

Candidate 1 evidence

Source One:

- "his administration slashed threatened levies on Italian pasta from 91.74 per cent to as little as 2.26 per cent"
- "Lorenzo Castellani "It is a political victory for Meloni""
- "Negotiations were handled by the [EU] Commission, as a bloc"

[ps://www.thetimes.com/us/news-today/article/us-tariffs-donald-trump-giorgia-meloni-pasta-rjwbkd5c0?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=AWEtSqf6sqnhEBHfoYxijZU01x8-QcxdzKweCACb0EuwM6VnMCX0alowsan&gaa_ts=695a569f&gaa_sig=NgeGCSZqcl1CMQoQIH5jsrqTJ_3f-dzzL5Biag7sRlxoFA4mcXgCyT8Oja36z0_brC6BKniKGprcLKV0mQ3JHg%3D%3D](https://www.thetimes.com/us/news-today/article/us-tariffs-donald-trump-giorgia-meloni-pasta-rjwbkd5c0?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=AWEtSqf6sqnhEBHfoYxijZU01x8-QcxdzKweCACb0EuwM6VnMCX0alowsan&gaa_ts=695a569f&gaa_sig=NgeGCSZqcl1CMQoQIH5jsrqTJ_3f-dzzL5Biag7sRlxoFA4mcXgCyT8Oja36z0_brC6BKniKGprcLKV0mQ3JHg%3D%3D)

Source Two:

- "unemployment has fallen from 7.8% to 6%, and the public deficit is expected to drop below 3%."
- "Growth remains sluggish – 0.5% in 2025"
- "Wages have stagnated: Italy is the only EU country whose salaries have fallen over the past twenty years"

<https://www.iris-france.org/en/giorgia-meloni-three-years-in-power-between-european-pragmatism-and-national-ambiguities/>

Source Three:

- "American tariffs on single malts, which were suspended four years ago, are on course to return next spring with a further 25% charge"

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd0kkkmymz5o>

Source Four:

GDP Growth:

- 0.7% (2024 est.)
- 0.7% (2023 est.)
- 4.8% (2022 est.)

GDP composition, by sector of origin

- agriculture: 2% (2024 est.)
- industry: 21.7% (2024 est.)
- services: 65.6% (2024 est.)

<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/italy/#economy>

Source Five:

- "Under the new law, anyone "occupying properties intended as someone else's residence" could be punished with up to 7 years' imprisonment (Article 10)"

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/05/italy-draconian-new-law-criminalizing-peaceful-protest-while-expanding-police-powers-must-be-rejected/>

Source Six:

- "They took to the streets to protest...low salaries and cuts in public services."

<https://socialistworker.co.uk/international/italian-workers-stage-general-strike-over-austerity/>

To What Extent Has Meloni And Her Government Been Good For Italy?

Giorgia Meloni is a divisive figure in European and Italian politics. Liked on the right of Italian politics for bringing supposed stability, pragmatism and good economics to her time in power while the left critique her supposed anti democratic policy's, an economy which isn't good for the average person and a mistrust of how good her pragmatism really is. In order to understand this we need to frame the issue. In July of 2022 Mario Draghi stepped down as Prime Minister of Italy after just over a year in power. His government failed as he wasn't able to keep a coalition together in a confidence vote. By this point in time Italy had had seventy governments in seventy seven years, averaging a new government every thirteen months. This led to the political instability that Italy had become infamous for. Up next was Giorgia Meloni, Italy's first ever female Prime Minister. She is from the political party called Brothers of Italy, a party that has it's roots in the post war hard right factions of Italian politics which ultimately had their links to Mussolini and his Fascist regime. So there were some worries that she'd be a hard right prime minister which would be concerning if you are on the left and wanted social services to be kept up. She was even once caught saying that Mussolini - a dictator which caused lots of people to die in Ethiopia and in Italy itself - that Mussolini was a "good politician". A reminder - a politician which effectively motivated the rise of the Nazi's in nearby Germany. Yet she has seemed to at a glance been more moderate than fears were suggesting. She has now been in power for over three years in Italy which is rare in terms of stability, so she has had some staying power. It is also important to note that Italy is still recovering economically from coronavirus which really hurt the country economically. The significance of being Prime Minister of Italy is something also that cannot be understated. In a time in which Europe is being put under pressure by a hostile Russian government invading neutral and pro European Ukraine to the east and a eurosceptic president in Washington to the west in Donald Trump, stable leadership is needed to navigate through these tough times. It is also significant for the average worker in Italy as the agenda she puts through will dictate how well your wages are etc. It is also significant as Italy is one of the four largest eurozone economies so by setting an example it can boost Italy's respect among other countries and governments in the world. So looking at three areas, pragmatism, economy and democratic health as well as using Steven Luke's three dimensions of power (power from winning the argument, agenda and manipulation) - I will decide to what extent has Meloni and her government been good for Italy.

Those who are on the right of European and Italian politics believe that Meloni has done well with her use of pragmatism and negotiation skills while the left believe it has been overstated in her success in this field. According to Source one, James Imam writes in the Times that Trump "slashed threatened levies on Italian pasta from 91.74 per cent to as little as 2.26 per cent". This shows that Meloni has been able to

convince Donald Trump to make these threatened levies drastically less harmful than they could have been - by almost 90%. And her success in doing so is great news for the Italian economy as it means that America which is a huge market for the agricultural and culinary industry is easier for Italian business to reach and succeed, because had they of not been then they would of likely have had to raise their prices to pay for such a league making them less competitive in the American market. It was also great news for Meloni as if she had not been able to negotiate such a less frightening trade arrangement then the Italian farmers and agricultural unions which have a level of influence in Italian politics would of put more pressure on her government, seeing that their prices have skyrocketed and been made to be less competitive in the US market. Using Steven Lukes First dimension of power - in which someone has the power as they won the argument - it is clear to see here that Meloni does have a level of power and legitimacy in Washington if she was able to bring those levies down. According to source One again Lorenzo Castellani who is a political scientist at the Luiss University in Rome said that "It is a political victory for Meloni". This is for many reasons, one notably being that Pasta is symbolically an Italian export so by doing this Meloni does add to her more hard right fanbase in the Brothers of Italy as it has protected something which is nationally important to Italy. It is also a political victory as she has demonstrated that she can deal with a eurosceptic administration in Washington while still being a key member of the EU. And according to source three, a BBC article highlights American tariffs on single malts from the UK "are on course to return next spring with a further 25% charge. So clearly Meloni has more power than the likes of Keir Starmer - the Prime Minister of the UK - as she has won on a trade negotiation where Starmer has not. Those on the left however would add a slight issue with her supposed greatness in negotiating. Firstly Meloni as a right wing politician has a lot of ideological ground on things like immigration, economics etc with Washington and Trump's administration - so was it that Meloni was a great negotiator or is it more that it was a case of Trump supporting right wing governments in Europe. Also it says in Source one "Negotiations were handled by the (EU) Commission, as a bloc". So she cannot claim total credit for bringing down those levies as she used the European Union to help out with negotiations. However this does beg the question, if the result - lower prices for Italian businesses - is the same, does it matter? If anything it suggests that she is able to use different institutions in order to get good trade deals for the Italian republic. So in my opinion this points to her being a very good pragmatist and an effective political operator, at least in this field.

Secondly those on the right of European and Italian politics claim that Meloni has been effective in helping the Italian economy get back on its feet and bring about a bit of stability. While those on the left believe that her policies of cuts to education and health are emblematic of a right wing government that does not have concern for its less well off members. They also add that the economic turnaround as it is supposedly stated isn't actually much of a turnaround. First though there needs to be some more context.

Italy is politically unstable which means that the trust lenders and economists have in Italy has been poor. According to the IRIS think tank in source two "Wages have stagnated: Italy is the only EU country whose salaries have fallen over the past twenty years". So clearly there are deep fundamental and structural issues to Italy's economy. Let's look at the numbers. According to IRIS think tank in source two it says that "unemployment has fallen from 7.8% to 6%, and the public deficit is expected to drop below 3%". Firstly - key term - the public deficit is how much a government spends in contrast to how much money it earns, usually through methods such as tax. If it is lowered then this is very good news for Italy as it means the government can borrow money more easily as those loaning money will have more trust in Italy's economic stability. So on this account Meloni has done well with the economy. And unemployment going down by 1.8% while not a massive jump signals that more Italians are getting into work to boost the economy. So Meloni is using her power to in these contexts boost Italy's economy. Yet her power and authority seem less assuring when looking at GDP growth. Only as according to Source two it is at "0.5%" in 2025, which is slow and sluggish. The Gross Domestic Product of a country is essentially how much money and profit a country makes all together. This is also below the eurozone average which is just over one percent in GDP growth. So Meloni's Italy in economic terms seems to be a bit of a paradox, underperforming compared to the rest of the eurozone but still the eurozone's 4'th largest economy. Also according to source four, the CIA World Factbook says that GDP growth in 2024 was "0.7%" and the same in 2023. So it has actually gotten worse. Though to what extent Meloni's fault is debatable. Energy costs of Ukraine and Washington have added to the fiscal strain. In 2022 it was estimated to be "4.8%", which was the year that Meloni got into power and took over from Draghi which means she cannot claim total credit for that year as she was only around for a part of it. It was also a rebound from the covid pandemic and the automatic boost to industries like tourism etc. In terms of Steven Luke's second dimension of power, where someone has power because they set the agenda, Meloni is struggling. She has the power to set the agenda economically in Italy, but it looks like she isn't using it to great effect. Also it says that agriculture only makes up "2%" of the GDP composition, meaning that the trade deal on pasta said earlier was more symbolic than overly practical. So this all points to the left wing point that it is overstated how well Italy's economy is performing as true and shows that Meloni in terms of power over the economy has not been as good for Italy - due to her economic policies of cuts which put strain on GDP short term. She has not used her power and politics well.

Thirdly, those on the left of Italian politics believe that Meloni has been using the dark arts to curb protests against her government's policies. While those on the right more believe that she is only being pragmatic in controlling a ramp up of protests which harm the everyday person. The Italian government (under which Meloni is the head of) tried to pass a new law saying that you could be arrested on a protest if it was on

somebody else's property - which sounds a tad dubious. According to source five, Amnesty International states "Under the new law, anyone "occupying properties intended as someone else's residence" could be punished with up to 7 years' imprisonment". This all sounds dubious in many respects because it is very vague, and lets be honest when protests occur it is in their nature to be on somebody else's property, and if they damage anything then it is more than fair in many eyes to charge them under laws concerning vandalism but this law seems to be prosecuting simply protesting on somewhere that is considered as somebody else's property. Those on the right argue that this is actually another example of her being and using her pragmatism. In modern times it is not unusual to hear of climate protesters damaging things or doing harmless but annoying things like glueing themselves to a road in order to cause maximum disruption to bring notoriety to their cause. Now imagine if there was an emergency situation where an ambulance needed to get through but couldn't. Hence this law aims to stop such an occurrence, the European right argues. However, according to the Socialist Worker article in source 6 it states that there were protests against the borderline austerity measures economically that Meloni had taken - further evidence also that Meloni's power economically has not been felt by the average Italian worker. It states "They took to the streets to protest... low salaries and cuts in public services.". So the curbing of the protests which have a anti democratic tint to them some may argue can also seem worrying considering Italy's history with authoritarian governments under Mussolini which was Far right in its politics and the current Brothers of Italy Party which is doing these possibly anti democratic things. Also in terms of Steven Luke's third dimension of power, where Person A gets person B to act in the interests of Person A without Person B knowing it, then this can be seen here. It could be seen that Meloni's heavy nationalistic policies are to gain voters based on national pride and not substance in policy, actually where it could be seen that she is taken advantage of the worse off to fund tax cuts. So this does point to Meloni not being good for Italy's democratic tradition, threatening to cause a new tradition in Italian politics where such a thing becomes normal and hurts the European values that Italy was given after the second world war - namely the uphold of democracy.

So to conclude, Giorgia Meloni and her government has been mixed and overly poor in the extent in which she has been good for Italy. Strong on pragmatism - able to bring down threatened levies with the US administration in Washington by almost 90 percent is seriously impressive and deserves to be applauded. Her use of the EU also in the negotiations was genius as she used institutions to her benefit in order to get better deals for Italian businesses and the Italian people. She won the argument as Steven Lukes says and hence has used her power well in this context. She has done less well economically, with an economy that is very sluggish and not growing all that fast, which has to be put down to her as she is in power and has done things like cuts to public services which can hurt growth in the short term. So her use of Steven Luke's theory of

Agenda in this context has been not overly impressive. Although she has gotten more people to work, with unemployment going down and the public deficit going down to below 3%. Meaning that the economy's health is good as she can now borrow more easily as there is more trust in this context. Lastly, her curbing of protest with the law which stated you could go to prison simply for 7 years because you were protesting on 'someone else's property' is vague and possibly done to put less scrutiny on the government with people protesting cuts to public services. Adding to a possible idea that she is manipulating some of her voters with the sell of patriotism - linking to the idea of the past levies - while hurting them economically and stamping down on their rights to protest - a clear example of Steven Luke's third dimension of power which is manipulation.