

## Federica Mogherini. Italy in America. A Pride for All

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The Foreign Minister meets Italian and Italian-American community at the Consulate in New York. "The Italians have contributed and continue to contribute a lot to the success of this country, from the institutional, political, economic, commercial and cultural point of view. We are, perhaps, the largest superpower in the world for the quality of our presence abroad."



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It was not the easiest time in a busy city like New York. Nine-thirty, a regular Friday morning. A workday for everyone. The weather was not the most inviting either. A dull rainy day which was making everyone feel a bit lazy.

Yet, through the door of the Consulate General, on Park Avenue, dozens of people flocked and filled the three large rooms to greet the much-awaited guest.

We are talking about the Foreign Minister, whom while on her first official visit regardless of her tight schedule, decided, even if for a brief time, to meet the Italian and Italian American community.

Federica Mogherini since 22 February 2014 is the new Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Renzi government. She was among those elected onto the the Democratic Party lists.

Previously, she was in charge of international relations of the Leftist Democratic party DS, as well as the Foreign Affairs of Leftist Youth. She holds a degree in political science, is married and has two daughters.

She is the third woman, after Susanna Agnelli and Emma Bonino, to hold office of the Foreign Ministry in Italy.

Her official visit to the United States is short, but intense at the same time.

After visiting Washington in the last couple of days, where she introduced the foreign policy of the government of Matteo Renzi to Barack Obama's administration, after a stop in London for a meeting with Foreign Ministers from 11 countries who are part of the group 'Friends of Syria,' she came to New York.

On Friday, after having met with political scientists in the early morning of the Council on Foreign Relations, Minister Mogherini arrived at the Consulate General of Italy.

She was warmly welcomed by the Consul General, Natalia Quintavalle, the Ambassador in Washington, Claudio Bisogniero and the Ambassador to the UN, Sebastiano Cardi.

The entry way to the consulate, given the time of the day, was filled with Italians, there to conduct business in the various consulate offices.

This is what made this visit particularly different than a normal meeting / welcome with the community awaiting an official, formal speech.

This minister's entry into the daily routine of the activities of the consulate offices made her visit very natural and removed much of the anticipated formality.

On the first floor, in the space utilized to welcome her, many Italians, Italian-Americans and Americans awaited.

Joined together, representing a diverse community, representing the young and new migrations, intellectuals, representatives of business and art institutions, as well as schools and universities.

Among them, Matilda Cuomo, former first lady of the state of NY and mother of the current governor of the State of New York, Andrew Cuomo.

Representatives from various Italian institutions were also present, including: ICE Director, Pier Paolo Celeste, Director of ENIT, Eugenio Magnani, Director of the Bank of Italy, Marco Martella, irector of the Italian-American Chamber of Commerce, Claudio Bozzo, the heroic Daniel Nigro, appointed FDNY Commissioner by Mayor De Blasio just a few days ago, as well as Senator of the Italian Republic, elected by Italians Abroad, Fucsia Nissoli.



Minister Mogherini acknowledged that this meeting with the Italian community was short. "This is just a first meeting, let us make an appointment in September," said Mogherini, "when, on the occasion of the General Assembly at the United Nations, I hope to spend more time in New York, to listen to you, hear your stories, needs and proposals."

Creating a magical ambience, the surrounding walls of the main reception hall of the consulate, were beautifully adorned by the young artist Teresa Cinque, who just finished setting up her tapestry tree exhibit titled "Velvet Park."

In her introduction, Consul General proudly emphasized the role of strong and growing importance, which serves the Italian community in the Tri-State area, as well as reminded the community of the careful work carried out jointly by the Italian System of New York.

She recalled the importance of Expo 2015 for our country, as well as the importance of the EU Presidency for Italy, which begins in July.

Ambassador Bisogniero, who presented the Minister of Foreign Affairs, has sought to stress the "importance of the Italian presence in the United States." "The Minister - he said - insisted on having this meeting, to give a concrete sign of the importance that this government gives to Italians abroad, in particular to the community of fellow residents in the USA."

Also on this occasion, as usual in his direct intervention to the community, Bisogniero wanted to reiterate the importance of the teaching of Italian in American schools and of how vital it is to maintain the Italian AP exam.

"The Italians have contributed and continue to contribute a lot to the success of this country, from the institutional, political, economic, commercial and cultural point of view. We are, perhaps, the largest superpower in the world for the quality of our presence abroad," stated Minister Mogherini.

She then noticed how more and more outside of Italy we find a great curiosity and attention for our country. "There is a great demand in the world. We must respond together and make our own challenge," she said. Then she added, "It is certainly very important to work on our image, but we must act on the very substance."

In the course of our interview, which will air on NYC Media, channel 25 she stressed the importance of relations between Italy and the USA.

"Here, we see, one of the most important, strong and valuable Italian experiences in the world. My visit is a tribute to the Italian and Italian-American community and its role in the past and present of this country. We want make Italian community aware. We know that is a key added value for Italy and for its political culture."

On Friday afternoon the minister held a meeting with Mayor Bill De Blasio, at City Hall, the seat of the municipality of New York. We have asked what this appointment meant to her. She answered: "I admit it, I think of meeting him more as an Italian american than as mayor... I was very excited at the news of his election. I think it's the most concrete sign of what Italians and Italian-Americans have contributed to the grandiosity of this country. And if America is so great a bit of it is our doing. And we are aware of and proud of that."

Right before meeting with Bill De Blasio, the Minister visited the UN where, accompanied by the Permanent Representative Sebastiano Cardi, she met President John Ashe of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, to talk about the moratorium on the death penalty, a priority of the Italian Presidency of the EU "Mare Nostrum. Her action-packed day of activities finished with an evening among the circle of the Democratic Party at the famous downtown Italian Pizzeria Ribalta.



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