

Friday afternoon, September 9, in the academic setting of the City University of New York in Manhattan, a debate took place organized by *La Voce di New York* along with the Calandra Institute of CUNY and with the support of the tristate Co.Mi.Tes and the Gruppo esponenti Italiani that featured the aspiring representatives for foreigners abroad of North and Central American to the Italian Parliament's elections, which will be held on September 25, 2022.

Of the twenty-nine candidates for the House and the Senate from the five parties present (PD, M5S, MAIE, Meloni-Salvini-Berlusconi, IV-Italia Azione), twenty were in attendance, of whom eight were in person at the Calandra Institute and the rest linked viz Zoom.

The debate, introduced by Calandra's dean, Anthony Julian Tamburri and moderated by the President of VNY Giampaolo Pioli, achieved its principal aim, which was to afford the candidates the opportunity to make themselves better known to the community of Italians in North and Central America and to present to them their ideas and plans, as well as to share the same space with their opponents who, we must remember, in order to be elected must confront one another, including candidates from the same party.

The participants included:

FDI-LEGA-FI – Vincenzo Arcobelli, Andrea Di Giuseppe, Tony Zara Federico Felli, Isabella Olivieri

PD – Francesca La Marca, Pasquale Nesticò, Christian Di Sanzo, Michela Di Marco, Vera Rosati, Gianluca Galletto

MAIE – Vincenzo Odoguardi, Pasquale Capriati, Angelo Viro, Paolo Canciani

M5S – Jonas Di Gregorio, Anna Fumagalli

AZIONE/IV Daniele Severi Bruni, Vincenzo Pascale, Francesco Cacchioli, Claudio Vignola

The candidates were allowed one minute to introduce themselves, and then questions were put to each one by Stefano Vaccara and Grace Russo Bullaro, respectively Editor in Chief and English Editor of *La Voce di New York*. In the end there was time for questions from the public. Candidates answered within the allotted time constraints and above all maintained a cordial tone, without a hint of quarrelsomeness.

The questions asked were as follows, in order:

1. If you were elected, but your party ended up in the opposition, how would you go about moving your projects forward?

2. Being “a good person” isn't enough to be a parliamentary representative of the Italian community in America. So, what are, in your opinion, the most important qualifications for someone who takes on such a critical role in order to get results?

3. In your view is it more urgent to give back Italian nationality to those people who have lost it by going abroad years ago or to give automatic citizenship to the children of immigrants who are born and raised in Italy?

4. President Joe Biden recently said that whoever supports Donald Trump and the MAGA movement is a threat to democracy. What do you think of this?

5. What do you maintain are the planned pieces of legislation that are most pressing for Italians abroad? Abolition IMU on the first home in Italy. The right to reacquire citizenship for those who have lost it? Strengthening the consulates? Or do you have another idea that's more important than any of these?

6. Who do you think your constituents are in the twenty-first-century world and why should those who have not voted up to now vote this time?

Toward the end of the event Silvana Mangione (vice president of CGIE) and Mico Delianova Licastro (representative of CONI in USA) posed some questions. The former asked about the importance of developing the teaching of Italian language and Italian culture abroad, and the latter queried about the inclusion of sports law in the Italian Constitution. There also was a final question from Ornella Fado, of the Co.Mi.Tes, who expressed her uncertainty about the means the candidates have employed in making known to one another and to their constituents their ideas in an electoral region that extends all the way from Canada to Panama.