

THE FUTURE OF EUROPE, THE FUTURE OF ITALY: THE ITALIAN MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MASSIMO D'ALEMA IN OXFORD

By Giorgio Di Marzo

At the St Antony's College in Oxford the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Massimo D'Alema, by his lecture held on Tuesday 8th May, demonstrated the reason why he is considered one of the most appreciated Italian politicians, both in Italy and abroad.

Minister D'Alema, in his speech embedded with the highest values that had inspired the Rome Treaties, talked about the future of Europe of the 27, future that sees some necessary changes within the European political institutions – such as the extension of the majority voting – changes that represent the basis of democratic effectiveness and legitimacy that should lead Europe to being more and more united and simplifying the decision processes.

To the debate that followed the lecture, the Minister answered the questions, asked in English also by the Italians, in fluent English – unleashing his intelligence and irony – very appreciated by the audience composed by the ambassadors in London of the states part of the EU, among them the Italian Ambassador Aragona, professors, personalities of the British and Italian journalism, and personalities of finance.

In talking about the relations between Europe and the other countries, D'Alema stressed that Turkey is an integral part of Europe, at both historical and cultural level, and thus the process of enlargement of the EU would have to include Turkey, even though, obviously, at certain conditions; and to whom who affirmed that Ukraine, too, is part of Europe and then asking what was the European position with regard to the inclusion of Ukraine in the future, the Italian Minister replied “politically” by affirming that Ukraine is definitely part of Europe but its entering the EU, even though Russia has not presented any official veto, is not as much a priority as Turkey's is; in talking about Russia, the Italian Minister confirmed that the relations with Italy are always very good, and that in general the relations with the countries at the boundaries of the European Union are not to be of the kind “in or out” but of collaboration. Particularly with the countries formerly part of the ex-Soviet dominion, the EU politics consists of helping

them in continuing the process of modernisation and democratisation of their institutions.

When asked about what he thinks of Tony Blair, Minister D'Alema sung the British Prime Minister's praises by acknowledging his great merit in reforming the European left-wing; but recalled that, together with Rutelli [*Italian Minister of Culture* – Author's note], at a meeting with Blair before the Iraqi War, they were right in not being as optimistic as the British Prime Minister was about the length of the conflict.

With regard to the USA, the position of Europe does not change: the great American country is an obvious and important counterpart of the European Union, and Europe collaborates with whatsoever American administration; D'Alema recounted an anecdote about the States: at a meeting with the Chinese President Hu Jintao he asked him whether China was worried about the USA in relation with their almost monopoly in political and economic terms, and the answer was that they were not worried at all as this monopoly, in thirty years, would become a duopoly with China being USA's counterpart.

In about 90 minutes were outlined the path that Europe is walking and will walk in the next years, a path that will lead the single countries to weigh less and less: in fact D'Alema himself, when asked which he would choose among a seat for Italy and a seat for the EU at the UN Security Council, replied that in order to have a tougher Europe it would be desirable that Europe held a place. We the Europeans, independently of our nationalities, should wish that the duopoly of which the Chinese President was talking about will be, at least, a triopoly...

You will find a video with some highlights of Minister D'Alema's lecture on our website www.giorgiostudio.co.uk.

To read Minister D'Alema's speech:
www.esteri.it/ita/6_38_227_01.asp?id=3014&mod=3&min=1