

*Signature ceremony and announcement of agreement between
Italian government and College Board*

(NY, Consulate General, 10 November 2010, 6 pm).

Under Secretary Scotti opening remarks

I am delighted to be here today to participate in this most important ceremony which saw Governor Caperton, President of the College Board, announce the agreement between the Italian Government and the College Board for the reinstatement of Italian in the AP program.

This result could not have been achieved without the constant and unremitting support, in Rome, of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Franco Frattini, and Under Secretary of State Gianni Letta.

And it certainly would not have been possible without the unmitigated support of the Conference of the Presidents of the Major Italian-American Organizations, and particularly of the followings sponsors:

American Association of Teachers of Italian, American Society of the Italian Legions of Merit, COPILAS, Columbus Citizens Foundation, Italian Language Foundation, Italian Welfare League, National Italian American Foundation,

National Organization of Italian American Women, Order Sons of Italy in America, UNICO.

Let me take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to two members of the Italian-American community whose personal involvement in this cause was truly remarkable: Frank Guarini and Berardo Paradiso.

In addition, I must mention the invaluable support of the following important private Italian groups: Eni, Fiat, Finmeccanica, Luxottica, Mediterranean Shipping Company, Unicredit.

The reinstatement of Italian in the AP program is pivotal to consolidating and expanding the teaching of our language - the only European one to have registered an increase in the American education system. The request for studying Italian is at a historical high and the reinstatement of Italian in the AP program entails that our language is now on the same level of other European languages in the US.

It is not only Americans of Italian origin - increasingly proud of their roots - who wish to study our language and culture. Americans look to the Italian language as the universal *lingua franca* of culture and art. Reintroducing

Italian in the AP will enable us to promote our language in thousands of schools and colleges throughout the United States.

Signing this agreement however doesn't mark the end of a process, but rather the beginning of a new chapter based on solid foundations. Now we must ask school Principals to introduce, if they have not done so already, Italian in their school curriculum. We must provide thorough and widespread information to families on this new, important opportunity for their children. This is why we continue to rely on the constant support of Italian-American organizations, whose role in ensuring the diffusion and consolidation of this program will be critical.

As far as I am concerned, let me continue to assure you of my Government's continuing efforts to finding ways to abet, in particular, teacher and student exchanges between our countries. This could also be done by following pre-existing models, based on agreements between Italian and American universities, which are yielding such excellent results today.

Thank you.