

# Sergio Mattarella re-elected as President of the Italian Republic

The outgoing head of state, Sergio Mattarella, was re-elected on 29 January as President of the Italian Republic. In the eighth round of voting, he garnered 759 votes, 254 more than the simple majority needed in the fourth round of voting (a two-thirds majority is required in the first three rounds of voting) and 89 more votes than in his first election on 31 January 2015. This result is also the second best result in a presidential election after Sandro Pertini's victory on 8 July 1978 (by 832 votes). The college of electors that elected the head of state includes the 630 deputies, the 315 senators, the 6 life senators (former presidents of the Republic) and 58 representatives of the 20 regions of the country, i.e. 1,009 people.

Although he had said he did not want to serve a second term as President, stating that he "had other plans", Sergio Mattarella was forced to give in to those who asked him to run again and changed his decision so as to avoid a political crisis in Italy. The Head of State indicated that the Covid-19 pandemic and Italy's economic and social difficulties obliged him to accept this second mandate and that he was committed to "responding to the expectations and hopes of the people".

Indeed, the various political parties were unable to agree on a successor. The President of the Council, Mario Draghi, former President of the European Central Bank (ECB) (2011-2019), had long been the favourite, but many voters preferred not to vote for him so as

not to upset the fragile balance on which the broad government coalition he has led since February 2021 rests, bringing together right-wing parties (the League, Forza Italia), left-wing parties (the Democratic Party, Free and Equal), the Five-Star Movement (M5S) and a number of independents. The coalition is united around the need to manage the €209 billion of European funds allocated to Italy in the context of the health crisis and intended for the country's recovery. Voters also wanted to avoid calling early parliamentary elections before the end of the legislature in February 2023.

The outcome of the presidential election could nevertheless have consequences for Mario Draghi's coalition government.

Sergio Mattarella, 80, from Palermo (Sicily), was a professor of parliamentary law at the University of Palermo. A former member of the Christian Democracy, he was elected Member of Parliament in 1983 and regularly re-elected thereafter. He also held ministerial posts on four occasions: Minister for Relations with Parliament (1987-1989), then for Public Education (1989-1990), for Defence (1998-1999) and Vice-President of the Council (1998-1999) of the government of Massimo d'Alema (1998-2000).

In 1993, he was the rapporteur of the law (called *Mattarellum*) that modified the Italian electoral system (introducing a dose of majority voting to bring stability to the country). This law was applied until the elections of 31 May 2001.

## Presidential Elections in Italy

29<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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Sergio Mattarella retired from politics in 2008. He then served as a judge at the Constitutional Court.

02

He is the twelfth President of the Italian Republic and the first of Sicilian origin to hold this position. He is now also the second, after Giorgio Napolitano, to have been elected for a second term.

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