

Mogherini & De Blasio. The Italian Diaspora and its Impact Around the World

Bianca Soria (May 17, 2014)



Federica Mogherini, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, meets mayor Bill de Blasio at City Hall. The New York mayor clearly proclaims his Italian-ness in an open and proud manner by kicking off the meeting speaking Italian. Minister Mogherini underscore responds: " Italy is a superpower in terms of presence around the world, and we need to empower this huge resource we have. Building bridges with a strong leader like you in this part of the world is part of that process"

[Federica Mogherini](#) [2], on her first official visit abroad since her designation as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy, meets the New York mayor [Bill de Blasio](#) [3] at the City Hall. In the presence of Italian media we attend a press conference that highlights the common challenges Italy and New York face, the impact that the Italian Diaspora has had and still has around the world, and how it is crucial, on the basis of the American example, to turn the wave of immigration Italy is experiencing into a source of inspiration and positive outcomes.

Bill de Blasio unmistakably proclaims his Italianism in an open and proud manner: by kicking off the meeting speaking Italian, by proudly showing off the Italian clothes he is wearing, but more importantly by emphasizing how his Italian background is an essential trait not only of his own identity, but also of the intrinsic identity of the US as a whole, given the significant contribution the Italians have made to turn the US into the great country it is today.

He proudly tells us of when New York welcomed his grandparents at the beginning of the 1900s and allowed them to build their life and their future, and how important it is to him that New York today is as welcoming to Italians and other immigrants as it had been at the time of his grandparents.

“My sense of my origin is a constant in my life – De Blasio says – it’s an every day reality and my sense of pride and appreciation for the homeland that my ancestors come from is always in my thinking.”

He shows his appreciation for Mrs Mogherini’s visit as the representative of a new Italy that is addressing its challenges head on. Challenges such as economic crisis and increasing social inequalities that are common to Italy and to the City of New York, and that need to be tackled by showing the citizens unwavering commitment and constant progress.

He goes on asserting that New York has a profound connection with Italy, as “so many New Yorkers have their origins in Italy, and because so many of the leading individuals in all aspects of life in this city are people of Italian descent”

When the Minister Mogherini takes the floor she first of all expresses her satisfaction in concluding this foreign mission by meeting Mr. De Blasio which she defines “The most Italian of New York mayors”, the one that has embraced his roots the most and a great and inspiring example of the Italian impact abroad.

“ Italy – she adds - is a superpower in terms of presence around the world, and we need to empower this huge resource we have. Building bridges with a strong leader like you in this part of the world is part of that process”.

She explains how the complexities of Italy and NY, although different, pose similar challenges in the governing process. Both administrations share the urgency to deliver much needed reforms in order to concretely improve the quality of life of their people and to make the economic crisis more sustainable for all parts of society.

It is a priority, the Foreign Minister maintains, to deliver the message, especially to younger generations, that politicians and institutions are working towards a common goal of change that can restore hope and a positive outlook about the future.

The Minister continues by bringing our attention to the fact that it is a country like America that should remind us the value that there is in welcoming other cultures and making them an integral part of our society. “In the hope – she says- that also Italy, once country of emigrants and now facing the challenges of unprecedented immigration flows, could take advantage of what a mix of cultures can bring to our nation, and use it to build a stronger society and a more robust economy”.

De Blasio concludes by reminding us how the [Italian Diaspora](#) [4] and its impact around the world should not be underestimated, as everybody, in his own way, makes a valuable contribution, from the anonymous cafeteria lady down the road who proudly brings up her Sicilian and Tuscan origins in a heavy Australian accent, to big and influential personalities like [Pope Bergoglio](#) [5], “arguably the greatest example we have recently”.



Links

- [1] <http://ility.org/files/mogherinideblasiocover1400342310jpg>
- [2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federica_Mogherini
- [3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_de_Blasio
- [4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_diaspora
- [5] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bergoglio>