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'Her Tremendousness' elected leader of self-declared micro-nation on hilltop in Italy





Nina Döbler Menegatto will be known as "Her Tremendeousness" after winning an election in an Italian micro-nation

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or the first time in village history, a princess will lead the self-declared micro-nation of Seborga, an eccentric hilltop hamlet on the Italian Riviera which has claimed sovereignty for six decades.

The newly elected Princess of Seborga or La Sua Tremendita - Her Tremendousness, as she will be affectionately known by inhabitants - is Nina Döbler Menegatto, 41, a German-born businesswoman who has twice served as foreign affairs liaison for the tiny Ligurian village's Crown Council.

"The first thing we will do is of course celebrate," Ms Döbler Menegatto told the Telegraph as the final results rolled in. "But once I have met with my council ministers, I think we will start with tourism - make Seborga bloom again."

More than 78 per cent of Seborga's 247 registered voters turned out at the polls Sunday to elect Ms. Döbler Menegatto.

She received 122 votes, compared to 69 for her rival candidate Laura Di Bisceglie, the daughter of a local mimosa flower grower who first declared the village's independence back in 1963 and gave himself the title Prince Giorgio I. She is set to serve a seven-vear term.



The Principality of Seborga, near Imperia, in Liguria province, Italy CREDIT: ALAMY

The owner of a property company who splits her time between Seborga and nearby Monaco, Ms. Döbler Menegatto is also the ex-wife of the current sovereign, former speedboat champion Marcello Menegatto.

He resigned for personal reasons in April after a nine-year reign as Prince Marcello I and as of Sunday retains the title Prince Emeritus of Seborga.

She ran on a platform to promote tourism, advance Seborga's sovereignty, revive the local currency, known as the Luigino, and improve relations with other nations.

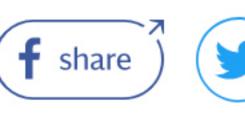
Despite this, no state recognizes Seborga as independent, including Italy, from which it receives regional and state support.

Residents say Vatican archive documents show that deeds from the sale of Seborga by the Savoy dynasty to the Kingdom of Sardinia in 1729 were not registered properly, nor fixed when Italy was unified in 1861, leaving Seborga in legal limbo.

Perched overlooking the Mediterranean Sea and just a half hour's drive from the fully recognised Principality of Monaco, Seborga has benefited from tourists enchanted by the eccentric myths that swirl around its principality claims and reported ancient links to Knights Templar.

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