

## The Italy-America Chamber of Commerce Celebrates 125 Years with the Minister for Foreign Affairs

Francesca Di Folco (May 14, 2012)



The 125th anniversary of the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce was celebrated in Rome at Palazzo Farnesina. A delegation led by the Chamber's president Claudio Bozzo met with Minister for Foreign Affairs Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata. He underscored three main points of focus: enhancing interest in the Italian language and culture; expanding business and entrepreneurship; and supporting development and investments.



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The meeting held at the Farnesina - the headquarters of Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs - was a reunion of sorts for the Minister and former Ambassador to Washington, who is very familiar with the Italian and Italian-American communities in the United States and who met with the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce on several occasions during his tenure in the United States. Welcoming the delegation of entrepreneurs and tycoons from the leading chamber of commerce overseas, Minister Terzi di Sant'Agata underscored three main points: enhancing interest in the Italian language and culture; expanding business and entrepreneurship; and supporting development and investments.

He suggested strategies for reviving the economies and trade between the two countries. The Minister reiterated the importance of supporting projects focused on cultural growth and the diffusion of Italian language with initiatives related to entrepreneurship, high-level trade, and business. Speaking about the work of the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce, he praised its achievements and emphasized that in periods of economic crisis it is beneficial to continue to focus on tools for growth, investment, and innovation. The minister was blunt: international competition is "plentiful and varied" and the United States are increasingly open to Asia and Africa in new areas such as new technology, computer science, engineering. "We must therefore never lower our guard and never loosen our grip," he urged. After the delegation's applause, Claudio Bozzo took the podium.

The youngest president ever of the Chamber expressed his gratitude for Minister Terzi di Sant'Agata's compliments and fondly recalled President Giorgio Napolitano's visit last year to New York. Bozzo admitted the difficulties and challenges increasingly faced by the Chamber because of the economic crisis. It has, however, diligently worked to ensure that its associates remain the best in their fields, serving the interests of the Italian and American business community. President Bozzo had one request for the Minister: to continue to believe in, invest, and support the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce, which is proud to be celebrating its 125th anniversary. At the end he rose to reveal something that gradually appeared under the gaze of those present. It was a gift to the Minister, a little luminous statue in bronze. It looked like the gift was a virtual "pact," a mutual exchange of goals between the Minister and the delegation. Terzi di Sant'Agata in turn rose to shake hands with Bozzo, demonstrating his respect and esteem.

Sincere feelings of warmth and familiarity permeated the event and enveloped the delegation which, as the Minister reminded us, was made of close and personal friends. With a firm handshake and an appreciative glance to all those present, we were left with the sense that the man who heads the Farnesina, who is a "technician" rather than a politician, has nevertheless superior interpersonal skills.

Before ending the evening, we glimpsed at the shining bronze statue and despite its diminutive size, we were assured by Cav. Vincenzo Marra (President of ILICA) that it "weighs over five kilograms," and was sculpted by master artist Alessandro Marrone, from Arezzo in Tuscany. The contours, defined in detail, reflect the characteristic apple, the quintessential symbol of New York City, over which the Freedom Towers soar.

The work can be eloquently explained in this way: from the ashes of tragedy rises the promise of tomorrow. This is also a metaphor for the 125th anniversary of the Chamber of Commerce: letting go of past successes and victories in favor of renewal from within, embarking on new challenges and focusing on business success.

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