

## Emilia-Romagna is the ruling coalition's last stand

A lot has been written and said about the symbolic value of a possible victory of the center-right in Emilia-Romagna, one of the last regional pillars of the Italian left that never as this year has been at risk of falling. In general terms, the current power relationship of Italian parties has to be verified, especially when the center-right has won 11 regional elections out of 12 in the last two and a half years (Lazio was the only exception). In addition to understanding whether the League's boom in recent months has been a passing phenomenon or the beginning of a broader trend. But perhaps the most interesting data on which it is better to stop and reflect is another and concerns closely the reasons for this potential overtaking. All the more so when one considers that in the last five years the wealthy Northern region has been administered by a capable president like Stefano Bonaccini, who just two months ago placed himself in second place in the general ranking drawn up by the polling company SWG to line up regional governors according to their electors' appreciation. Bonaccini was the only leftist politician in the top-5, dominated by the right. In fact, in Emilia-Romagna the erosion of the once overwhelming consensual advantage enjoyed by the center-left comes from afar: in 2014 Bonaccini himself managed to win with a much lower percentage than those obtained by his predecessors (49%), with also a smaller turnout (37%). In this context, there is also the strong desire for change widespread across the country that directly feeds into the League's and center-right's popular support. Which have

grown tremendously over the past two years, to the point of overtaking the left in Emilia-Romagna already at last year's European elections, with a peremptory 44.7% to 38.7% - and after having caressed the dream of winning also in the 2018 general elections, when the match ended instead 35.3% to 33.7% for the left. The M5S also intervened to disrupt the region's electoral landscape, with a sharp consensual trajectory that had the primary effect of ferrying many voters from left to right. To the point that there's nothing wrong in writing that Emilia-Romagna is a region where the center-right coalition is the political force to beat. For sure it will be a confrontation on the razor's edge, with only a few thousand votes to decide the outcome. Other variables are the "Sardine" youth protest movement's effect on local politics and therefore their ability to mobilize a sufficient number of young electors in anti-Salvini function, as well as the mechanism of the electoral system. The split voting calls into question the voters of the M5S, who will be able to opt to vote for the party's list (to elect regional councilors) and also the candidate running for governor - in this case Bonaccini (left) or Bonaccorsi (right), given that the M5S' Benini has no hope of making it. Finally, a passage on the political consequences of the round of voting: many speculate that a clear defeat of the left could lead to the resignation of PD secretary Zingaretti or even to collapse of the government. It is legitimate to think otherwise: a debacle in the iconic Northern fort will further compact the ruling coalition, which would find itself at its last stand.