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Maroni: “First the north gets going again, starting with Lombardy”

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“There’s victory and there’s victory; there’s the election victory and the political victory, and they’re not necessarily the same. We got both, but especially we got the latter, the political victory; for us, it was strategic, and we made it.”

The press conference began with flashes from the journalists and a multitude of television cameras, just after 9 p.m. on Tuesday, 26 February; the speaker **was the new governor of Lombardy, Roberto Maroni**, who, with the counting still not over, was crowned the leader of Lombardy for the next 5 years.

“This is what the Northern League was after, in line with the decision of the congress. The plan behind ‘First the North’ is to create a macro-region that unites the North, so that it can compete with Rome and Brussels,” Maroni said. “The victory in Lombardy is a step towards achieving this plan. We knew that we had to come to an agreement with the PDL that would penalize us, but we’d already accounted for that. First, we saved the League with a high approval, over 4%, and that wasn’t easy. **The result was better than in 2001 and 2009.** We’re beginning a new page in the history of the League and of the North. Creating a macro-region, and keeping 75% of the taxes here will depend on us. We’ll start negotiating with Rome and Brussels. I wagered everything, fully aware that the risk was great, but we achieved our goal. From now on, we’re beginning a new page.”

Then everything stopped, the journalists turned around and Umberto Bossi walked in.

“Good evening President,” Maroni said.

“Padania!” was Bossi’s reply, as he brought his hand to his head, in salute. Then he sat down at the table and the attention returned to Maroni, who spoke about “someone I had the chance to get to know, a friend, Antonio Manganelli,” the police chief who underwent an emergency operation last Sunday, for a cerebral haematoma.

“A new phase is beginning with the creation of a macro-region,” Maroni added. “It’s a great dream, the victory of League militants and not only. A few minutes ago, Ambrosoli called to congratulate me. I assured him we’d have a loyal collaboration for this wonderful land.”

These words go beyond the “simple” victory in the regional election, and look to the political elections. **“No scam for the government in Rome.”**

The League is not interested in broad-based governments or scams. We govern with a strong majority and it is this majority that will talk to the government in Rome, which we see as weak. We're strong, with clear ideas and requests that we'll make as soon as the government is formed."

"The election campaign was intense; the whole League was mobilised. **Particular thanks go to the 'Maroni President' civic list, which got over 10%**; it didn't take votes away from the League. Its effect is very interesting, because it allows extending the boundaries, especially on a political level," Maroni concluded.

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