

## Encouraging Women Leadership in the World

Francesca Giuliani (March 24, 2012)



The International Women's Day Celebration of the Society of Foreign Consuls is the occasion to acknowledge the commitment of women throughout the different immigrant communities of New York City. Italy participated in this year's edition, awarding Silvia Formenti, MD, as its exemplar woman leader

On March 15, International Women's Day, The Society of Foreign Consuls in New York organized a reception in celebration of the commitment of women throughout the different immigrant communities in the city, contributing to the diversity and richness of New York City.

At the [Consulate General of the Russian Federation](#) [2], Consul Andrey Yushmanov welcomed the women Consuls of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Italy, Kazakhstan, Poland, Saint Lucia, Slovenia and Venezuela. Each nation picked an exemplar woman member and leader of their communities in New



York, the Honorees of the night.

Koula Sophianou, Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus and President of the Society of Foreign Consuls, greeted the guests and stated: "We live in this great country, the United States, in which women play a very important role in society.

Each one of the honorees today serves as an example to all us here on how to live a better life, a life of giving to our community, not just the one we are from, but the community where we reside."

Initiated last year by Consul General of the Republic of Kazakhstan Raushan Yesbulatova, the reception in celebration of Women's Day was so successful that it was established as an annual celebration.

Italy was represented at the event by [Deputy Consul General Lucia Pasqualini](#) [3] who awarded the Italian Honoree for the night, [Silvia Formenti, MD](#) [4], Professor and Chairwoman of the Department of Radiation oncology at the New York School of Medicine.

Pasqualini said that collaborating with The Society of Foreign Consuls was a beautiful experience: "Working with the women Consuls of so many different countries has been very interesting and we were very enthusiastic to participate," and added: "Consul General Quintavalle accepted immediately, and we couldn't have done differently since in our Consulate women are the majority."

Commenting on the gradually increasing presence of women in Italian diplomacy, Pasqualini said: "We are still not that numerous, but hopefully the change will be sensible in the results."

On the choice to nominate Formenti as the Italian Honoree, Pasqualini commented: "Silvia Formenti gave a significant contribution in the field of medical research and she is an amazing banner for representing our country today."

First Chairwoman at NYU and first Chairwoman in her specialty in the United States, Formenti believes that "Women today have to be given the opportunity to think they can become leaders, which is not something to be taken for granted."

The importance of encouraging women to pursue leadership positions is something that both Formenti and Quintavalle are very actively encouraging, and about the Consul General Formenti told i-Italy: "It is great to have a woman Consul such as Natalia Quintavalle here in New York, she is an extraordinary person and we are all very proud of her. She knows how important it is to promote women in society, which needs to be pursued at all costs."

Formenti's advice to young girls in Italy who are struggling to find opportunities for a better future is "to be resilient against rejections and disappointments," and to get back on their feet as fast as they can, "no matter how often they fall."

Penne with Vodka sauce and Ricotta and Spinach Ravioli in Butter and Sage sauce prepared by [Serafina's Chef Vittorio Assaf](#) [5] were the Italian dishes offered at the reception that followed the awarding ceremony, featuring typical delicacies from the cuisines of all the participating countries.

Italian wines were also available among other international spirits, and we asked [Alessandra Rotondi](#) [6], Italian sommelier, to define the most feminine among all Italian wines.

"I'd pick Falanghina," she said. Falanghina derives its name from the Latin 'falanga,' the stakes supporting the grapes in the vineyard: "like women, falanghina grapes are autonomous but when



they have a support to grow on, they become wondrous...like wonder woman!"

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Since its founding in 1925, [the Society of Foreign Consuls in New York](http://www.consulsnewyork.com/) [7] has represented the world's largest diplomatic community. This unique organization, whose members are gathered from the 112 NYC-based Consulates General, is steered by an Executive Committee made up of elected members representing all countries via the following regional groupings – Europe, Africa, West & South Asia, North & South America, the Caribbean & Central America and East Asia & Western Pacific.

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