

## Mario Monti Meets the Italian and Italian-American Community in New York

Francesca Giuliani (February 11, 2012)



Before returning to Italy, Prime Minister Monti met with representatives of the Italian and Italian-American community at the Consulate General of Italy in New York. "We are all part of the same enterprise," he told the guests. A reportage of the ceremony [STAY TUNED FOR OUR VIDEO-INTERVIEWS](#)

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President Monti's first visit to the United States ended yesterday night at Park Avenue, where he met with representatives of the Italian and Italian-American community at the Consulate General of Italy.

With him were Foreign Affairs Minister and former Ambassador of Italy to the US Giulio Terzi di



Sant'Agata, and the newly appointed Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero, at his first official meeting with the community.

The day before, Monti had addressed the Italians and Italian-Americans at the White House during a [press conference](#) [3] held after the bilateral meeting with President of the United States Barack Obama.

On that occasion, Monti said in Italian to be aware of the primary role of the Italian and Italian-American community in the history of America, and he declared: "I hope that the progress we are making in Italy will make every Italian and Italian-American citizen more proud of his Italian heritage."

The increased international credibility of Italy and the revamped pride of being Italian are the main reasons why the representatives of the Italian and Italian-American community are grateful to the President.

To greet him at the Consulate, together with the whole staff and the representatives of the institutions of "Sistema Italia", were prominent exponents of the Italian and Italian-American communities.

"For the first time a representative of the Italian government is seen as a testimonial of Europe as a whole," said Claudio Angelini, President of the [Dante Alighieri Society](#) [4] in New York and former RAI news correspondent. "Italy was considered the ailing body of Europe, but thanks to Monti this is not true anymore, to the point that America attributes to Italy today a representational role in the European Union."

Anthony Julian Tamburri, Dean of [John D. Calandra Italian/American Institute](#) [5] at CUNY, agrees: "Monti restored the image of Italy. The presence of Foreign Affairs Minister Giulio Terzi is also a sign that the role of Italians abroad will be more recognized too."

"What was desperately needed was a new Italian Premier," said former New York State's governor Mario Cuomo.

"Monti is a very distinguished man, he speaks the language here but understands more than just the language. People in the United States have not yet come to understand how important Italy is to us. We're so proud of the US that we think we don't need anybody else, but we need all of Europe to be well in order to be great ourselves. Monti is going to be responsible in very large ways for Europe. We're delighted to see him."

Many other guests expressed similar opinions during short video-interviews with i-Italy that will be published shortly.

Monti was introduced by Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero, who underlined the role of the Italian and Italian-American community as a "multiplier of influence for Italy in the United States" and as "the primary channel to project a different and up-to-date image of our national identity, combining the heritage of the past with the contemporary excellences."

Beginning his speech, the Prime Minister defined the meeting as a "significant and intense moment." He then joked about bringing Minister Terzi back to the United States, saying to have felt "a little guilty subtracting such a personality from the community."

Monti remembered the year he spent studying in New Haven, Connecticut, and said that since then he still feels "a part of the Italian presence in the United States."

"The great and affectionate participation of this community to the Italian destiny is something moving, gratifying and prideful," he declared, adding that the achievements of the Italians living in America and of the Italian-Americans are a significant stimulus for Italy, which "with a very atypical government is facing very relevant challenges as far as financial stability, growth and social equality



are concerned, but also with regards to an increased, serene but strong presence of Italy in the European and international affairs.”

Through the modernization of the country and the reestablishment of a more tranquil political dialogue, Italy will not only “have more room for, but a greater duty of giving its contribution to international affairs,” beginning with the European ones, “whose positive and negative repercussions affect it the most.”

According to Monti, it is pointless to blame Europe for not considering the needs of Italy or for imposing too harsh sacrifices on its population: “We are Europe,” he states, “We are a great component of it, as we are – you are – a great component of the United States.”

The President’s message to the Italian and Italian-American community is one of gratefulness and encouragement to keep pursuing their goals, valorizing Italian culture and image.

In the “city of the stock market”, as he describes New York, “we are all part of the same enterprise,” the activities of which “have a common effect,” the one of determining “the quotation of the adjective ‘Italian’ in the world.”

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