

XI

Convention of the Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad

The XI Convention of the Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad was held in Salerno last year from October 20 to 25. It was a major event with the participation of 600 representatives from the network of 68 Italian chambers of commerce, together with Italian government representatives.

The Convention focused on internationalisation and globalisation, two themes that define the new economy. Italian small and medium companies must now play an active role at an international level. This means not only exporting to other countries, but also being equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to operate with other countries.

In this context Italian chambers abroad become extremely helpful, as they know the countries they are based in and the opportunities available to Italian companies. The Chambers of Commerce Abroad offer qualified services to support and develop the presence of Italian enterprises in international markets. The chambers' knowledge and experience of foreign markets has been acknowledged as the strength of

the organization. These are in fact centres of information abroad that can assist small companies.

Mr Augusto Strianese, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Salerno and director for the Internationalisation of the Chambers of Commerce in the world for Unioncamere, defined the Chambers as "entrance tollgates to motorways of information".

On the same topic, Mr Danilo Longhi, President of Assocamerestero, emphasized that the globalisation process is "an interaction of flows of products and services" that makes it "necessary to find new forms of economic relationships in order to create closer ties with the local business communities in the various countries. In this process the Chambers of Commerce Abroad have a major role because they are well established in the foreign countries and connected with Italy".

In order to implement this process, Mr Longhi warned that "a more functional organization of the whole system and a new attitude towards the policies of promotion must be carried out. [...]"

These policies should aim at creating an effective system of information that could help the Italian companies to face the uncertainty when approaching new markets".

It is important that all the organizations that promote Made in Italy products create a network that cooperates and supports business: "the Chambers of Commerce are keen to work according to this approach, both in Italy and abroad".

The Government has also expressed its commitment to carry out reforms aimed at promoting internationalisation, in particular to create a structure that strictly links the local with the national and global dimension. It is in fact necessary to set clear and basic rules that guarantee an actual coordination.

The Minister for Productive Activities, Hon. Antonio Marzano, and the Deputy Minister, Hon. Adolfo Urso, praised the job done by the Chambers abroad to promote the Made in Italy and commented that "their number has increased without a concurrent increasing of the funds allocated by the Government".

Coordination implies also cooperation. Mr Beniamino Quintieri, President of ICE, the Foreign Trade Commission, stressed the importance of collaboration in order to guarantee the success of promotional activities and avoid any waste of resources. ICE and ICCI have to learn to work not only in competition, but also as complementary institutions.

The role of ICCI members and of the entrepreneurs who have established companies in other countries is fundamental. They are in fact the protagonists of globalisation.

They stressed the importance of the cooperation from the Government and the fact that bureaucracy is still a hindrance to the internationalisation of the Italian economical system, together with the cost of infrastructures, training and the tax system.

The last two days of the Convention were dedicated to meetings with associations, companies and entrepreneurs of the Campania Region who would like to establish business relationship with companies abroad.

Sydney President Adrian Guido Reconfirmed Area Representative and National Council President



During the Convention, ICCI Sydney President Adrian Guido was reconfirmed Area Representative and President of the National Council of the 5 Italian chambers of commerce in Australia (Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney).

Mr Guido is to given credit for bringing Australian trade issues to

the attention of the Assocamerestero Board in Rome, as such issues vary greatly from those that confront both Europe and the Americas. Assocamerestero is a board comprising of the seven Area Presidents and is responsible for the formulation of all international policies that affect the sixty-eight Italian chambers of commerce throughout the world.

Mr Guido, with his customary metodologia di partecipazione, firmly but diplomatically succeeded in convincing the Council to accept the intrinsic needs of the Italian chambers of commerce in Australia, and upon his return to Australia Mr Guido was congratulated by all for having achieved an objective which had been deemed unattainable.