

Italy's parliamentary election close

With up to a third of the electorate still undecided, former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's *People of Freedom Party* and the *Democratic Party* led by Walter Veltroni are locked in what political observers describe as the first real two-party contest in modern Italian history



People of Freedom (PdL)

New centre-right Christian-democratic, liberal-conservative coalition

Launched: Nov 2007. Made up of 20 groups including Forza Italia and National Alliance

Leader: *Silvio Berlusconi*



Democratic Party

New party formed by merger of two main centre-left parties

Founded: Oct 2007

Leader: *Walter Veltroni*, former Communist who now embraces free market. Mayor of Rome 2001-2008



Union of the Centre

Founded: Dec 2002.
Coalition of groups united by their mutual loathing for Berlusconi

Leader: *Pier Ferdinando Casini*



Rainbow Left

Founded: Dec 2007.
New far left coalition of Marxist-Green parties – could take votes from Veltroni

Leader: *Fausto Bertinotti*



Northern League

Founded: 1991.
Anti-immigration Lega Nord will fight election in coalition with Berlusconi's PdL

Leader: *Umberto Bossi*