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Interview with Gigi Farioli: “We’ve eliminated municipal socialism.”

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For Mayor **Gigi Farioli**, 2014 coincides with the beginning of the second and final part of his second mandate as mayor, which began in June 2011. Since 2006, he has led the city council continuously, and there are two and a half years left of his five-year term. For the Mayor of Busto Arsizio, this is no time for evaluations; on the contrary, it is time to relaunch administrative action, at this difficult moment for towns councils. This is what he said in response to the questions of VareseNews, in this wide-ranging interview. One and a half year after the first policy document, he has announced the new one, which will look at 2015 and beyond.

Mayor Farioli, you have just formed a new council, but it has been criticised by various people because of its lack of new faces. Paola Reguzzoni and Alberto Armiraglio have already been on the council, and the only new faces is that of Mario Cislighi. Is there anything preventing you from making a real change?

It's true that the mayor chooses autonomously, but it's also true that he has to take into consideration the indications of the council groups. I think we've done the best we could with what we had available. Having said that, I'm convinced that there are clear difficulties in the party system, in general, difficulties concerning renewal. Despite this, I'm convinced that we've done so much better in Busto Arsizio than in Rome, with its Montis, Lettas and Renzis. The real result is the elimination of “municipal socialism”, with the abolition of 24 positions (those of the public services company AGESP, which the mayor himself endorsed in 2011, *ed.*).

What are the main objectives of the new council?

There are no objectives that individual councillors have to achieve; there has to be strong unity for us to achieve our general objectives. Tomorrow (Wednesday, *ed.*), at Volandia, the council and I are meeting with the stakeholders to define the city's needs, and not only, as best we can. The themes that the councillors will have to tackle, which I'm going to put in writing in the policy document are social inclusion, that is, the fight against old and new poverty, starting with complementary currency, with work, and by supporting small and medium-sized businesses, so that they apply their traditional strengths from a “glocal” perspective, expanding the view of the territory to Upper Milan Province, from the supra-municipal services, to Expo and beyond, implementation of the new territorial zoning plan, resuming the joint public-private partnership proposals for the large transformation areas, (the area of the Ferrovie Nord railways, Borri and the Malpensafiere exhibition centre), the instruments of Horizon 2020, on sustainable energy and social housing.

There is talk in several areas, of your standing at the European elections. Is that true, or pure fantasy?

I don't think I'll stand. I'd like to live the last part of my mandate as a free man, albeit in a weaker position, because this is my second mandate as mayor. I'll place my political future at the party's disposal, to contribute to bringing up a new, young political class.

Talking of parties, why did you choose to follow Silvio Berlusconi and his new Forza Italia?

Mainly to be consistent with the values I've always shared: overcoming the welfare state, family values, work and economic freedom, which Berlusconi has always pursued. But, I'd ask the new party to be more attentive to the participation of the people.

If you could ask Prime Minister Letta to grant a wish, as the mayor, what would you ask for?

I'd ask him to take account of the situation, in other words, we don't have political peace in the country, which is the main reason for his being in Palazzo Chigi; I'd ask him to resign. Stop being a Christian Democrat of old, kneeling to the wishes of Northern Europe. Not to mention the catastrophes that he created with his back and forth on taxes.

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