Ciaurro and sought to meet some of the latter's criticisms of the French model by two amendments. First, the synchronisation to a five year cycle of the terms of office of parliament and president. Second, the requirement that the president resign if he dissolved parliament (Fusaro 1998a).

The fall of Berlusconi's government in December 1994 led to a constitutional confrontation between the Prime Minister and the President, with the former demanding that an early election be called in keeping with the new constitutional spirit - that is, the public's consistently declared support in opinion polls for the direct election of the president, and reformists' intention that the electorate should be decisive in determining the process of government formation. The President preferred to remain loyal to the existing constitution and to avoid the risk of an indecisive election when already two had been held in three years (1992 and 1994). The subsequent government comprised entirely non-parliamentarians and was led by a former Director General of the Bank of Italy, Lamberto Dini, who had become Berlusconi's Treasury Minister. By the end of 1995, concern was growing that effective technocratic government (already seen to some extent with Amato in 1992-93 and then Prime Minister Ciampi, 1993-94, who was the former Governor of the Bank of Italy) was consolidating the delegitimisation of political parties. Elections could not be delayed indefinitely and the first serious discussion of the reform of government took place. Again, the two alternatives of strengthening the government and Prime Minister, or adopting a semi-presidential system were put forward (Fusaro 1998a: 111).

The Joint Constitutional Committee of 1997-98 established four sub-committees, one dealing with the form of government, chaired by Senator Cesare Salvi (DS). The extent of disagreement between the parties was marked, ranging from minority support for 'pure' parliamentarism (Communist Refoundation) to 'pure' presidentialism (some within Forza Italia). The Right was relatively (sic) united, supporting semi-presidentialism (AN, CCD-CDU) or presidentialism but, given the impossibility of that, reinforcement either of the president or the prime minister. The Left was split four ways, between supporters of

- a) parliamentarism (RC)
- b) parliamentarism with a strong electoral bonus to reinforce the majority (PPI)
- c) neo-parliamentarism with PM candidate names on the ballot papers (which proposal was applied in 2001)
- d) supporters of semi-presidentialism (Rinnovamento Italiano and some MPs within the DS).

The committee agreed to draft two proposals, one focusing on semi-presidentialism, the other on the prime minister and/or cabinet. It further agreed that the losing side would be allowed to amend the other side's proposal before it was presented to parliament. The cabinet-prime ministerial side of the argument appeared to have the majority in the committee. When it came to the vote, the Northern League, which for the most part was absent from its deliberations, participated and backed the semi-presidential position. The proposal adopted was then amended and

presented to parliament. The entire process was abandoned in the summer of 1998. Most judgments of the 'semi-presidential' proposal put forward were negative. For those who wanted a strong president, the office's powers were insufficient, for those favouring the strengthening of the electoral-cabinet-prime minister dimension of government, they were too strong. In any event, the constitutional and political implications were ambiguous. The nature of the electoral system would be crucial to actual outcomes, as would the character of the first directly elected President and the first Prime Minister, and the interaction between them. As far as electoral reform was concerned, a pact reached outside of parliament and hence the Joint Committee drafted a proposal for a system which saw 15 per cent of seats awarded as a bonus to reinforce the government majority, but this was incomplete in important details and never implemented (Fusaro 1998a: 111-147). Many commentators regarded it as incompatible with the aims of semi-presidentialism, or as, at the very least, 'not conducive to good results in terms of the opportunities offered to the voters, the incentives given to the formation of homogenous coalitions, the constraints on the behaviour of the president and the prime minister' (Pasquino, 1998: fn.13, p.54).

Following the failure of the Joint Committee, interest in macro-constitutional reform waned, with federal reform introduced as part of the electoral manoeuvring between the Left, which feared annihilation in northern constituencies in the 2001 elections, and the Right. Within the latter, the Northern League sought, and continues to seek, reforms, which are particularly radical. Ignazi (2003: 82) describes the situation following the failure of 1997-98 and of the referendum initiative of 1999 (which sought to render parliamentary elections entirely a matter of plurality voting in single member constituencies) as one of 'deathly silence'. He also suggests (p.83) that it serves little purpose to survey the rash of new initiatives when 'everything and its opposite is said every day'.¹

The Debate

Objections to semi-presidentialism refer either to its ambiguity and indeterminacy, or to the danger represented by the concentration of political power that semi-presidentialism results in. The former notes that the term covers very different actual practices, and so can be vacuous given that some support it to avoid major reform regarding key powers to appoint ministers, including the prime minister, and to dissolve parliament, and legislative efficacy. Better, then, it is argued, to promote a clearly monist system, rather than a dualist one. That is to focus on the reinforcing of the prime minister, their cabinet and/or the parliamentary majority. Regarding the latter, the following concerns re the Fifth Republic's constitution specifically have been raised, and met the following responses (Pasquino 1996):

To declare states of emergency (Art.16) – reflects Algerian crisis; is fenced in by strong safeguards (requires consultation with PM, the speakers of both houses and the Constitutional Council which judges appropriateness of measures to the requirement to be met, the nation must be informed by an official message, parliament is summoned and may not be dissolved); it is not necessary to insert this clause in Italian constitution

To call referendums – but the government or both houses must propose it; it applies specifically to the organisation of public powers, the ratification of treaties and EU accords and some socio-economic issues (1995 amendment). In Italy, the whole issue of referendums is one of concern and debate in any case, and this issue should be considered in this context.

Nomination of the PM – never been an issue in France, given constraints of parliamentary outcomes and anticipation of the electoral consequences (assuming the President may be re-elected) of ignoring the democratic will thus expressed. Of marginal significance elsewhere, for example Portugal and Poland, but essentially positive impact in promoting stability and ensuring governance. In any case, the Italian president of the republic formally has this power already - but has rarely been able to challenge the will of the party secretaries.

Dissolution of parliament – the Italian President has this power, and it is appropriate after presidential elections, if not simultaneous with parliamentary, and where parliament is unable to support a majority government, if the aim is to provide decision-making efficacy.

Legislative powers of the PM independent of parliament – Art.49, 3. This can be vetoed only by an unlikely vote of no confidence, but the German constitution has a similar measure (Art. 81) which is, moreover, not open to veto; Neither Duverger nor Mény, French scholars attentive to the faults of the Fifth republic's constitution, have been greatly concerned by this clause; and in any case, it need not be inserted in a revised/new Italian constitution.

Majority tyranny given the concentration of powers. The true home of this is Westminster, whereas it is less likely where each bloc comprises more than one party; a robust democratic culture should be able to stigmatise arrogant position-taking by majorities sufficiently to cause them to lose elections, or for majorities to restructure themselves in anticipation of such consequences (as happened to Mrs Thatcher in 1990).

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Joint Committee, Pasquino continued to promote the introduction of a semi-presidential system like the French one (1999). Addressing the challenge this presented to Italian sensibilities, particularly on the Left, he conceded that it was difficult to see a directly elected president as having an effective constitutional guarantee role in contemporary Italian circumstances. He nevertheless continued that French presidents had frequently adopted a style seeking to accommodate this role, and argued that even directly elected presidents emerging from bipolar elections can not necessarily be treated in any simple fashion as being 'Left' or 'Right' where they seek re-election, and given that they always have as responsibility before history/ historians. For both reasons, presidents tend to seek to represent national unity and to uphold the constitution. Since then, the debate has moved on again. Berlusconi has affirmed his leadership of the centre-right and, indeed, become Prime Minister, and has done so in such a way that many regard his leadership as that of a clan rather than that of a government leader promoting his and its vision of the national interest. With regard to the introduction of a semi-presidential constitution, specifically, the concern of e.g. Ignazi (see cover sheet) now focuses on the cumulation of media-cultural, economic and political powers which is not found in the UK. That is, the fear is not just of majority tyranny à la Westminster, but of the consolidation of an illiberal democracy in a country where the liberalism of its political culture has been historically weak (Bufacchi and Burgess 2001).

Forbes magazine has identified Berlusconi as the richest politician in the world (Corriere della Sera, 28 February 2003), and concern about the increasingly direct role of economic power in core political institutions has been raised by Domenico Fisichella (2003), the National Alliance's leading political scientist. Thus, despite having promoted the direct election of the Prime Minister in 1997-98, Fisichella apparently now advises against this given the danger of a return to 'oligarchy' (others talk of the return of plutocracy [Salvadori 2002]), and even supports the new movementism in Italy (Di Vico 2003). This latter phenomenon is essentially directed against Berlusconi's cumulation of powers and is regarded by other commentators in much more negative terms (Pombeni 2002).

Regarding the media issue, the government's extremely controversial role in decision-making within RAI (via the Management Board whose composition it effectively determined in the spring of 2002), provoked the liberal commentator Ralf Dahrendorf (2002) to express the need for constitutionally guaranteed media pluralism in modern democracies. So important is this principle, that Dahrendorf identifies it as a third fundamental liberal discovery after those of constitutional pluralism, identified by Montesquieu, and economic pluralism identified by Hayek. Dahrendorf suggested that the parliamentary opposition be given the right of veto over nominations to senior positions in the public broadcasting service (RAI). Logically, this idea is connected to that of proposals for parliamentary 'opposition statutes' which have become a major feature of current constitutional reform proposals. Sartori, a liberal conservative also much exercised by the cumulation of powers, has also made a number of proposals regarding the need to allow the opposition a formal public voice via the RAI, including splitting it in to two, with one channel (of three) entirely managed by those sympathetic to the opposition (Corriere della Sera, 2 March 2003). More significantly, Sartori has also shifted his position from being a strong supporter for the introduction of a French style electoral systems and semi-presidential constitution to rejecting this as 'dangerous' (Corriere della Sera, 11 February 2003).

Conclusions

Since Berlusconi's nomination as Prime Minister, the guarantee role of President Ciampi has been rather conspicuous, even though the president has sought to be as discreet as possible. The argument that reinforcing the executive in any way, via semi-presidential or prime ministerial reform, is undemocratic or at least dangerous in the current circumstances, is once again prominent on the Left – and amongst some conservatives, as the cases of Fisichella and Sartori indicate. In addition, the new social movement referred to briefly above, which has largely been called in to being by activists despairing of the passivity and immobilism of the Left's parliamentary elites, probably looks more to Sergio Cofferati, the former Secretary of the major trade union confederation (the CGIL), than to anyone else, as a source of authority, and Cofferati opposes all constitutional reform. It is not clear that the alarmist concerns of the opponents of reform are right. Cavalli (2003), who helped put presidential reform on the agenda in the 1980s, ridicules the idea that if directly elected in 2006 Berlusconi would bring the danger of despotism. In November 2002, the gossip was that reform was possible. The President and the speakers of the two chambers would not permit such reform by simple majority, it was argued, and with this assistance and guarantee, some agreement between the government and opposition focusing on reinforcing the Prime Minister, would perhaps be possible. This may have been an optimistic view. In any event, the introduction of a semi-presidential system seemed very unlikely. In effect, there is undoubtedly a significant weight of political opinion against such a development. As there always has been. The taboo lingers on, and has been strengthened on the Left, at least, and a window of opportunity seems to have been lost. The irony is that some observers regard the Left, rather than the Right, as needing reform of the executive if it is to have any prospect of being able to govern effectively, and hence of getting re-elected. And only thus, and by presenting a reformist programme offering effective government, can it present a real challenge to the Right. Italian reformism seems to be somewhere between a paradox and a dilemma.

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- ¹ A very brief summary overview of bills presented in the current Chamber of Deputies is as follows:
- Bill 260 Spini (DS) 30 May 2001 (renews/amends 197 of XIIIth legislature amending articles 83, 85, 86, 87, 88 e 92) – link to bill 250 on majoritarian ES; DE Pres & reinforced powers
- Bill 376 Buttiglione (CDU) et al. 31 May 2001 (govt formation, powers & dissolution) – link to majority bonus ES; reinforcement of PM esp. positive vote of no confidence
- Bill 875 Selva (AN) 15 June 2001 – DE of Pres and increased powers
- Bill 2168 Buontempo (AN) Jan 2002 – DE of President, procedures for
- Bill 3058 Boato (Greens) 22 July 2002 – (re-presents 7314 of XIII signed by all group leaders of C-L) reinforce PM incl. constructive vote of no confidence
- Bill 3523 Pier Paolo Cento (Greens) 7 Jan 2003 – Modify articles 92, 94, 134: German model of PM elected by parliament and constructive vote of no confidence
- Bill 3531 Monaco (Margherita) 13 Jan 2003 - 5 yr. govt & opposition statute: reinforced PM, but not Chancellor model because CVofNC ineffective (works in Germany via change of coalition formula, ie ‘ribaltone’; problem in Italy is often of collapse of majority, but with no alternative majority. Italian PS is fragmented and coalition discipline less. Allow minority govts by avoiding necessity of confidence vote; allow PM to seek early elections; Opposition statute: guarantee symmetrical position of leader of Opposition to PM via right to participate in all Chamber and Senate activities, right of response to PM’s declarations, equal time available to govt and to opposition’ the right to require direct tv broadcast of important debates etc
- Bill 3584 Chiaromonte (DS) et al. 23 Jan 2003 – Govt stability and opposition statute, based on OT programme of 2001, focusing on: a) DE of PM as practised in Italy’s sub-national authorities, with PM able to dissolve parliament; b) opposition statute, with leader of opposition as AGIW
- Bill 3639 Cabras (DS) et al. 5 Feb 2003 – new govt only within majority that won election; Opposition Leader introduced; PM with powers to suggest and revoke ministers, to suggest elections; President elected on wider basis. Link to parliamentary reform, all this linked to CoD only; Senate to link to concurrent federal) legislation.
- Bill 3659 Intini (SDI) et al. 7 Feb 2003 – details not available
- Bill 3684 Mantini (Margherita) proposal (Bassanini, Mancino, Amato, Salvi) 13 Feb 2003 – reinforced PM via indication on voting slips; nomination of PM on basis of that; PM (not council of ministers) has vote of confidence; powers to direct govt action; CVofNC. This to be balanced by reinforced constitutional guarantees, by abrogative referendum with quorum of 25 not 50% (and 700,000 signatures to initiate), by an opposition statute, by tighter controls on electoral regulation including incompatibility and conflict of interest rules, CC to decide on disputed election results etc., ...
- Senate – incomplete
(Senate 1662 Tonino (DS) 31 July 2002 – govt stabilisation around the PM, and an opposition statute)