

Italy's Ambassador to the US Armando Varricchio Meets the Italian Community in New York

Camilla Santinelli (May 05, 2016)



Tuesday, May 3rd 2016: the melancholy of a rainy afternoon was driven away by the cheerful atmosphere that prevailed at 690 Park Avenue, location of the Italian consulate, where the Italian community assembled to meet the new Italian Ambassador on his first official visit to New York.

An overcrowded room welcomed Ambassador Armando Varricchio on his first day in New York. It was his first official visit since the Italian government appointed him the new Ambassador to the United States last March.

The meeting was opened by Consul General [Francesco Genuardi](#) [2]. After welcoming him warmly, Mr. Genuardi went on describing the busy schedule of this official visit.

Besides meeting with mayor [De Blasio](#) [3], Ambassador [Varricchio](#) [4] visited several cultural and educational institutions that help strengthening the bond between Italy and New York: [NYU's Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò](#) [5], the [Whitney Museum](#) [6], the [Center for Italian Modern Art](#) [7] and [Centro Primo Levi, among others](#) [8]. And everywhere he went he met Italian, American and Italian-American guests eager to share their passion and love for Italy.

After this, the Ambassador began to speak, accompanied by a thunderous applause by the audience. "This is my home, New York is my home", Varricchio started off. "It is a place that I feel strongly close to our hearts as Italians. Just as mayor De Blasio told me, New York would not be the same without Italy and the Italians".

With these emotional words, Ambassador Varricchio underscored the robust bond that has always tied together Italy and the United States. "Italians love New York" – he went on saying – "There has always been a very strong, sentimental, emotional relationship that we feel very vividly. Such relationship is perceived by the Italians of New York. By those who have been living here for a long time and who, with their work and passion, contributed to the success of this extraordinary city; and by those who moved here more recently to study and work. And last but not least, this bond is perceived also by our American friends who feel strongly connected to our country for its culture and for many other different reasons".

Amb. Varricchio also highlighted how intense his first months here in America were and how, from the day he presented his credentials to President Obama, he and his collaborators have constantly been busy promoting Italy's friendly relationship with the United States.

A special mention was made of the excellent job carried out by Consul General Francesco Genuardi and Vice Consul Isabella Periotto, as well as by all those who work in the economic, cultural, press and media sector—the big "Italia team" in the US.

A reference was also made to this particular moment in American politics, when "a big democracy is renewing itself." Referring to the presidential elections of the next November, Amb. Varricchio concluded that "Whoever goes to Pennsylvania 1600 will be considered a true friend of Italy, there is no doubt about that."

In concluding his speech, the Ambassador shifted his attention to Italy's present economic situation. The latest economic data have been positive and encouraging, despite all the difficulties the country had to face in the last few years. A new beginning and a new development is in sight. "This is an important moment also for our Country" Varricchio said.

"Italy started to run again. That's what the figures say. We emerged from three years of crisis that affected all Europe. Since last year, the economy started growing again, and projections are encouraging. Given that we as Italians are never easily settled, and we are constantly looking to the future, we do know that this is a starting point: we are beginning to grow again, to do better, to reform our economy and institution."

Then Armando Varricchio renewed his personal gratitude to New York, a city "full of emotion, passion and strong sensations", before giving the floor to [Kathy Hochul](#) [9], Lt. Governor of the State of New York and [Joseph Esposito](#) [10], Commissioner for Emergency Management.

Both of them underlined their pride for the bond that connects these two extraordinary Countries, a bond that allowed them to enrich their life experience, from all points of view.

It was indeed an exquisite afternoon, during which i-Italy also enjoyed the privilege to be granted an exclusive televised interview with Ambassador Varricchio, which will soon be broadcast in our TV show on NYC Life (Ch 25) and then posted online. So, stay tuned for more.

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