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Italy Conducts Referendum to Change the Constitution

More power to the Prime Minister, more autonomy for all regions

Monday represents the second day the Italians are summoned to come to vote in a referendum whose main purpose is to detect political public opinion trends with regard to the potential change of the constitution, Reuters informs. The changes would be related to the attributes of the Prime Minister, which will be multiplied under the new constitution, as well as to the greater autonomy the regions would be given. The referendum has already placed Berlusconi and Romano Prodi's political sides at odds again. On the one hand, the proponents, led by former Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi, stated that the new constitution would allow for the reduction in the number of decision-makers, and thus an increase in the finances of the national budget, as well as for a means to end the political instability which has been reigning the country, affecting the governmental authority in particular. On the other hand, Prodi's ruling coalition, expressed its pessimism towards the potential results of the referendum, declaring that these changes might actually bring more negative consequences than positive ones: it could weaken the office of the president, even fragment the nation and place the country in the position of spending billions of euros on something would not improve the national statute, let alone the fact that it could cripple an already frail economy. Moreover, a win for Berlusconi would strengthen the opposition and endanger Prodi's feeble majority. Sunday, the first day of balloting, revealed the fact that 35 percent of all 50 million eligible voters had expressed their opinions, which represents more than the amount of the population which took part in the 2001 national referendum.