

UNDER THE MATTRESS

Public funding to political parties since 1994



6

minidossier

May 2015

Political campaigns

Reimbursements for regional, european and national elections

Political groups

Expenses for activities and management

Party media

State grants for radios and newspapers

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INTRODUCTION

Article 49 of the Italian Constitution says that any citizen has the right to freely establish parties to contribute to determining national policies through democratic processes.

Before starting any kind of analysis, it is important the state the central and fundamental role that political parties play in the Italian democracy. The right to “freely establish parties” is at the heart of our modern society, a natural and necessary need for citizens that want to actively take part in the improvement and growth of their countries. A right, like all rights, that has a cost, obviously tied to the concept of democracy.

In a historical period characterized by an unprecedented economic crisis, it can also happen that the numbers of the Italian public expenditure, and of our democracy, are continuously challenged. Politics and political parties became the main target, guilty having collected for too long too much State money. In addition with several cases of corruption and improper use of public money, funding to political parties became a central topic in the widespread public debate.

At the heart of the debate were three aspects of the same phenomenon: electoral reimbursements, funding to regional and parliamentary groups, and the money granted to party media (newspapers and radio). All of this was the natural consequence of a way of understanding politics in Italy that has always seen the State as the main financier of parties. A idea that is slowly changing, as shown by the recent reform implemented by the Letta Government which introduced other ways of financing parties (2xMille).

The MiniDossier will look at the historical development of these three elements, attempting to understand: i) how much public money did parties actually receive, ii) the difference between certified expenses and electoral reimbursements and iii) the results that were achieved by using this money. All of this will be look at on three different institutional levels: regional, national and European.

Though they play an essential role in our democracy, we must remember that parties are not companies, and most of all, they can not base their survival on the idea of profit. One might say that in a period of crisis, the “business of political parties” continued, in various ways, to put money under the mattress.

One thing is to reimburse, another is finance, but it’s a whole different story when parties continue to accumulate money year after year. Always keeping in mind the central role played by political parties in our democratic system, it is also important to remember all the wrongdoings of recent years.

€
€ 2.480.702.266,11
 total reimbursements for
 electoral campaigns since 1994

14 
 elections
 analyzed

125 
 parties taken in
 consideration

25 
 party news outlets
 looked at

3 
 confronted institutional
 levels

The MiniDossier is based on official data published on the websites of: Court of Audit, Government, Official Gazette, Chamber of Deputies, Senate of the Republic and European Parliament up until May 12th 2015.

NORMATIVE REFERENCES

Constitution of the Italian Republic

ART 49 Any citizen has the right to freely establish parties to contribute to determining national policies through democratic processes.

Rules of Procedure of Senate

ART 16 1. In order to perform their functions, Parliamentary Groups shall be provided with premises and facilities, and contributions from the Senate budget, varying according to the size of the membership of each Group.
2. The contributions from the budget of the Senate altogether given to parliamentary groups, as determined by the resolutions adopted by the Presidential Council, are intended exclusively for institutional purposes by groups reported in parliamentary and political activities to it connected, study, research, publishing and communication, for the functioning of their organs and their structures, including those relating to the salary of staff.

ART 16 bis Each group approves an end of the year budget, within the terms and in the manners established, with reference to the contributions transferred by the Senate to the Group and intended to purposes referred to in Article 16

Accounting rules of parliamentary groups

ART 5 1. Each group has to publish on its website, and made freely available the following documents and data information:
a) internal organization of the Group;
b) details (date, amount, cause) of money orders, checks and bank transfers;
c) statements and management reports.
2. The documents, data and information referred to in subparagraph a) of the preceding paragraph shall be promptly published on the website but no later than seven days of their availability.
3. The documents referred to in point b) of paragraph 1 shall be published on a quarterly basis by the end of the month following the quarter of reference.
4. The documents referred to in subparagraph c) of paragraph 1 shall be published after the compliance check referred to in Article 8.

ART 6 1. The Parliamentary Groups are required to submit a final report at the end of parliamentary term, and in case of dissolution during the legislature, pursuant to Article 16-bis, paragraph 9, of the Rules of the Senate.
2. The contributions received by the Group that have not been fully spent within the purposes of Article 16 of the Rules of the Senate shall be returned to the Administration of the Senate, establishing for each Group a fund where the money will be placed for at least one year,
3. The funds referred to in paragraph 2 which have not been taken, in accordance with the preceding paragraph, shall be paid into the budget of the Senate five years after the end of the legislature

ART 8 1. A Board of the Senate, examined the documents referred to in paragraph 1 of Article 2 and its judgment of the auditing firm, resolves the compliance of the report to the Rules of the Senate.
2. If a group fails to submit the report within the terms provided in Article 2 and it does not comply with the requirements of the Rules of the Senate, the College of Quaestors invites the Senators, with a reasoned letter, the Chairman of the Group to ensure the regularization. In the event that the group fails, the College of Quaestors communicates the results which, through a resolution, could cause the reduction or loss of the right to the provision of contributions due to the Group.

NORMATIVE REFERENCES

European Parliament
Rules on the use of appropriations from budget item 400

ART 1.1 The appropriations made available from Item 400 are intended to cover:
 -the administrative and operational expenditure of the political groups/non-attached Members' secretariat; -expenditure on political and information activities conducted by the political groups/nonattached Members in connection with the European Union's political activities.

ART 1.2 The allocation of the appropriations between the political groups and the non-attached Members shall be the subject of a decision of the Bureau based on a scale proposed by the chairs of the political groups. This allocation shall be established on the basis of the composition of the political groups and the number of non-attached Members as at 1 January of the year in question. It shall be distributed according to the rule set in Annex 3. The political groups/non-attached Members may not finance their activities, as described in Article 1.1.1 of these rules, from resources other than those made available to them under budget Item 400 or the resources derived therefrom. Political groups/non-attached Members in their capacity as Members of the European Parliament may not receive either donations or legacies.

Law of december 23rd 2000,, n. 388

ART 153 [Concerning party media] This regulation complies exclusively to newspapers, periodicals that are part of political parties that have a least one representative in one of the Houses or in the European Parliament or are representing a linguistic minority that has at least one MP.

Law of August 7th 1990, n. 250

ART 4 The Presidency of the Council of Ministers will give a contribution equal to 40% of expenses of the previous year for radios of political parties that have at least one representative in a House of Parliament [...]

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS REIMBURSEMENTS FOR REGIONAL, EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS

44%

of the countries in the world have some sort of annual public funding for parties.

26,4%

of the countries in the world have a system of reimbursements for electoral campaigns.

7,1%

of countries of the European Union do not have any kind of funding for parties (Malta and Switzerland).

The reimbursements of election expenses has always been considered by the public opinion the main problem when dealing with the issue of State funding parties. To give an idea, through national, european and regional elections, since 1994 the State gave over 2 billion euros to parties.

What shocks the most is the unique interpretation given to the idea of “reimbursement of election expenses”, considering that in the same period of time the certified expenses of parties for electoral campaigns in over 20 years was slightly over 720 million euros. A surplus of over 1.7 billion euros, gained especially thanks to the 2001, 2006 and 2008 national elections, that alone gave parties a “bonus” of over 1 billion euros.

A bonus that recently became very useful, considering that for the 2013 national elections, putting together party funds and money passed on by other parties, the different coalitions running for Parliament raised almost 40 million euros, slightly under the 45 million euros of certified expenses, turning State reimbursements pretty much useless. This will not change the fact that State money was given, and will continue to be given up until 2016.

The Letta Government recently abolished both reimbursement of election expenses, and also the money granted for political activities. Starting from 2014, 2x1000 for parties was introduced, the biggest innovation in recent times concerning the funding of parties.

CERTIFIED EXPENSES AND STATE FUNDING FROM 1994 UNTIL TODAY

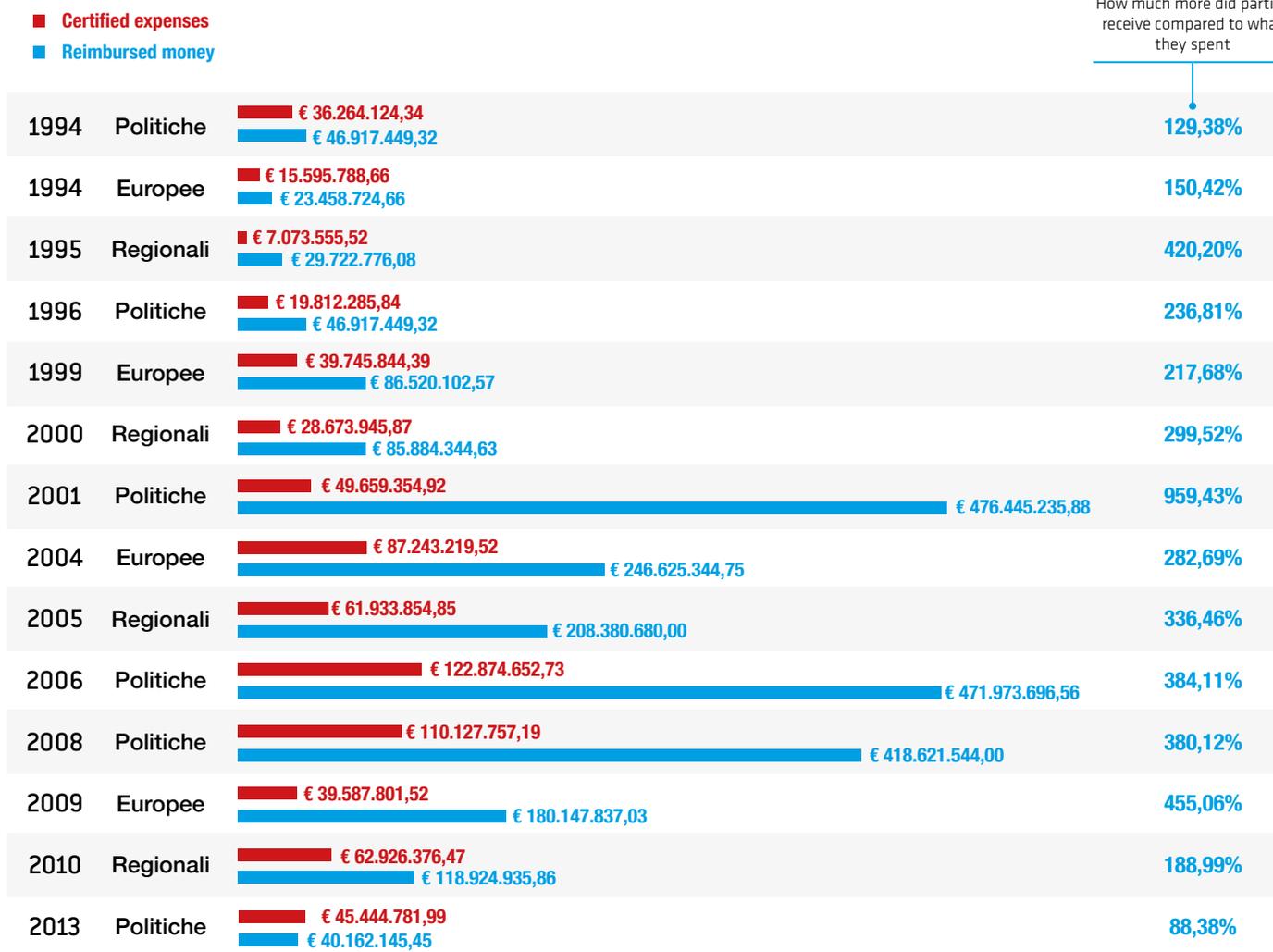
Since 1994 more money has been reimbursed for national elections, than the actual total amount spent by political parties for those elections. If on one side the

certified expenses since 1994 add up to 726,9 million euros, the money given as reimbursements adds up to over 2.4 billion euros. The climax was reached during the 2001 elections, when parties were granted 476 million euros, with certified expenses barely reaching 49 million euros (a surplus of over 400 million euros. Since 1994, parties received 341% more of what they actually spent.

How did the difference between certified expenses and money reimbursed vary from 1994 to 2013

By **“certified expenses”** we mean expenses certified by the Court of Audit.
By **“reimbursed money”** we mean the State contribution to political elections and campaigns.

How much more did parties receive compared to what they spent



For the 2013 political elections 3 of the 5 installments still have to be paid

Only in 2001 parties received 959% more of what they spent during the election through State funding

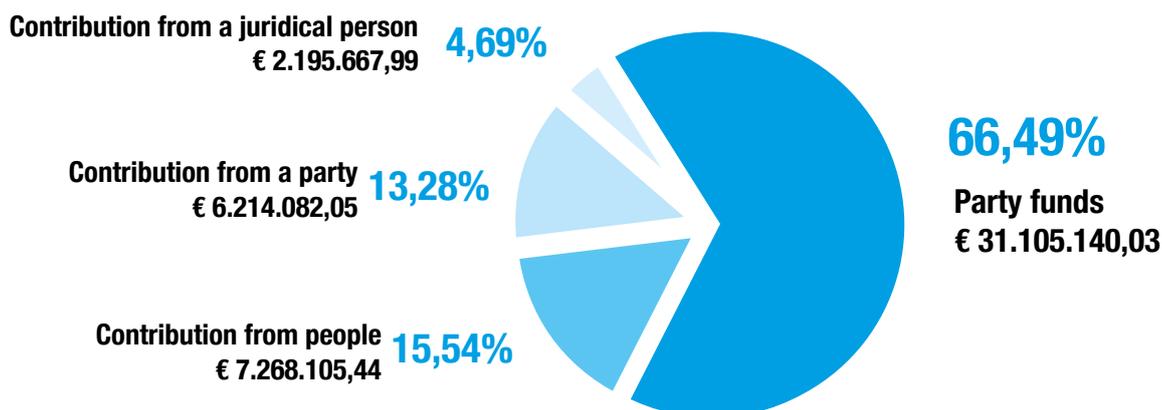
2013 NATIONAL ELECTIONS, NEW RULES AND NEW WAYS

For the last political elections, considering the changes implemented in the 2012 reform, parties decided

to organize otherwise. Besides drastically reducing the money they spent for elections, parties began experimenting new ways of funding. For the 2013 elections almost 20% of money used by parties came from either people or other legal entities. As if that were not enough, the surplus put aside throughout the years, left parties with a “reserve” of over 30 million euros, that they decided to spend for this campaign.

How did parties raise money for the 2013 elections

Type and amount of funding raised and used by parties for the 2013 national elections

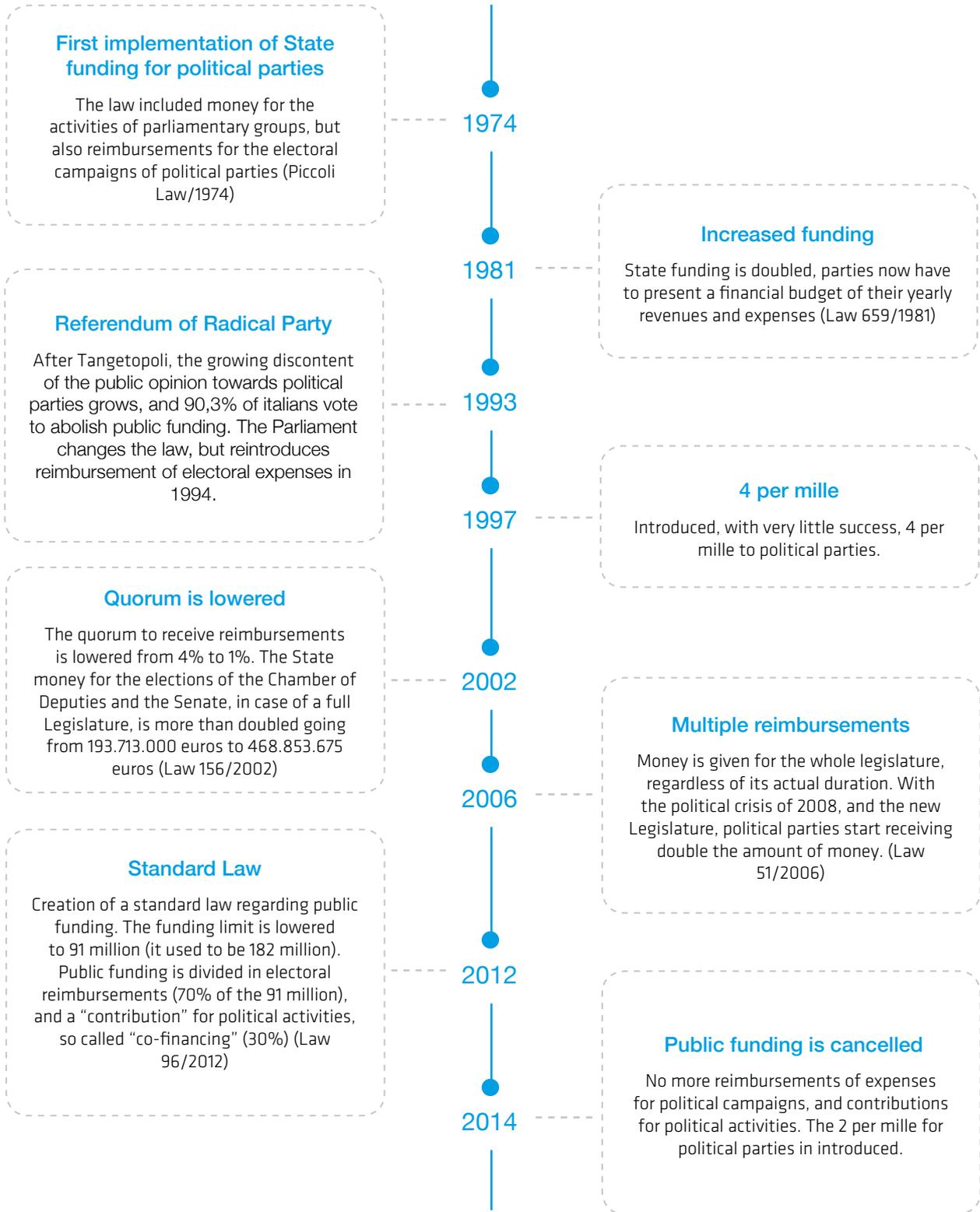


Raises	+	State Funding	-	Spent	=	Surplus
€ 46.782.995,51		€ 54.359.354,20		€ 45.444.781,99		€ 55.697.567,72

State funding was calculated considering all 5 planned installments

Without any help from State money, parties managed to raise 46,78 million euros for the last elections

RULES AND LAWS, 40 YEARS OF CHANGES



A LOT OF NEW PARTIES, ONE THING IN COMMON

Behind these numbers we find most of all parties. Election after election, it is possible to understand how

parties split the loot. Though the protagonists are more or less always the same, it is easy to analyze how the balance changed throughout the years. Keep in mind that during a single election, a same party can run with different names in the Senate and in the Chamber of Deputies, as the case of Casa della Libertà and Forza Italia in 2001.

Political elections, who got the most amount of reimbursement money since 2001

Nome del partito 1,87% — Percentage of money received out of the total reimbursed for that election
 The color represents the political area of the party

The Movimento 5 Stelle refused the electoral reimbursement it had gained after the 2013 elections (more than 40 million euros)

2001		2006		2008		2013			
Rifondazione Comunista	4,68%	Rifondazione Comunista	4,68%	La Sinistra L'Arcobaleno	1,87%	Sinistra Ecologia Libertà	3,75%		
il Girasole	1,23%	il Girasole	1,23%	Partito Democratico	36,36%	Partito Democratico	43,51%		
Partito dei Comunisti Italiani	0,95%	Partito dei Comunisti Italiani	0,95%					Italia dei Valori	4,37%
Uniti nell'Ulivo	22,01%	Uniti nell'Ulivo	16,14%	Unione di Centro	5,22%			Scelta Civica	6,22%
				Democratici di Sinistra	9,41%			La Margherita	5,73%
Democratici di Sinistra	9,41%	L'Unione	2,58%	Il Popolo delle Libertà	41,66%	Il Popolo delle Libertà	34,68%		
La Margherita	8,25%	Unione di Centro	8,34%					Lega Nord	8,32%
Casa della Libertà	24,30%	Forza Italia	25,73%	La Destra - Fiamma Tricolore	0,58%	Fratelli d'Italia	1,55%		
Forza Italia	16,70%	Alleanza Nazionale	13,12%					Lega Nord	4,52%
Alleanza Nazionale	6,83%	Lega Nord	4,52%	Altri	1,61%	Altri	2,86%		
Lega Nord	2,24%	Altri	5,31%						
Altri	3,41%								

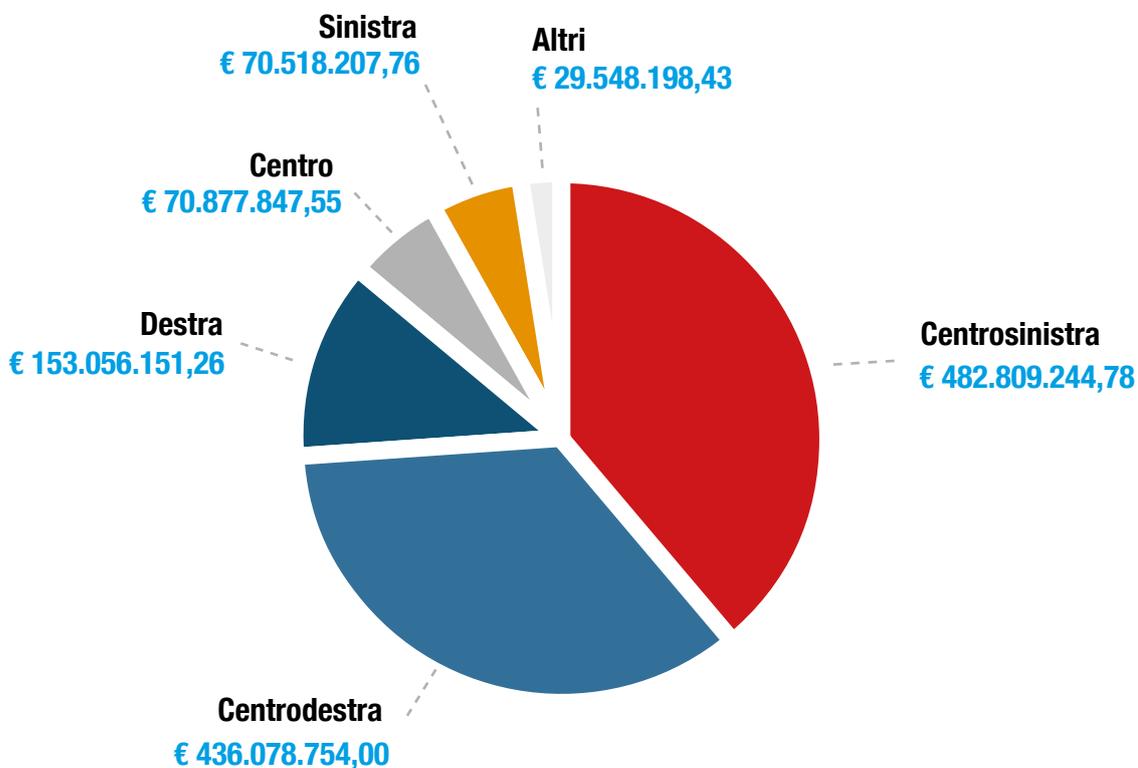
To the Partito Democratico went over 43% of reimbursed expenses for the 2013 elections.

COMPARING COALITIONS

During these years, the main center-left and center-right coalitions (in their various forms), received most

of the State reimbursement money (over 70%). Since 2001, the center-left parties appear to be the political area that through national elections gathered the most amount of money, over 480 million euros. Falling behind the center-right, slightly over 430 millions, and the right, 153 millions.

National elections since 2001, which political area received most amount of money



The center-left in four national elections received over 480 million euros of State funding

POLITICAL GROUPS

EXPENSES FOR ACTIVITIES AND MANAGEMENT

A similar issue concerns the funding political groups receive in the various institutional levels. It should not surprise, that several scandals in recent years of corruption and illegitimate use of public money, came from regional assemblies. Money that technically should be used for the management and functioning of political institutions, but that often enough is used for other purposes. Trying to go beyond the scandals that filled newspapers around the country, it becomes very important to quantify the exact amount of money that we are talking about.

To understand the exact impact of this issue, we looked at the budgets of regional, parliamentary and european political groups in 2013, with much attention given to “institutional allocations”.

We are obviously talking about large amounts of money, especially if we considered that only in 2013 political groups in the italian regional assemblies received almost 30 million euros. Region Sicily, to give an example, in only one year gave over 6 million euros to political groups.

At a national level we are talking about slightly higher numbers. In 2013 the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate gave parliamentary groups over 38 million euros (respectively 24,7 millions and 14,05 millions). To put everything in proportion, in a single year parties received almost the same amount of money they received as State reimbursements in two years. What appears to be clear is that in a historical phase where the public opinion was focused on electoral reimbursements, we have been ignoring for too long the money parties receive in other ways. As if not enough, here we are talking about the money given only for the functioning of political groups, we are therefore not considering the money that both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate give to individual Deputies and Senators for their job (including salary and optional employment of staff).

With the idea to paint the whole picture, we also looked at the European Parliament funding to political groups. In 2013 the total amount of money allocated to political parties added up to 58,75 million euros. Most of this money, more than 36 million euros, was given to the two main political groups (Ppe and S&D), that in the previous Legislature had members of Pdl, Udc, Svp and Pd.

In 2013 parties received

29,39 mln	38,50 mln	58,78 mln
million euros as political groups in regional assemblies	million euros as parliamentary groups in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate	million euros as political groups in the European Parliament

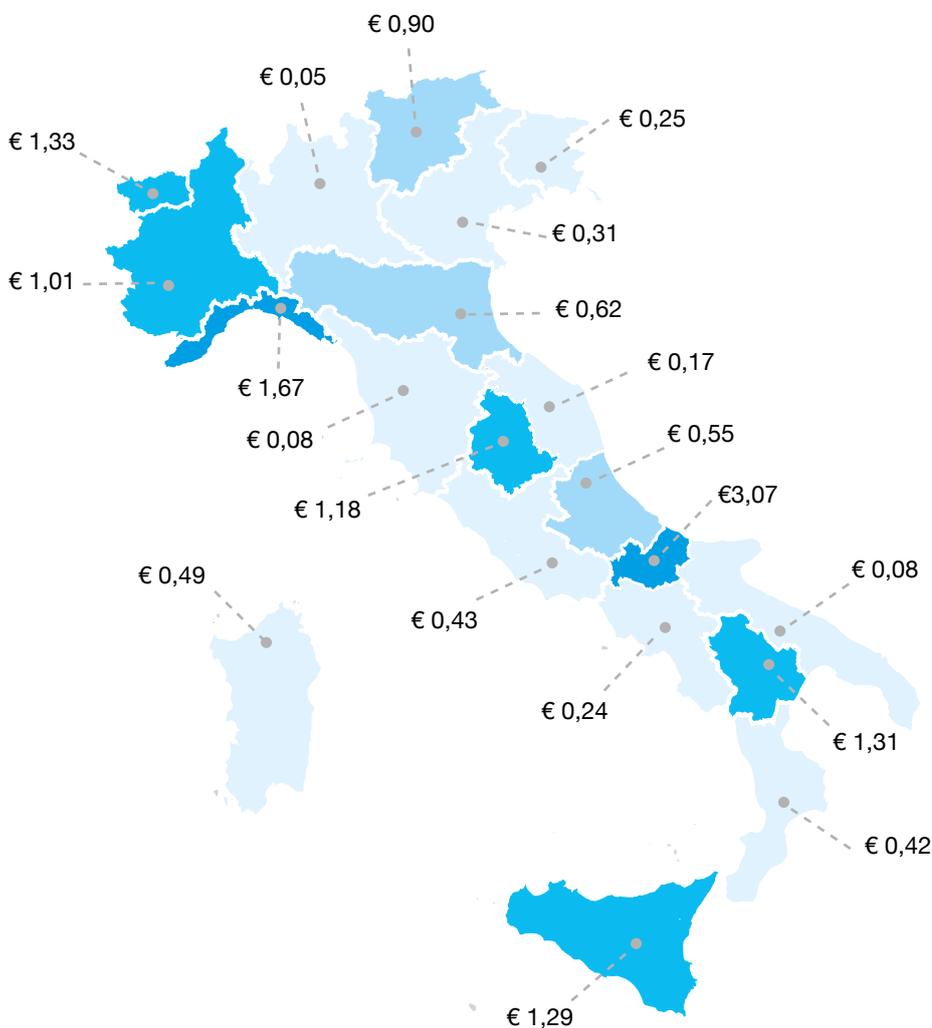
POLITICAL GROUPS IN THE 20 ITALIAN REGIONS

In 2013 political groups in the Italian regional assemblies received 29,39 million euros. The most "generous" region

was Sicily that in a single year granted over 6 million euros to the political groups in Ars (Regional Assembly of Sicily). Converting all of this in per capita values, the numbers of Molise stand out: with a population slightly over 300.000 people, it gave 934 thousand euros in 2013, almost 3 euros per citizen.

The regions that gave most subsidies to parliamentary groups in 2013 (per capita)

The amount of funding was calculated putting together the money given for the functioning of the group, and also the one meant to sustain staff members.



Sicily alone is responsible for 22% of the money given by the Italian regions to political groups in 2013

BEST AND LAST

Valle d'Aosta
 😊 € 170.236,23

Sicilia
 😞 € 6.473.015,46

€0,00 / €0,50 €0,50 / €1,00 €1,00 / €1,50 €1,50 / +€2,00

For Trentino-Alto Adige and Sardegna 2012 data was used

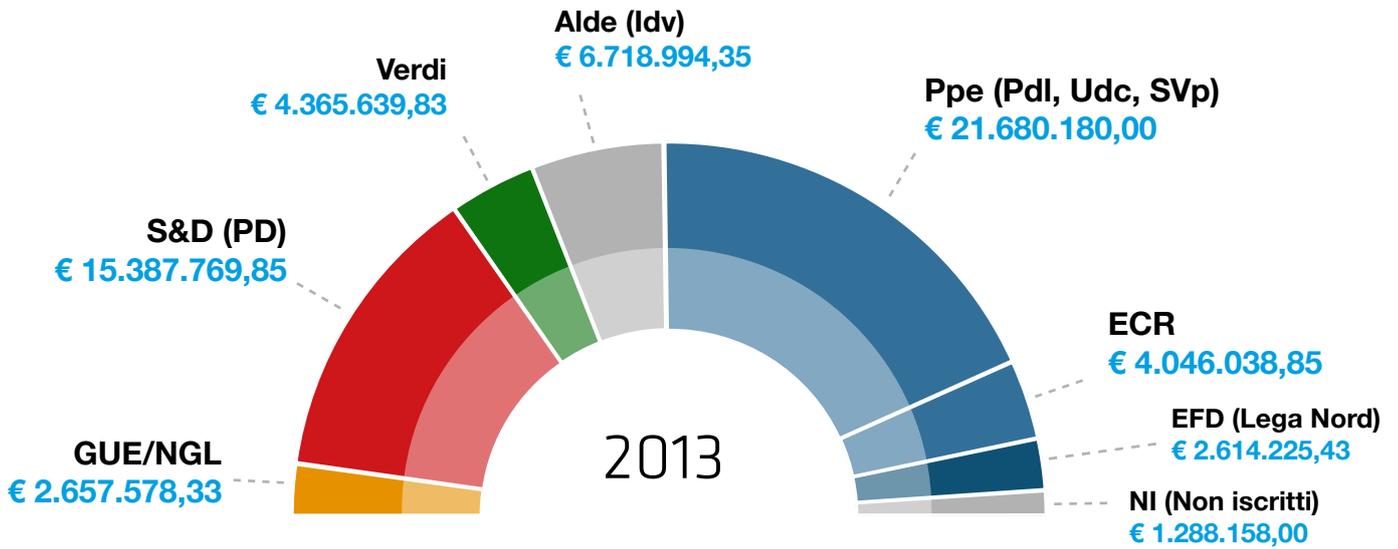
EUROGROUPS IN BRUSSELS AND STRASBOURG

As all political institution, even the European Parliament has in its budget a section of money meant to sustain

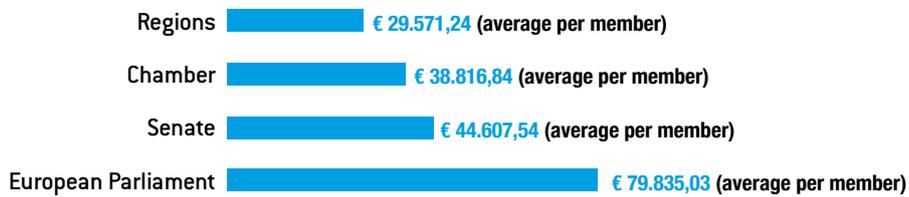
the activities and functioning of political groups. Only in 2013 the political groups of the European Parliament received all together almost 60 million euros, with Ppe, as the biggest, receiving almost one third of the money. On average we are talking about almost 80 thousand euros per MEP.

How much money do political groups in the European Parliament receive?

The money was calculated by looking at budget item "Allocation from European Parliament" in the individual budgets of parliamentary groups in 2013



Group funding comparison



In the European Parliament each year on average a political group receives 80 thousand euros per MEP.

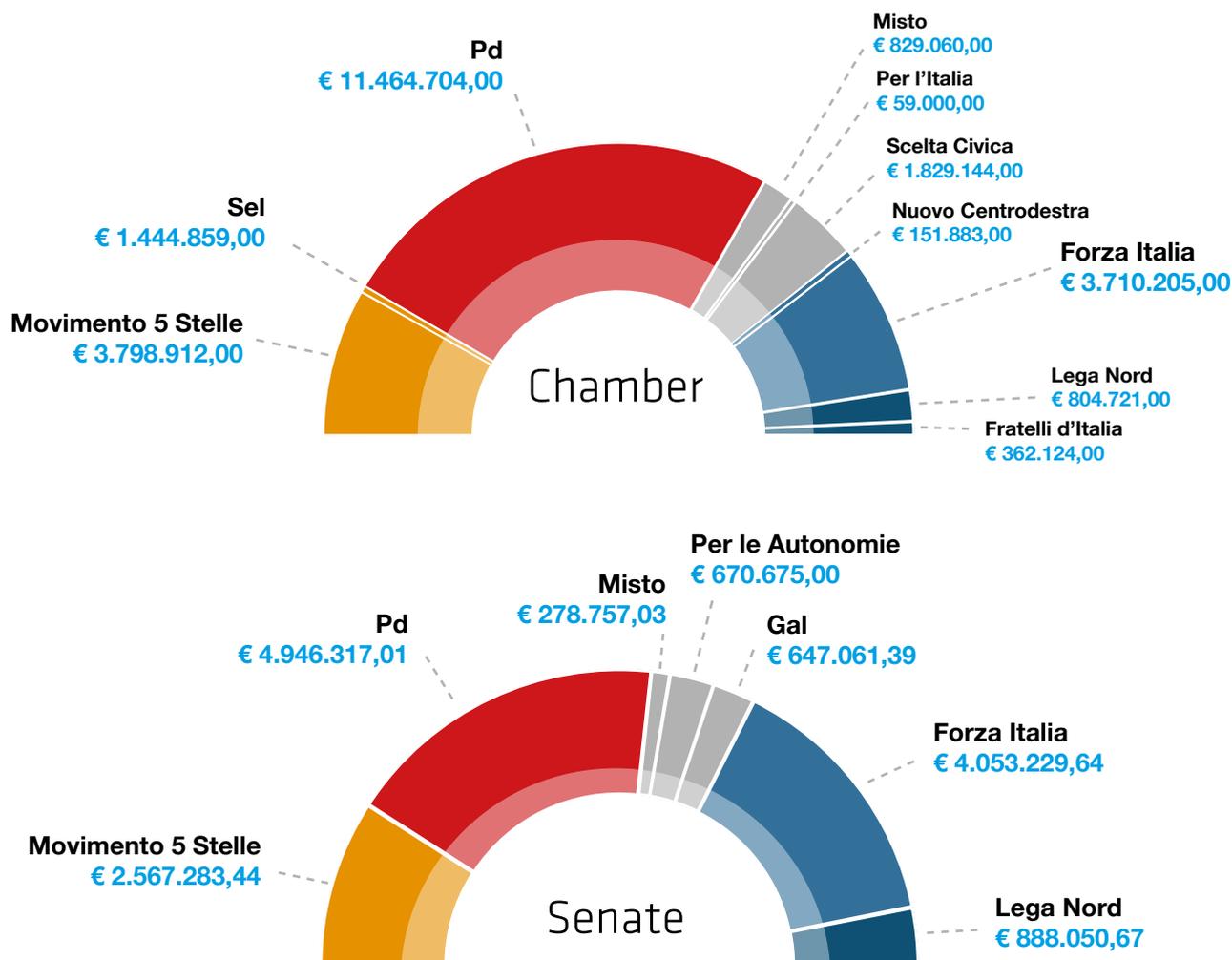
PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND SENATE

Groups in the Chamber of Deputies and the Italian Senate are obliged to publish a budget that shows revenues and expenses of their activities in Parliament.

Only in 2013 the groups in Montecitorio received over 24 million euros, and the ones in Palazzo Madama slightly over 14 million euros, for a grand total of 38,50 millions. We are talking about almost the same amount of money parties received in two years of electoral reimbursements. A good amount of funding, with an average of 60 thousand euros granted per MP.

Money received by parliamentary groups in 2013

The item budget "Contribution" was calculated considering the Contribution of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic to parliamentary groups



In 2013 the group Ncd in Palazzo Madama did not receive any funding from the Senate.
The data concerning the groups Scelta Civica and Per l'Italia at the Senate were not found

In a single year parliamentary groups received the same amount of money parties received in two years of electoral reimbursements

PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS, 2013 BUDGET

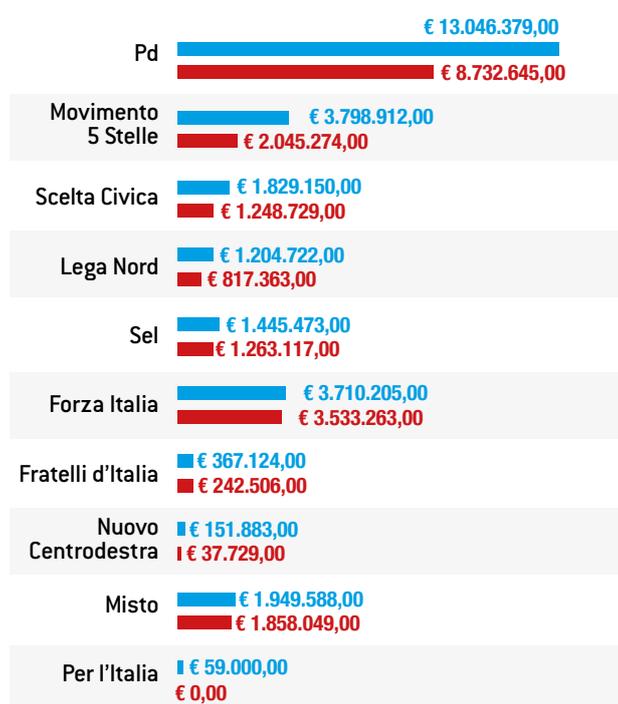
If on one side parliamentary groups receive subsidies for their activities from both Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, on the other they obviously have to take care of

a certain amount of expenses. The money they receive is meant for institutional purposes (political activities, research, publishing, communication, salary of staffers), but it is not the only type of revenue they have. By the end of 2013 parties spent less of what they “earned”. Over 40 million euros of revenues (between Parliament funding and other type of revenue), for an end of the year positive balance of 15 million euros.

Revenues and expenses of parliamentary groups in 2013

- Revenues
- Expenses

Chamber

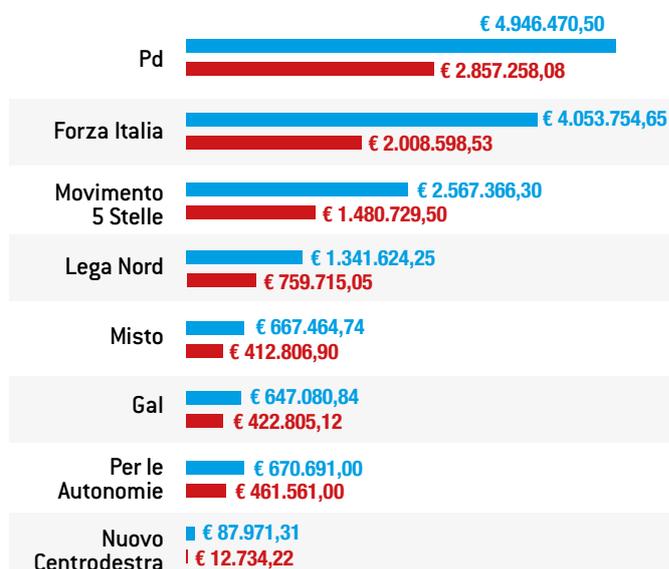


Not all groups have the same date of foundation

For the **Chamber of Deputies** we looked at budget item “Conto Economico” (Difference between revenues and expenses) in the budget of parliamentary groups.

For the **Senate of the Republic** we looked at budget item “Rendiconto Finanziario” (Difference between revenues and expenses) in the budget of parliamentary groups.

Senate



The economic and financial cost of Ncd employees was covered by Forza Italia up until December 31st 2013.

Not all groups have the same date of foundation.

The data concerning the groups Scelta Civica and Per l'Italia at the Senate were not found.

All parliamentary groups ended the year with a budget surplus.

PARTY MEDIA

TATE GRANTS FOR RADIOS AND NEWSPAPERS

**344,54 mln
di euro**

million euros of State money between 2003 and 2013 to 25 party media outlets (newspaper and radio)

64%

of them are now closed

Another topic worth mentioning regards party media. Italy gives financial support to the publishing industry in a variety of ways, one of them is a yearly subsidy given to newspapers, periodicals and radios of political parties. On the Government website it is possible to look at the funding given from 2003 up until 2013. In 10 years party newspapers received over 252 million euros, while radios received 92 million euros.

On the podium we have l'Unità, that in the past 10 years received over 60 million euros of State funding. La Padania, in second position, was granted "only" 37.43 m.

The issue with radios is not very different. Radio Radical, for example, in only 8 years received almost as much as La Padania in 10. With an average of 4 million euros a year, Radio Radical has collected 37.17m from 2003 to 2011. Right behind we have EcoRadio, that between 2003 and 2013, received a total of 27 million euros.

What is interesting to find out is that even with the large amount of money received, most of these news outlets are out of business. 77% of newspapers and 16% of radios have shut down. Of the 19 newspapers that were granted State subsidies, only 16% continues to publish on paper.

PARTY NEWSPAPERS

19 newspapers and periodicals have received since 2003 State funding as party media. Going from left to right, all political parties managed to collect some amount of money from this program. The numbers are very clear: L'Unità (60 millions), La Padania (37 millions),

and Liberazione (more than 30 millions), are only some examples of 10 years of State funding that adds up to more than 250 million euros. In the past years Italy started reducing the amount of money granted, with only 4 newspaper continuing to receive money: the already mentioned La Padania and L'Unità, as well as Europa and Secolo d'Italia.

Party newspapers that received State funding since 2003

Newspapers that appear to be of political parties and movements that have at least one representatives in one of the Houses or in the European Parliament or that represent linguistic minorities that have at least one MP (Art. 135 - Law 388 of 2000)

Unità'	€ 60.729.173,82
Padania	€ 37.434.644,85
Liberazione Giornale Comunista	€ 31.990.321,13
Europa	€ 31.952.936,73
Secolo d'Italia	€ 27.261.644,42
Notizie Verdi/Terra	€ 13.856.324,80
Cronache Di Liberal	€ 10.167.805,30
Discussione	€ 7.903.310,38
Zukunft in SudTirol	€ 6.125.131,66
Rinascita della Sinistra	€ 5.938.782,25
Liberal	€ 4.362.581,17
Italia dei Valori	€ 3.512.891,07
Socialista Lab	€ 2.868.812,76
Democrazia Cristiana	€ 2.365.154,70
Peuple Valdotaïn	€ 1.958.094,95
Campanile Nuovo	€ 1.864.902,09
il Sole Che Ride	€ 1.020.390,93
Avanti! Della Domenica	€ 752.530,13
Orizzonti Nuovi	€ 18.943,75

In 20 years the newspapers of Italian parties were granted 252 million euros

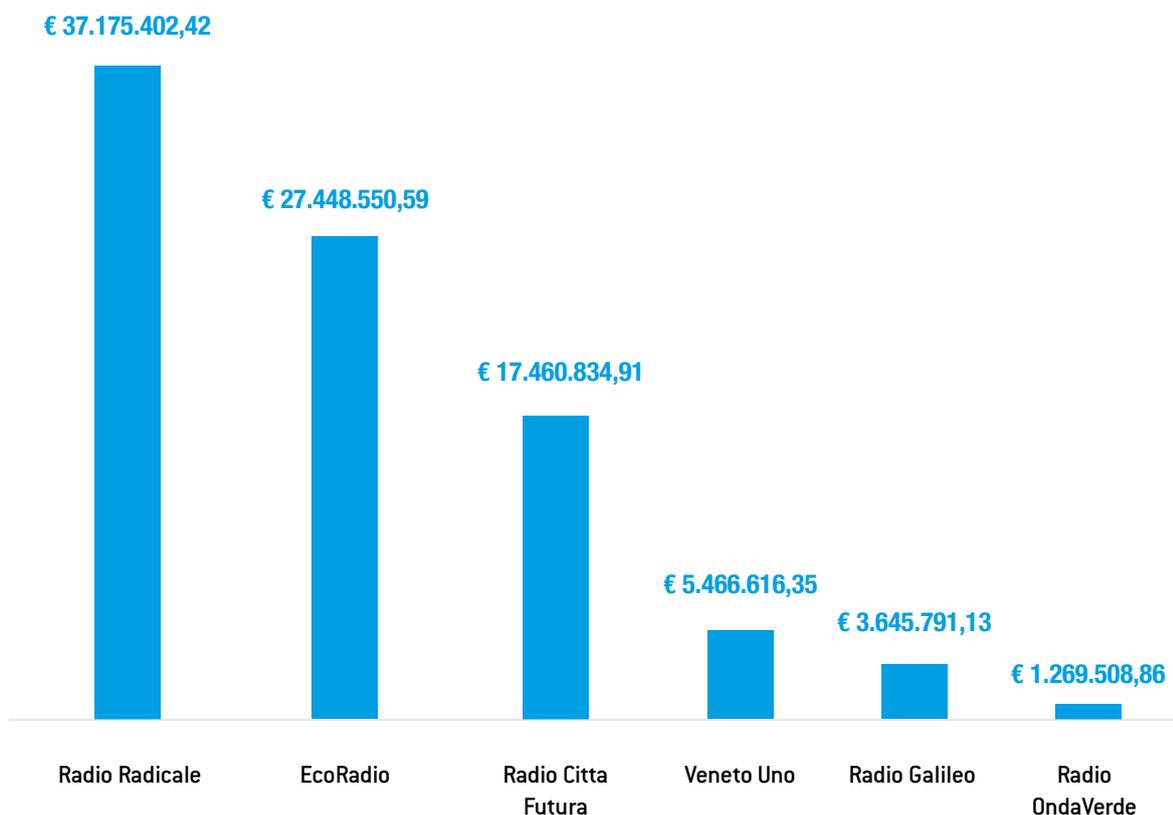
PARTY RADIOS

6 radios since 2003 have received State funding as part of political parties: Radio Radicale, EcoRadio, Radio Città Futura, Veneto Uno, Radio Galileo e Radio OndaVerde. Radio Radical, that has not been receiving funds

for the past two years, appears to be the “luckiest” recipient, with over 37 million euros granted in 8 years. In total, considering all radio stations, we are talking about 92.46 millions. Also receiving large amounts of subsidies, EcoRadio (27 millions) and Radio Città Futura (17 millions).

The radios of political parties that received funding since 2003

Radio stations that appear to be part of political parties that have at least one member in the Italian Parliament (Art. 4 - Law 250 of 1990)



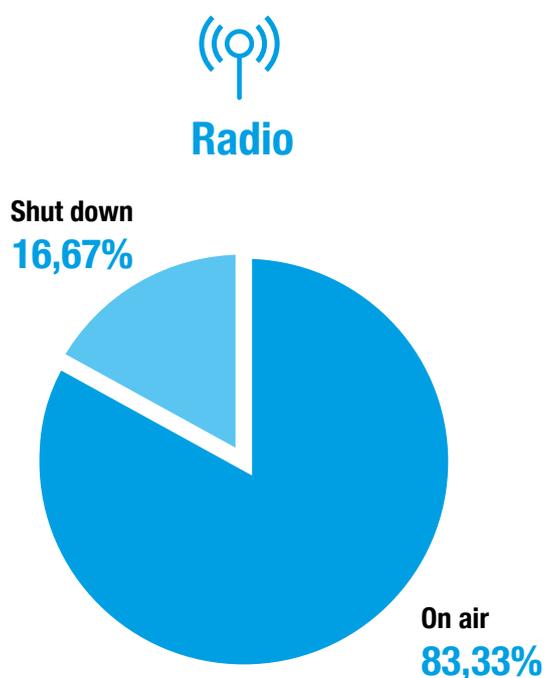
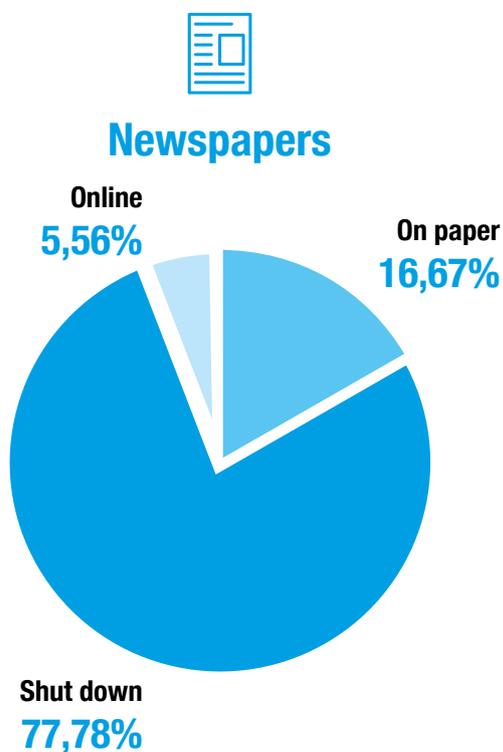
In 10 years radios of political parties received 92 million euros

PARTY MEDIA: CLOSED OR STILL IN BUSINESS?

Italy has put a lot of money in the publishing industry of political parties: more 340 millions euros in only 10 years.

What are the results? 77.78% of these newspapers have now closed, only 16.67% continue to publish, and 5.56% survive only on an online version. Things are going a bit better for radios, 83.33% of them are still on air, and only 16.67% is out of business.

The crisis of party news outlets



77% of party newspapers are out of business

CREDITS

**Openpolis network:
platforms for those that ask questions**

**Voisietequi.it
What do parties think?**

For every single election we select the most important themes of the political campaign and ask parties to say their opinion on them (in favor/against). citizens after having answered the same questions, have the possibility to find out which political party is closer to their position.

**Openpolitici.it
Who are the italian politicians?**

the biggest and most up to date database on italian politicians. over 250.000 personalized pages with biography, political career, and timeline of past institutional postings for each elected representative for each institutional level: local municipalities, Regions, National and European Parliament.

**Openparlamento.it
What do politicians elected in parliament do?**

Daily analyses on what happens in the chamber of Deputies and in the italian Senate. It is possible to monitor single MPs, specific subjects and single bills. We created various indicators useful to understand the differences between each MP in order to better value their work.

**Openmunicipio.it
What do elected municipal politicians do?**

local municipalities can decide to take part in this project by "opening" their public data, and by making the doings of the town council more transparent and accessible. Each presented act, bill and motion is immediately published online to allow an open discussion with citizens. For this purpose, each document is analyzed, categorized and geo-localized.

**Openbilanci.it
Who do mayors spend local money?**

We published the budgets of the past 10 years of over 8000 municipalities. Besides specific details for each local administration, comparisons, rankings and indicators allow users to have a better understanding of data and numbers at times complicated to understand.

Openpolis is a watchdog working for making italian politics more transparent. It is completely independent and does not receive any kind of funding from parties, politicians and associations and foundations to them connect. It has created and manages an online network that allows citizens to receive free and adless information based on data.

It constantly carries out research on e-democracy, e-gov, opendata and data journalism. It is one of the founding partners of the **Pan European e Participation Network** (PEP-NET), recognized and financed by the European Union, and it represents Italy in the **Parliamentary Monitoring Organizations** (PMO's).

Openpolis publishes a series called **"MiniDossier"**. Through a data journalism approach its goal is to verify, analyze and compare data from different official sources in order to suggest different point of views and tell different stories. On important issues and topics, such as politics and local finance, documented indexes and innovative indicators are created.

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