

## **Virginio Merola**

Virginio Merola was born in 1955 in Santa Maria Capua Vetere, in the province of Caserta (Campania region), but at the age of five he moved to Bologna with his family.

He graduated in Philosophy at the University of Bologna. After the military service he took his first job at "Società Autostrade" (the Italian Concessionaire for toll motorway construction and management). While entering the world of labour, he also committed himself as a unionist in the CGIL Trade Union, for the category of transport: at first he was a union representative and he later became in charge of the Motorway sector and of the union's professional training for the whole CGIL transportation category.

In 1989 he accepted the proposal by Walter Vitali, at the time Bologna's Deputy Mayor for Finance, to be the regional secretary of the Local Governments' League, the Italian association of Municipalities, Provinces and Regions.

From 1990 to 1995, by working for the association supporting the local governments, he had the opportunity to know more about their problems, about laws that rule them and also about their need for innovation as far as public management systems are concerned.

In 1995 he was elected President of the Savena District of Bologna for two subsequent terms, and this was the start of his commitment in the city government.

In June 2004 he was elected in Bologna's City Council within the DS, Democratici di Sinistra, group and soon after he was appointed Deputy Mayor for Urban Planning and Housing.

From July 2009 until February 2011 he was President of the Provincial Council, from which office he resigned in February 2011, after winning the primary elections of the Centre-Left coalition as candidate to be mayor for Bologna.

On May 16<sup>th</sup> 2011, Virginio Merola was elected Mayor of Bologna with more than 50% of votes at the first ballot.

