

TRANSATLANTIC SYMPOSIUM 2021
Special edition

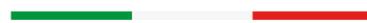
A Lasting Bond. Revisiting & Reinvigorating Italy-US Relations 160 Years since their Inception

Remarks by Marina Sereni

CONFERENCE ROOM: SALA ALDO MORO
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
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Remarks by Marina Sereni, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very glad to be with you today to celebrate the Italy-U.S. relationship.

My gratitude goes to the IAI [Istituto Affari Internazionali] and collaborating institutions for organizing this **Special Edition of the Transatlantic Symposium**, which over the years has become an important forum for policymakers and experts to discuss the **transatlantic relationship** and the **friendship between Italy and the United States**.

A special grazie goes to US Chargé d'Affaires, Tom Smitham, for joining us and contributing his perspective and insight - and, if I may add, for his personal contribution to the depth of our relations.

Today I wish to start by sharing some thoughts with you on the **legacy of our common past**, and then continue with a **glance ahead to the future of our relationship**.

Let me start by saying that the Italy-U.S. partnership would not be what it is today without our **long and meaningful history**. Our all-encompassing partnership and cooperation are, indeed, a product of the path our Countries and people have gone together.

Our bonds are rooted in **common values**. We share a universal commitment to promote human rights and to defend freedom, peace and democracy. Our trade and economic relationship is strong and extensive. Social, academic and cultural exchanges between our peoples are vibrant.

The breadth and depth of the Italy-U.S. partnership is also made by the **many Italians and Italian-Americans**, who - day in day out, one brick at a time - proudly give their contribution, leaving their mark across the U.S. on the political, business, scientific and cultural landscape at a local and state level.

I am particularly pleased of our relations in the fields of **technology and innovation, from quantum technology, to biotechnologies and space**. This week, the **Italian Innovation and Culture Hub in San Francisco** will be inaugurated at the presence of Foreign Minister Di Maio. An ambitious project that will pool economic, scientific and cultural resources to maximize the impact of Italy's diplomatic initiatives. The Innovation Centre will offer a wide range of services for Startup and SMEs Traction, creating the **possibility for Italian and American startupper to cooperate on their ideas**, while attracting the investments needed to develop them into business ventures.

As we gather to celebrate our relations in the year of their 160th anniversary, I am very proud of the level and the scope of **foreign policy cooperation** between Italy and the US.

There is **constant and constructive dialogue** between our Countries, and it could not be otherwise, given the strategic importance of our relationship and the challenges of the times.

Meetings between Minister Di Maio and Secretary Blinken have been particularly frequent this year, starting with Minister Di Maio's trip to Washington D.C. in April for the kick-off of the 160th celebrations.

In June, Secretary Blinken travelled to Rome to co-chair the **Ministerial Meetings of the Global Coalition against Daesh and on Syria**, and joined foreign ministers, in Bari and Matera, at the **G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting** to reinforce the U.S. commitment to multilateralism and discuss continued cooperation in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing the climate crisis, and building back better, with a focus on Africa.

We were particularly pleased to **welcome President Biden in Rome** for the G20 Summit and grateful to the United States for its strong support throughout the G20 work streams.

Our collaboration is particularly close in the **Broader Mediterranean region**, where we keep a wide-ranging Strategic Dialogue. At the recent MED Dialogues, we came together to discuss a **positive agenda for the Mediterranean in a time of political and economic transition**.

In the last few months, **coordination on crisis areas has further increased**. The very same goes for other key **regional issues, such as defence matters and energy security**.

Following the end of the NATO mission in Afghanistan, the U.S. and Italy have been working closely. In the wake of the Afghan crisis, **Italy called a special G20 meeting to promote a coordinated response of the international community**. The United States played an essential role in the most challenging phase of the crisis and in helping expatriating Italian nationals and those Afghans that cooperated with our institutions in the Country. **The work done by US Forces at the Kabul airport was of paramount importance to secure safe passage operations**.

As allies, we are resolute in our pledge to **protect our collective security** and we **cooperate to maintain international peace and stability**. As such, according to its European dimension, Italy's commitment to NATO remains steadfast and fundamental in its foreign policy.

Building on the strong foundation of this relationship, we look ahead to the **future of the Italy-U.S. partnership**.

The future carries **great challenges**. The global order and the geopolitical environment are in a state of flux. The developments of this past year -from the pandemic to climate change, to regional crises - have brought to the fore the **urgency of charting a path towards a future that embodies our principles and values**.

Europe and the US share a strong interest to **protect the international liberal order**. We need to update it and upgrade it, in order to **keep up with the power shifts** in the twenty-first century and to **handle new conflicts effectively**.

All these objectives are within reach, if Europe and the US stand together and lead a coordinate response of the international community, through **dialog and diplomacy**. As allies and partners, we are irreplaceable to each other.

In this light, **Italy welcomes the Summit for Democracy and the Year of Action** as an opportunity to help strengthen and improve democracy for the 21st century.

We are **taking bold and ambitious action to foster democracy at home and abroad**. Also through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan - part of the Next Generation EU - which includes investments in six key policy areas and reforms in Justice, Public Administration, Regulatory Simplification and Competition to help build a more modern, inclusive, and democratic society for our citizens.

The current **US Administration has a genuine interest to strengthen relations with its European partners**. This represents a window of opportunity that we must seize.

A strong Europe makes the US stronger. Increasing Europe's strategic autonomy and strengthening transatlantic relations are two sides of the same strategic response to a complex international scenario.

We consider the "NATO 2030" process, and the update of the Strategic Concept, as a **collective effort to reinforce transatlantic unity and cohesion**. We want to make the Alliance stronger, successful and fit for the future.

Reinforcing cooperation between NATO and the EU goes precisely in this direction. This is particularly true in **areas where the EU is a key responder, such as cyber, hybrid and the resilience of our societies**.

But there is more. Other issues, such as trade and technology, have become highly political, posing new risks.

Let us take, for instance, the **protection of the global value chain**. The pandemic crisis has highlighted its critical importance. The EU-US Trade and Technology Council is a very useful tool to discuss how to strengthen supply chains.

On the trade front, we have made **immense progress, starting from the Boeing/Airbus dispute, as well as on steel and aluminium tariffs and on the issue of digital taxation**.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Practicing **strong and effective multilateralism** is the only path to successfully addressing the most pressing challenges facing the world today, from global health to addressing climate change.

The safeguard of our planet is a **top priority for Italy**. We must build on the results of the G20 and COP26 Conference in Glasgow.

The **ecological transition is** the most relevant part of the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan. We have devised a broader strategy for making our economy sustainable in the long run. 40% of all the resources from the Plan will be devoted to the "green transition".

We have clear **environmental targets to meet**, starting from achieving a full-scale energy transition. Many Italian leading companies, such as ENEL, SNAM and ENI, among others, and the Italian research system are at the forefront in de-carbonization efforts.

As we embark in the so-called **“twin transitions” - the green transition and the digital transition** - the value of the scientific and technological cooperation between Italy and the US is higher than ever.

We have already reached **peaks of excellence in many sectors**, such as the life sciences, carbon-free productive processes, artificial intelligence, and robotics. We seek to boost them further.

Digitalization and artificial intelligence will drive economic growth in the coming future. **Achieving a sustainable and inclusive development largely depends on them.**

Progress in these areas is essential also to protect our health, as we have learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. **Artificial intelligence and ITC technologies can make the difference in terms of effectiveness of medical care and resilience of health systems.** I know there are several promising partnership in place between Italian and American researchers in these fields. I wish we could have many more soon.

In these most difficult times, the unique partnership between US and Italy has never been more important. The transatlantic relationship remains today - more than ever - a **stronghold of stability, peace and prosperity in the international system.** **Together, we can continue to lead the way.**

Thank you.

