

Let's Call Them Rules, Not Quotas!

Giulia Madron (March 13, 2014)



Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò hosted a round table dedicated to women and politics. Special guest: Valeria Fedeli, Vice President of the Italian Senate.

A few days after International Women's Day, [Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò](#) [2] hosted a round table dedicated to women and politics. The conversation, opened by the director of La Casa Stefano Albertini, included the participation of Valeria Fedeli, Vice President of the Senate of the Republic, Lucina Di Meo (Gender & Leadership Consultant), Angela Vitaliano (Il Fatto Quotidiano) and Maria Luisa Rossi-Hawkins (TGcom, Mediaset).

The conversation occurred right after the Italian Parliament's recent rejection of the three amendments in the new electoral reform aimed at guaranteeing the equality of gender within public



positions.

After a brief screening of a documentary that recalled 60 years of female presence inside Italian politics, Valeria Fedeli opened the debate commenting on what just happened in Italy.

"It is not a problem of laws. Italy has advanced laws but not well applied," said the senator. Moreover, she explained that she was quite surprised, not about the rejection of the first two amendments, but about the rejection of the third one, which stated that both genders cannot be under-represented by 40% on the electoral lists. " I thought this one could have been seen as an element of modern culture since its premises are definitely non discriminatory," affirmed Fedeli.

According to the senator, there is a linguistic issue that contributes to this failure and "impedes to achieve our objectives." "It's wrong to talk about "Quote Rosa." It seems as something you need, because you know someone else holds the power," said Fedeli. "I prefer to talk about rules. We need to set rules on the electoral laws."

"I think there is a generational problem," added Lucina di Meco. "Before, one thought that merit was everything. It's not like that anymore. In Italy there is no meritocracy."

Another big issue that was addressed during the conversation was the responsibility of the media in creating wrong models that are discriminatory especially for women. "We have many women who are very prepared and smart. But TV, for instance, gives more space to men, giving to women a secondary importance," said senator Fedeli.

"It's a socio-cultural problem that is reflected in the education system. The same educational contents are wrong, they don't reclaim the historical role and importance of many women. We have to change the learning models, introducing, for example, sex education courses, which I like to call sentimental education, in order to highlight to young people the existence of a relationship between men and women based on mutual respect for one another," affirmed Fedeli.

At the end of the debate, together with Stefano Albertini, all the speakers went to pay homage to the victims of the fire that occurred at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory on March 25th, 1911, that caused more than 140 deaths, of which 123 were women.

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