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MEETING FOR THE FRIENDSHIP AMONGST THE PEOPLES

#meeting15

August 20<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> Rimini Fiera

## **Italy and the challenge of the world**

*At the Meeting the Prime Minister Matteo Renzi intervenes*

**Rimini, August 25<sup>th</sup> 2015** – Matteo Renzi at the Meeting: a young Prime Minister among young people who build the Rimini kermesse. Immediately after arriving at the Fiera, the Prime Minister made a brief visit of the pavilions, in response to numerous requests for greetings, photos and handshakes from the public. There was also a quick stop at the stand of the Region of Emilia Romagna, which subsequently offered the premier some refreshments with star chef Paul Teverini's appetizers. Then, under the guidance of curator Mariella Carlotti and along with former minister Maurizio Lupi, Renzi visited the exhibition "Opus Florentinum. The Cathedral Square in Florence between faith, history and art". After the rendezvous at the stand of Federlegno with president Roberto Snaidero, the Prime Minister held talks in Hall D1 with the organizers of the Meeting, as well as personalities from the institutional and business: the president Stefano Bonaccini of Emilia Romagna, the mayor of Rimini Andrea Gnassi, the CEO of Ferrovie dello Stato Michele Mario Elia, the director of Country Italia of Enel Carlo Tamburi, Stefano Lucchini of Intesa SanPaolo, Massimo Angelini of Wind, Riccardo Pugnalin of Sky, Angelo Sticchi Damiani (President Aci), John Bariviera of Ferrero and Goldoni Federunacoma, also attended by the Tunisian Foreign Minister Taieb Baccouche.

Renzi has attended at 1 a.m., in the Auditorium Intesa Sanpaolo B3, the public lecture "Italy and the challenge of the world". In the introduction Emilia Guarnieri, president of the Foundation Meeting for friendship amongst the peoples, talked about her experience and the Meeting. "This will be a verification meeting" she said, "we would like to see how to the testimony of unarmed people looking to spend their lives so that their desires and those of others may live can be socially and politically useful, so that nobody could steal our hope – like Pope Francis said". Giorgio Vittadini, President of the Foundation for Subsidiarity, posed four questions to the Prime Minister around the enhancement of the forces that build Italy "from the bottom", the Italian contribution to a subsidiary Europe, the revival of southern Europe and the development of the Mediterranean and finally the role of Italy in the international dynamics.

The premier pointed out that the cut that he would give the speech started from his personal experience, an issue that is central to the appeal to the responsibility of the self, through the figure of Abraham: "I also feel called to a personal liability to you" was keen to stress "Italy must get back to being the land of opportunities, not of regrets, and to do this we must be able to form an opinion. The world runs, and we have an obligation towards our children to restart Italy".

"The Europe of 28 is too much or too little?" has asked the Prime Minister "It is born without a political vision and Italy did not play its part. We lost twenty years by erasing the Mediterranean from the discussion and by erasing the Balkans as well. There is a reckless emergency in the Balkans. That was because the European institutions have looked elsewhere and not in the South. These regions have always been the subject of a negative, caricaturist tale".

In fact, at this moment Italy is facing a huge challenge – he continued – both educational and cultural. "I came to the Meeting because struck by the personal experience that you live here. I recognize this place as one where many friends have enriched their experience. I believe that this enrichment can generate a friendship that goes beyond the political opposition". Renzi has complained that in these twenty years Italy has turned the second republic into an ideological scuffle that has lost its common good "and while the world was running we were bogged down in a sterile internal discord between Berlusconi and anti-Berlusconi".

"With these reforms" he continued "we are trying to restart Italy after twenty years of break. Our nation needs simple rules such as the electoral law, the Jobs Act, the public administration reform, the law on the

third sector and the planned tax reform – all of them are certainly improvable, but they give a push for change. The Italian world is a much richer world than what they tell us the talk shows touting negativity”.

Renzi also focused on the role of Italy in the world. "Our country has to have as lodestar the relationship with the United States; however, we can play an important mediating role between the various powers, in particular with regard to Russia. Thinking of building a Europe against Russia is a tragic mistake: the cultural roots that bind us are deeper than the economic aspects”.

It is no coincidence, stressed the Prime Minister, that the terrorists’ action is directed against places that are symbolic from a cultural, educational and religious point of view: "The terrorists are trying to kill us as they like, but failing that, they try to make us live as they like, convincing us that the neighbor is an enemy. Against this barbarism Italy – place of quality and beauty - can play a central role in its history”.

To those who say that our country is a list of problems, Renzi recommends: "tell them the many fascinating stories of a country that has gone on, despite the policy. Nobody needs a blocked Italy; rather, it must be set in motion. And Italy is made day by day by the people who do their job well. The task of the state is not to cage these people into a system, but to leave them free. It is not a matter of consensus to take action on taxes today, rather an increase of freedom and social justice for the country. For this we should make Italy easier”.

Taking a cue from the exposition he saw, the Prime Minister said that his choice as mayor of Florence to pedestrianize the Cathedral Square drew inspiration from a phrase of Chesterton: "The world will never starve for want of wonders; but only for want of wonder." The same recipe, according to the Prime Minister, can be applied to all Italy. Until now, our country "has been blocked because it is accustomed to beauty. Italy must rediscover the wonder of its beauty and strength. We have a gigantic space if we stop feeling sorry for ourselves and start to realize that what makes us great is still all there”. "Face to the institutions that try to pull the country out of crisis” concludes Emilia Guarnieri –“we're there, outside the ideological conflicts, working for the common good.”

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