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**Berlusconi Fills New Cabinet With Familiar Faces**  
by Elisabetta Povoledo

ROME, April 23 - Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi appointed a new cabinet on Saturday that included most of the same faces that had left office three days earlier after a crisis in the governing coalition.

Only five ministers changed in the 24-member cabinet and another two switched posts. A former economy minister, Giulio Tremonti, ousted from the cabinet after a dispute with former political allies last year, returned as one of two deputy prime ministers. Rocco Buttiglione, the departing European Affairs minister, was given the Culture Ministry job after being snubbed for a European Union post last fall because of his conservative views. Claudio Scajola, who was forced to resign two years ago after a political gaffe, was appointed industry minister.

Mr. Berlusconi resigned last week, closing down Italy's longest-serving government since 1946. After losing 12 of 14 regional races earlier this month, Mr. Berlusconi's allies - the centrist Union of Christian Democrats and the far right-wing National Alliance - demanded changes in government policies and people.

"Both the Union of Christian Democrats and National Alliance wanted a formal crisis as a sign of discontinuity," said Gianfranco Pasquino, a political science professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Bologna. "They wanted to make a point that this is a different government and it's different because they reasserted their roles."

Rather than face new elections one year ahead of schedule, the prime minister reshuffled his cabinet and pledged to shift the focus of his policies for the duration of his term.

On Friday, President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi gave Mr. Berlusconi a mandate to form a new government. The prime minister told reporters Friday that his team would soon be at work "with renewed impetus" to carry out a new program centering on "supporting businesses, defending families' purchasing power and a concrete plan for the South to encourage the creation of new jobs."

The new government, which will face a vote of confidence in Parliament next week, should buy the prime minister some time to bolster his sagging popularity before elections scheduled for next year.

Piero Fassino, leader of the Democratic Left, the largest opposition party said the new executive ignored calls for change. "It is a desperation government," he said.

One surprising new entry in the cabinet was Francesco Storace, who replaced Gerolamo Sirchia as health minister. Three weeks ago, Mr. Storace was pushed out as head of the Lazio region, which includes Rome, after election losses.