

Political crisis locked, allies can think about local elections

The prime minister's ultimatum to parties has unblocked the negotiation on the appointment of deputy ministers and undersecretaries of the Conte II Cabinet, which had indeed dragged for days. After having reached the agreement on the top roles of the government over a week ago and having won two confidence votes between Monday and Tuesday, the dialogue between the M5S and PD has continued with the goal of completing the administration team through the appointment of its remaining key figures. In addition to their function within ministries, undersecretaries play in fact another fundamental role when they oversee the parliamentary works and set up a fruitful dialogue with ruling majority MPs. Overall the match proved itself to be no less complex than the one performed to identify the ministries' top jobs, something demonstrated by the continuous postponements decided by M5S and PD or by the appeal that the prime minister himself had to make in order to reach a final synthesis point. This morning the Council of ministers appointed 10 deputy ministers and 32 undersecretaries, assigning their majority of roles to the 5Stars with 21 undersecretaries and 6 deputy ministers. PD obtained 18 undersecretaries and 4 vice ministers, while the two remaining junior coalition partners – the left-wing LeU and Italians abroad group MAIE – get two and one undersecretaries respectively. The oath set for next Monday will formally conclude the summer crisis, which, moreover, has been overcome relatively quickly despite the extent of the political torsion made by the 5Stars: from the rightwing

League to center-left PD in less than a month. Another interesting element of dialogue between coalition allies regards the proposal launched by minister and PD manager Dario Franceschini, who called his party to an alliance with M5S ahead of the upcoming regional elections. According to M5S ruling staff the issue would not even be on the agenda, but it is a fact that the new government allies must react also at the local level against the irresistible tsunami that was set in motion by center-right parties. The first months of 2019 have indeed confirmed the trend observed since last year, when a League-led coalition has managed to conquer almost all the regions that went to poll and were already governed by the center-left: Lazio excluded, the center-right has won in Molise, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Valle d'Aosta and in the autonomous province of Trento. This trend has re-emerged also in the current year, with new victories of the center-right coalition in Abruzzo, Sardinia, Basilicata and Piedmont between February and May. On 27 October it will be the turn of Umbria, where League leader Salvini has already opened the election campaign. Then it will be the turn of Calabria and above all of Emilia-Romagna, the historic stronghold of Italian left in which the League has emerged as the strongest party after European elections, taking control of many municipalities such as Ferrara and Forlì. With this regard, the impression is that despite the denials, coalition allies are moving into a negotiation with an outcome maybe uncertain, but not for this to be confined in the realm of the impossible.