

Franco Frattini Met the Community and Announced the Upcoming Re-establishment of the AP Program in Italian

Marina Melchionda (September 23, 2010)



On the sidelines of the 65th UN General Assembly, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Franco Frattini met the Italian community in New York during an exclusive event organized at the Consulate General. It was an occasion for him to announce the upcoming re-establishment of the AP Program in Italian, and a full calendar of events dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy.

On September 24th, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Franco Frattini met a selected group of members of the Italian and Italian-American community in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.



Keeping up with a very intense schedule, he first stopped at the [Italian Cultural Institute](#) [2] where an international conference on the protection of women rights was being held at the presence of the Italian Minister for Equal Opportunities Mara Carfagna and the Vice President of the Senate and co-founder of "[No Peace Without Justice](#) [3]" Emma Bonino.

At the exclusive event that followed he was welcomed by a number of people who crowded the beautiful conference room of the Consulate General, next door from the Italian Cultural Institute on Park Avenue.

Ambassador Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata had praising words for the minister, recognizing his merits in bringing new energy and dynamism to Italy's foreign policy. "It is undeniable that Italy has recently undertaken a preeminent and key role on the international scene," he stated.

Mr Frattini is not new to New York. Having already been Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2002-2004, during one of the previous Berlusconi governments, it is not the first time that he participates in the General Assembly of the UN and comes to New York. During his visits, he always found time to meet the community, which he finds every year more close knit thanks to the commitment of Consul General Francesco Maria Taló to establish an integrated Italian network in the city, a network that he likes to call Sistema Italia.

His speech was an occasion for him to give two important announcements.

The first concerned the re-establishment of the [AP Program in Italian Language and Culture](#) [4], a University level course of instruction that students can take while still in high school. Founded in 2005/2006 and offered by the American College Board as part of the Advanced Placement Program, it was discontinued after the 2008-2009. This year the government, a number of private entities, and a few Italian and Italian-American organizations and foundations joined forces and collected about 3,200,000 dollars, the funds necessary to restart the program: "The government alone allocated a million dollars, a sum that together with the donations of private entities such as [MSC](#) [5], [Luxottica](#) [6], [Fiat](#) [7], [Eni](#) [8], [Unicredit](#) [9], [Finmeccanica](#) [10], and of Italian and Italian-American organizations, first among which [NIAE](#) [11] and the [Columbus Citizens Foundation](#) [12], allowed the successful outcome of this common initiative."

In giving his second announcement, the minister showed us a brochure designed as an Italian flag and featuring a full calendar of events dedicated to the 150th anniversary from the unification of Italy. "Thanks to the collaboration among Ambassador Terzi, the Italian Cultural Institute and Consul General Taló there will be huge celebrations in the US in honor of this important milestone for the history of Italy. The President of the Italian Republic has officially backed this initiative, that will further enhance the image of our country in the US." Among the events being planned, there is also an exhibit dedicated to the correspondence (in Italian) between "one of the fathers of Italian language" Gaetano Filangieri, and Benjamin Franklin, one of the pioneers of the constitutional history of the United States.

The celebrations are an homage to the deep and rich historical roots on which Italy was founded, but are also an occasion to show that the country is capable to modernize and continuously reinvent itself. "We must find a balanced compromise between the historical heritage that our fathers handed down to us, and our modern role on the world stage."

On September 25th Mr. Frattini will deliver a speech through which he will draw the general lines of Italy's new foreign policy: "We believe in a global governance that puts the rights of people at the center of its focus. There can not be democracy or economic progress if we first do not make so that the social, political, and civil rights of each individual are respected worldwide."

Mr. Frattini finally left the podium complimenting his co-citizens for being such active representatives of the Italian culture abroad: "Italy is proud of you, of what you are doing, and of what we are sure you will do. You are and have been key to the growth of this country with your genius and entrepreneurial spirit. Since I love Italy so deeply, let me thank you all for this", he said as his voice was finally covered by loud and thunderous applause.



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