

Italian Minister of Justice Paola Severino's Visit to the US: A Recap.

Francesca Giuliani (May 17, 2012)



Presenting the American institutions and stakeholders with positive updates on the efficiency of Italian justice, Minister Severino elaborated on Italy's readiness for foreign investments. "Italy is an improved country," she told the Italian-American community at the Italian Consulate in New York, where she acknowledged the role of Italian-Americans as "privileged witnesses of Italy's belief in meritocracy." STAY TUNED FOR OUR VIDEO INTERVIEW!

Italian Minister of Justice Paola Severino's visit to the United States was an occasion for the Monti government to update the American institutions and stakeholders with the first positive results of the improvement measures adopted so far in Italy.

Severino's trip to the US followed the blueprint of Prime Minister Mario Monti's first [official visit](#) [2] to



the country, last November, when he presented President Obama, the Wall Street investors and the Italian-American community with his government's plan for a new and improved Italy.

In a meeting with the representatives of the Italian press and the Italian-American community held Tuesday afternoon at the [Consulate General of Italy to New York](#) [3], where she was introduced by Consul General Natalia Quintavalle to the notables of the community, Severino stressed the fruitfulness of the austerity measures adopted by the Monti Government, which are being paired with a rationalization of the justice system in Italy, as "Economy and Justice thrive together," and stated that "After asking the Italian people great sacrifices to contribute to the rebirth of their country, now Italy is in a second phase, the one of growth."

According to Severino, "Italy's economy is more resistant than other economies because it relies on a characteristic of Italians: they are healthy investors, they save their money and invest in tangible things, such as their homes, while they produce tangible goods that are globally appreciated."

The [NYSE](#) [4] investors, Severino told the Italian press, have shown great interest in the particular features of Italy's economic structure, and needed to be reassured on the certainty of law, as well as on the efficiency of justice. "I did not come to New York just to ask investors to come back to Italy with promises, I discussed with them about laws we already approved."

Severino referred to the new Business Courts' model that is being implemented in Italy, together with a rationalization of the geography of courts throughout the country, allowing a better allocation of human and financial resources and an improved responsiveness of justice for businesses. "Today you can invest in Italy because it is an improved country," the Minister stated.

Severino's visit also represented an important chance for Italy to learn from the US justice system.

Her tour of the Garner Correctional Institute in Connecticut -- after which the Minister also found the time to meet with the Italian-American women of [NOIAW](#) [5] -- was an occasion to discuss successful strategies to tackle the issue of overcrowding in penitentiaries, and her meetings at the [Family Court](#) [6] in Manhattan provided Severino with useful information on such institution, which might inspire the future plans of the government as far as family jurisdiction is concerned.

Italy, however, is also ready to share its knowledge and experience in fighting organized crime, a battle that has to be taken to an international level with even stronger commitments on the part of the world's governments.

Severino's participation in the UN General Assembly's [Thematic Debate on Security in Latin America](#) [7] has been a very important occasion to draw attention on this subject, that once again highlights the deep interconnection between justice and economy.

"The eradication of mafia is based on the sequestration and confiscation of the organization's patrimonies," Severino stated, remembering Magistrate Giovanni Falcone, killed by the mafia in 1992, whom had the intuition of how important a means to defeat organized crime was the tackling of their economic resources.

"In my speech at the United Nations I will explicitly mention Falcone," Severino told the Italian press at the Consulate General of Italy.

At the UN, Severino was accompanied by Anti-Mafia Procurator [Piero Grasso](#) [8], whom also mentioned Falcone in his speech: "Next week we will honor the twentieth anniversary of Falcone's heroic death, and I can only imagine how pleased he would be with today's renewed attention to the issues outlined in the [Palermo Convention](#) [9] against organized crime he so strongly pushed for."

"The Italian war against mafia is something we must be proud of, and that we must be credited for,"



she added in her speech to the Italian-American community, while elaborating on the importance of Italian-Americans as testimonies of this and of the values that characterize Italy as a nation.

"Italian-Americans are people who have found in the culture of merit their realization," the Minister told the representatives of the Italian-American community at the Italian Consulate.

"Your ties with Italy are unbreakable but they never kept you from deeply rooting yourselves into the American society. This way of being in two worlds makes you privileged testimonies of Italy's belief in meritocracy: your parents believed in meritocracy when they decided to come to this country, which offers great opportunities to those who deserve them. For all this you are the most important testimonials of the efforts of the Italian government, which is thankful for your action and your contribution to the growth of Italy," Severino added.

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