

Versione italiana

On Sunday, 20 September (from 7:00 to 23:00) and Monday, 21 September (from 7:00 to 15:00) voting will take place for the administrative elections and the constitutional referendum regarding the law revising the constitution in order to reduce the number of parliamentarians. In the counting of the ballots, precedence will be given to the referendum and the regional elections. The ballot count for the Mayoral election will instead begin on Tuesday, 22 September at 15:00. Apart from the referendum, Venetians will therefore be voting for the president of the Region, the Mayor, and the presidents of the Municipalities.

Concerning the laws for local elections it is worth recalling that if none of the candidates for Mayor obtain 50% +1 of the votes, there will be a runoff two weeks later.

One can vote for only a Mayoral candidate (in this case the vote is attributed only to the Mayoral candidate); only the list connected to the Mayoral candidate, or the Mayoral candidate and the list (in both these cases the vote is attributed to both the Mayoral candidate and to the list); finally it is possible to place a split vote, voting for a Mayoral candidate and for another list not connected to that candidate (in this case the vote is attributed both to the Mayoral candidate and to the unconnected list).

The winning candidate for Mayor will enjoy a stable majority as the majority status guarantees the newly elected Mayor sixty percent of the 36 seats in the Venice City Council. The rest of the councilors are chosen based on the method of successive divisions, better known as the D'Hondt method, for the lists that have surpassed the threshold of three percent.

It is possible to express up to two preferences for candidates for city councilor as long as one is female and one male (or vice versa), under penalty of cancellation of the second preference.

Regarding the municipalities, this is a one ballot election with no runoff. The candidate who obtains one vote more wins. This is the reason why the center-left has governed five of the six municipalities. The only municipality won by the center-right has been Favaro. The last time, however, the center-right ran with more separate candidates, while today their unity could hold some surprise, even in the "bastion" of the center-left such as the old city.

Now let's take a look at the candidates and lists for the city challenge.

Luigi Brugnaro and the center-right

Luigi Brugnaro, the incumbent Mayor, is supported by five lists: Lista Fucsia, Forza Italia, Fratelli d'Italia, Lega, and Le città. The latter is a list led by Roberto Panciera and Antonio Paruzzolo, two former counselors from the center-right government of Giorgio Orsoni (the list also includes former members of the Democratic Party).

The Mayor is working for re-election and, according to the polls, his faction is running around fifty percent. Brugnaro is favored in this electoral competition, however, problems could arise in the event he does not manage to win on the first turn. As is known, the runoff vote is a new election. If the Mayor's faction ends up in a runoff, the center-right would have to bring back out to vote all the voters that supported them on the first turn, an operation which in 2015 assured Brugnaro the victory through calling to vote of the center-right voters that had been dispersed among the various lists during the first vote.

It will be interesting to see the differential, if there is one, between the votes for the Region President, Luca Zaia, and the Mayor of Venice. The vote tally for Zaia could even interest the center-left, given the support the Lega "governor" enjoys, especially after the Covid-19 emergency. It will also be worth following the internal competition between Lista Fuscina, Lega and Fratelli d'Italia.



Luigi Brugnaro

Pier Paolo Baretta and the center-left

Pier Paolo Baretta is Undersecretary of Economy and Finance in the government of Giuseppe Conte. Baretta leads a coalition of five lists: Partito democratico, Venezia è tua, Svolta in Comune, Idea Comune per Mestre e Venezia and Verde Progressista.

Venezia è tua is the list that brings together Matteo Renzi's Italia Viva, the PSI, and +Europa: Svolta in comune is the list that unites Italia in Comune, the party founded by the Mayor of Parma, Federico Pizzarotti, who is a former member of M5S, and Volt, the progressive and pan-European party that is present in thirty-two European countries; Idea Comune is the list of the former Mayoral candidate for the Lega Nord, Gian Angelo Bellati, which

also includes the former PD city councilor Maurizio Baratello and Aldo Mariconda, the Lega Nord's candidate for Mayor of Venice in 1993, defeated by Massimo Cacciari in the runoff; Venezia Verde e Progressista is the list that brings together Articolo Uno, Verdi, Sinistra Italiana, Possibile and Rifondazione Comunista.

Baretta is the so-called underdog, the candidate who has the better chance of being defeated. But that does not mean he has already lost. Brugnaro, in fact, can enjoy the so-called bandwagon effect, "climbing on board the carriage of the victor" that happens both at the level of the formation of lists as well as in the perception of the voters, for whom it would not make sense to choose a candidate, Baretta, who according to the polls has lost before starting: thus these voters abstain or vote for the better-known candidate, especially if they don't have an extremely negative opinion of the candidate (and this could be a bitter surprise for the center-left).

Baretta, instead, could rely on the opposite effect, precisely that of the underdog, the vote for the less favored candidate that many undecided voters could express in the hope that their vote "counts". Much depends, however, on the ability of the candidate to mobilize voters and excite a little enthusiasm with his personal story, political commitment, or his reputation. On some of these points, Baretta falls short. However, if Brugnaro should not win in the first turn and Baretta was able to reach an agreement with the other candidates for Mayor - from Giovanni Andrea Martini to Marco Gasparinetti to Sara Visman - perhaps the possibility of defeating the incumbent Mayor is not so remote: as long as they can find an agreement. And it is not out of the question that Baretta, Martini, Gasparinetti, and Visman can do that.



Pier Paolo Baretta

Sara Visman and the Movimento Cinque Stelle

Sara Visman is the candidate for the Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S). A City Councilor for M5S in the previous Council, Visman won out over the candidacy of Andrea Grigoletto, after many months of uncertainty that led Davide Scano, former M5S candidate for Mayor, to say that the party risked political suicide.

There is no alliance with the center-left in the first turn, despite the fact the M5S and the PD are in the national government together. Baretta has declared himself ready to talk, and Visman had made it clear that she is happy to be considered “an interlocutor with whom to start a conversation”. A prelude, perhaps, to support for Baretta in the event of a runoff? It’s hard to say and probably not even in the interest of the M5S to declare it now, if they want to preserve their votes and try to represent the protest vote, notwithstanding their governing role at the national level.

M5S has never done very well in Venice during administrative elections: 3.12% in 2010 and 12.6% in 2015 compared to 27.65% (national elections 2013) and 28.28 % (national elections 2018). In 2015, according to the Istituto Cattaneo, a large majority of its voters preferred to skip the ballot

box in the runoff rather than express a preference for either Casson or Brugnaro. The alliance with the Movement was a subject that divided the PD last Fall, when at the time Massimo Cacciari proposed Alessandra Taverna, former president of the Parco della Laguna, as a candidate for Mayor, opposing the soon evaporated candidacy of the Rector of Ca' Foscari Michele Bugliese, in an attempt to forge an agreement with the Grillini.



Sara Visman

Marco Gasparinetti and Terra e Acqua

Marco Gasparinetti is the founder and spokesman of Gruppo 25 Aprile, a movement born in 2014 to create an alternative to Luigi Brugnaro and which during the administrative elections of 2015 almost succeeded in inserting for candidates from the movement in the Lista Casson, and idea that then went up in smoke with Felice Casson's decision to entrust the role of head of the list to Nicola Pellicani.

In January, a political age ago, Gasparinetti expressed his public support for the candidacy of the Rector of Ca' Foscari, Michele Bugliese, a candidacy that then evaporated. The group, therefore, conducted an online vote of Council candidates and activists who unanimously chose Gasparinetti as the Mayoral candidate for the list Terra e Acqua.

As the list's candidate for Mayor has specified, Terra e Acqua is an alternative to Brugnaro and Baretta. And this is the biggest problem for the Mayoral candidate of the center-left. If Brugnaro does not win on the first vote, for the runoff Baretta will need the votes of all who oppose the incumbent Mayor, even those of Gasparinetti's list. However, Gasparinetti has already made it known that in the case of a runoff he will approve the alliance only with a favorable vote of two-thirds of the list's City Council candidates. Gasparinetti's words about Marco Borghi, a center-left candidate for the Municipality of Venezia-Murano-Burano, and husband of a Council candidate on

the Terra e Acqua list, could give Baretta hope.

The list is running around 5% in the polls.



Marco Gasparinetti

Giovanni Andrea Martini and Tutta la città insieme

Giovanni Andrea Martini is the outgoing president of the Municipalità di Venezia-Murano-Burano and the former coordinator of the Venice circles of the PD. He founded the movement Tutta la città insieme and then left the Democratic Party, in February of this year, after having declared his candidacy and spent resources campaigning for the center-left primaries which were ultimately never held. Martini leads a list made up of people who come from various associations, but also some who come from the PD or other center-left organizations.

Relations between the PD and the center-left are tense, even if in recent weeks Martini and Baretta have found an agreement on a candidate for the president of the municipalities, with the exception of Favaro-Campalto-Tessera, where the center-left has made former councilor for the municipality Roberta Tossato their candidate, and Martini has put up Chiara Zecchin.

It's an agreement, however, whose usefulness would seem to diminish with the exclusion of Martini's list from the election for the six municipalities. The Veneto court (TAR) has in fact confirmed this exclusion due to the absence of the countersigning of the list, the program, and the estimated expenses, apart from errors in the authentication of the candidates' signatures.

It's difficult to imagine that in the event of a runoff between Brugnarò and Baretta that Martini will not support the candidate of the center-left. The recent dialog begun between the two

regarding the municipalities would seem to confirm that.

Like Terra e Acqua and Gasparinetti, Tutta la città insieme is very active. While it is a question of different political operations, if the political adventure of the two lists which call themselves civic but which orbit around the center-left does not end well, it will be because for some reflection about the capacity of operations that mix politics with associations to represent sufficient numbers of people to realize the changes they are calling for.



Giovanni Andrea Martini

The other candidates

Among the various Mayoral candidates, there are many “minor” lists. Among these, there is Alessandro Busetto, who is the Mayoral candidate of the Partito Comunista dei Lavaratori, the Trotskyist party whose national spokesman is Marco Ferrando. Busetto, who is RSU at University Ca' Foscari and coordinator of the regional CUB union, was a candidate in 2015, when he obtained 0.34% of the vote.

There is also Marco Sitran, one of the promoters of the referendum for the separation of Venice and Mestre, who is a candidate for Mayor with his Lista Civica Sitran. Sitran was a candidate for City Council in 2015 with the list “Mestre Venezia due grandi città”, supporting the candidacy for Mayor of Gian Angelo Bellati (Lega Nord).

Professor Stefano Zecchi is, instead, the Mayoral candidate for the Partito dei Veneti, a political formation born in 2019 from the various autonomist and independence movements (Independensa

Vèneta, Semo Vèneto, Grupo Chiavegato, Grande Nord Vèneto, Rete 22 de Ottobre, Vèneto Stado, Projeto Vèneto Autònomo, Belun Autònoma Rejon Dołomiti, Prima el Vèneto and Pòpoło de San Marco).

Finally, Maurizio Callegari is the candidate for Italia Giovane Solidale, a national party that includes the Movimento partite iva, and which has among its candidates for the Council Gino Mascari, owner of one of the oldest and best-known businesses in the city. Callegari also has the support of the Partito del valore umano and of Vox Italia, the party born in 2019 after the fall of the Lega-M5S government, and which defines itself as a “populist, sovereignist and socialist” party (among the founders is also the philosopher Diego Fusaro).

Translated by Paul M. Rosenberg for [Campaign For A Living Venice](#)