Italian American Leaders Seek New Path With Italy on Citizenship and the Next Generation

COPOMIAO delegation addresses dual citizenship restrictions, Italy's declining population & a role for Italian young leaders in its 'Future Leaders' fellowship.



Lorenzo Fontana, president of Italy's Chamber of Deputies, presents Hon. Basil Russo with an artistic rendering of the chamber in recognition of his leadership of the Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations (COPOMIAO).

ROME, ITALY, September 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A delegation from the Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations (COPOMIAO) held talks with senior Italian and U.S. officials in Rome this month to strengthen ties between Italian Americans and their ancestral homeland, advocate for greater access to Italian dual citizenship and explore opportunities for younger generations.

Led by COPOMIAO President Hon. Basil M. Russo and joined by U.S. Rep. Michael Rulli, co-chair of the Italian American Congressional Delegation on Capitol Hill, the group met with Lorenzo Fontana, president of Italy's Chamber of Deputies (a role comparable to the U.S. Speaker of the House).

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>
> *Hon. Basil M. Russo*

Fontana spoke candidly about the contributions of Italian Americans to the U.S. and the community's continuing cultural importance. He also expressed enthusiasm for keeping descendants of Italian immigrants connected to Italy.

For many Italian American families, that connection reaches back to ancestors who left Italy in search of safety and opportunity, including those escaping war, poverty and suppression. COPOMIAO's meetings brought their descendants' interests directly to Italian officials, with citizenship and cultural exchange at the

center of the discussion.

At the Italian Senate, the delegation met with Sen. Mariastella Gelmini, who chairs the Italy-United States parliamentary friendship group, and Christian Di Sanzo, a member of the Chamber of Deputies elected to represent Italian citizens in North and Central America. Di Sanzo expressed support for easing restrictions on citizenship by descent.

The delegation was also invited to Italy's Foreign Ministry with Silvia Limoncini, director general for services to citizens abroad and migration policies. COPOMIAO advocated for loosening dual citizenship restrictions and making visas easier to obtain, emphasizing the value of helping Italian Americans maintain meaningful ties to Italy. The group also raised concerns about Italy's declining population and discussed potential solutions with Italian officials.

As one way to deepen ties between younger generations in both countries, the delegation invited Italian government officials to help bring young leaders from Italy into COPOMIAO's successful Italian American Future Leaders program.



Tilman Fertitta (center-right) hosts the COPOMIAO delegation at the U.S. Embassy in Rome. Fertitta spoke at length about U.S.-Italy relations and fielded questions addressing macro issues.



Sen. Mariastella Gelmini (center-left) and Christian Di Sanzo (center-right), a member of the Chamber of Deputies, meet with the COPOMIAO delegation at the Italian Senate.

At the U.S. Embassy, the delegation sat down with Ambassador Tilman J. Fertitta to discuss broader U.S.-Italy relations, including energy trade and ongoing cooperation between the nations' leaders.

Additionally, COPOMIAO met with Italy's Supreme Court officials during its time in Rome.

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broken.”

The governmental meetings formed part of COPOMIAO’s broader September mission to Rome and Vatican City.

In a separate announcement, the organization detailed its meetings with Pope Leo XIV and Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, which focused on faith, culture and advancing an emerging relationship with the Holy See.

Together, the visits bolstered COPOMIAO’s efforts to build lasting ties among Italian American organizations, the Italian government and institutions in the United States.

ABOUT COPOMIAO

The Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations (COPOMIAO), founded in New York City in 1975, is a national nonprofit coalition of 77 cultural, educational, fraternal and anti-defamation groups.

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