

## Nichi Vendola in America

ALICE BONVICINI (November 23, 2010)



The trip of the President of Apulia in the United States. "I was in love with America even when I was radical left"

Nichi Vendola's trip to the States came to an end, and it was the President of [Apulia](#) [2] and national leader of [Sinistra Libertà ed Ecologia](#) [3] himself who spoke about its results. It was a trip centered upon the [Governors' Global Climate Summit](#) [4] wanted by outgoing California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and sealed by the signature of the intent bill of R20, the global network of regions against climate change. The only Italian present in California, the President of Apulia met with great success, for his region is the largest supplier of wind power in Italy. The meetings centered upon environmental sustainability then continued at the [Rockefeller Foundation](#) [5] and the [Ford Foundation](#) [6].

Vendola's transatlantic visit was also the occasion for meeting with the latest generation of Italians in America. From the [Italian Department of Georgetown](#) [7], in Washington D.C., to the "beautiful



and overwhelming" meeting at [Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò](#) [8] at New York University, the President of Apulia galvanized surprising amounts of curiosity and enthusiasm.

"But it also offered the opportunity to develop a relationship with the main players of American society," Vendola told us during his visit at Eataly, the huge emporium of taste by Oscar Farinetti. At the Department of State he discussed innovation and New Media, a topic that is very dear to Apulia's President, who made a prerogative of his both social networking and communication feedback. Also the meeting with Senator Kerry with whom he delved into the connection between North American politics and environmental decisions. On the eve of the NATO summit in Lisbon, the two spoke about the situation in Afghanistan, a topic very dear to Vendola who feels it is important to cooperate more with the international community. "We mustn't escape from Afghanistan. We must go where there's a theater of war and close it, opening a scenario of peace."

During his stay in the States Vendola also participated at a meeting at the [Italian Consulate General](#) [9] of New York with the protagonists of the "Sistema Italia", from [ENIT](#) [10] to the [Italian Cultural Institute](#) [11], from the small enterprises to the business world; a full circle with the verification of certain experiments to be built.

And the President couldn't miss the opportunity to meet with the community of Pugliesi at the St. Anthony Hall in Brooklyn. The evening was strongly awaited for since the last President to stop by Bensonhurst – the Italian-American heart of New York's most populated borough – was Salvatore Di Staso back in the 1990s. Vendola's American tour de force was concluded at Ground Zero. A morning was spent together with the protagonists of the reconstruction and "custodians of the memory, pain and horror." Vendola told us how such a visit is upsetting: "The great tragedies sometimes make us forget that even the loss of one single life is irreparable." "Never again for any religious, ideological or political reason," said Vendola, moved, "we must take steps towards an era where politics must necessarily be tied to a premise: my adversary's life is sacred."

And when some colleagues bring him back to the Italian present asking for a comment about the possible resigning of Minister Carfagna and the participation of Minister Maroni on the show [Vieni Via Con Me](#) [12] [Gomorra's author [Roberto Saviano](#) [13] is the also the co-host of the TV show; he made claims about organized crime's infiltration of Maroni's party, Lega Nord] Vendola explained that "the [Mara Carfagna affair](#) [14], who once again expresses a position of autonomy and also of dignity, is the demonstration of a suffering that revolves around a scabrous node: the presence of shadows of the Camorra in the center-right establishment." About Maroni he added, "I hope he has the courage to thank in public those who Berlusconi offends in public every day, meaning the prosecutors that fight the Mafia from the front lines."

In the maze of typical Italian products at Eataly the trip of Apulia's President comes to an end. It's the first time that an official regional delegation is made up of only one person, the President; and in spite of the small numbers, in this trip Vendola brings home great results "that honor not only Apulia, but also the whole Country system."

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