

## Elections, political and social activities

### Current definitions

#### **Abrogative referendum**

Art. 75 of the Constitution defines this type of referendum as a: “Popular referendum to deliberate the total or partial repeal of a law or a regulation with legal force, when requested by five hundred thousand voters or five regional Councils. Tax and budget legislation, amnesties or pardons and authorisations to ratify international treaties are not subject to referendum. All citizens called to elect the Chamber of Deputies have the right to participate in referendums. The referendum motion is accepted if the majority of those with the right to vote have voted and the majority of the votes have been validly expressed”.

#### **Chamber of deputies**

Body of the Italian Parliament, elected by universal, direct and secret suffrage. According to the Italian Constitution, the members of the Chamber are elected by constituency. Each constituency has a number of seats proportionally distributed according to its population. The constituency population is established by dividing the number of inhabitants of the Republic, as resulting from the latest general population census, by 618. The remaining 12 seats are reserved for the Italian citizens resident abroad.

#### **Constitutional referendum**

The faculty of constitutional referendum is established in art. 138 of the Italian Constitution: “Laws revising the Constitution and other constitutional laws should be adopted by each Chamber through two successive deliberations at an interval of not less than three months, and should be approved by the absolute majority of each Chamber in the second vote. The laws themselves should be submitted to popular referendum on the request, within three months from their publication, of one fifth of the members of either Chamber or five hundred thousand voters or five regional Councils. Laws submitted to referendum may not be passed unless approved by the majority of valid votes. Referendums may not take place if the law has been approved in the second vote by a two thirds majority in both Chambers.”

#### **Consultative referendum**

An advisory referendum on granting a constitutional mandate to the European Parliament, called on the basis of the constitutional law no. 2 dated 03 April 1989, in order to submit the following question to voters: «Do you believe that the European Communities should be transformed into an effective Union, with a Government responsible before the Parliament? Should the European Parliament be entrusted the mandate to draft a European Constitution to be submitted to direct ratification by the competent bodies of the Community Member States?». The response indicated voters' negative or positive opinion to the constitutional mandate for the European Parliament.

#### **Electoral list**

The list of persons holding the right to vote in political, administrative and/or other public consultations such as referendums. Voters are registered in the electoral lists by the election office of the municipality where they are registered as resident. Municipalities are in charge of surveying the resident electorate both in Italy and abroad in order to keep and revise the electoral lists.

#### **Electorate**

The total number of persons holding the right to vote in political, administrative and/or other public consultations such as referendums. Voters are registered in the electoral lists by the election office of the municipality where they are registered as resident. Municipalities are in charge of surveying the resident electorate both in Italy and abroad in order to keep and revise the electoral lists.

**European Parliament**

Organ of the European Union, elected by the European citizens with universal direct suffrage, once every five years. The Parliament is one of the two chambers which, together with the Council, exercises legislative power in the European Union. The Parliament shares with the Council both legislative and budget powers and exercises democratic power over the other Eu institutions, particularly the Commission. The members of the European Parliament are elected every five years. The electoral law for the election of the Italian representatives at the European Parliament was passed with provision no. 18 dated 24 January 1979, last modified by Parliament on 18 February 2009 by Law no. 10 dated 20 February 2009, introducing a minimum threshold of 4 per cent.

**Parliamentary term**

The term of the Parliament, fixed in five years. The first meeting of the Chamber of Deputies sets the beginning of the parliamentary term.

**Referendum**

A tool of direct democracy by which the electorate is directly consulted to express their opinion on specific issues of collective interest. Referendums are normally reserved for the abrogation of ordinary laws.

**Seat**

Each place on a collegial body assigned by vote.

**Senate**

Organ of the Italian Parliament, elected by universal, direct and secret suffrage. According to the Italian Constitution, the Senate is elected on a regional basis: 309 electoral seats are divided among the Regions in proportion to their population and 6 seats are assigned to the Foreign constituency. In addition to the electoral components, ex-Presidents of the Republic also have a life-long tenure in the Senate, in addition to the senators for life appointed by the President of the Republic from among the citizens that have brought honour to the Country for the highest merit for their social, scientific, artistic or literary work.