

Telos PRIMO PIANO

Andreotti in numbers. 7 times Prime Minister; 8 times Minister of Defense; 5 times Minister of Foreign Affairs; 3 times Minister of State Shareholdings; twice Minister of Finance; twice Minister of the Budget; twice Minister of Industry; and once Minister of the Treasury, Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of Cultural Heritage and Minister of EU Policies. After the Constituent Assembly he was in Parliament for 43 years running; twice elected to the European Parliament, Andreotti was never the Secretary of the Democrazia Cristiana.

On June 1, 1991 the former President of the Republic Francesco Cossiga named him a Life Senator, which means he served in Parliament for a total of 18+43 years. Author of many books about Italy's recent past – his most famous is entitled *Visti da vicino* – Andreotti maintains a brilliant personality, a quick wit and lively intelligence which today make him a point of reference for anyone wanting to interpret institutions and politics, not only in Italy but worldwide. But we still have to give you the numbers of Andreotti the journalist who with his scathing and desecrating articles curated the famous column *Bloc Notes* in the magazine *L'Europeo*.

13 (years) is the number in this case.

Editorial

Editor's note: "For the October issue of Primo Piano Scala c, in-depth discussion about Institutions. Topics: new balance of powers among Institutions, Italy's role and the importance of representativity and laws in today's world. Ideal interviewee? Giulio Andreotti, perhaps too ambitious?" But when Andreotti accepted, we almost didn't know where to start. Inspiration came from the important changes made by the Lisbon Treaty, recently approved even by Poland (and the first real disagreements about the name of the long-awaited President of the European Council have already begun to surface... Blair, or to use the definition coined by Barroso an europigmy?).

The interview shifted quite naturally to Italy's international role, often accused of "being a lightweight in Brussels". We would have lost a (golden) opportunity if we hadn't asked him what he thought about the balance of powers between the Italian Government and Parliament and the role of parliamentary representation, given that he had outspokenly, but with his usual good humour, said he was against a Presidential system. As professionals we're asked almost on a daily basis to tell legislators that existing laws have to be changed, or that new ones have to be implemented. We've often heard the comment, "laws don't fit into reality any longer".

And we're almost convinced it's true. Instead, with his usual acute insight, Senator Andreotti not only told us he didn't share our assessment, he also told us why. Only when we reread his answers did we realise he'd actually reminded us of one of the reasons why we founded Telos: we don't believe that new laws and regulations are the solution to all and every problem, but we are committed to helping – for as long as possible – all those who turn to us to find solutions. Shared, rather than legislative, solutions achieved with the input of all stakeholders.

Thank you, Senator Andreotti.

Mariella Palazzolo

Andreotti. Innovate in the footsteps of tradition. The real challenge faced by Institutions.

Telos: The Irish vote has boosted the Lisbon Treaty. The envisaged institutional changes it lays down will make a big difference. It has strengthened democratic participation, but above all it has created two new posts: the President of the European Council - a position which no longer rotates with the Presidency of the Semester - and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who will act as Vice President of the Commission and will chair the Foreign Affairs Council. What do you make of these novelties?

Giulio Andreotti: They are real *novelties* in a very balanced and constructive development process which includes gradually strengthening the federal and supranational status of European Institutions. This process involves tackling the challenges faced by contemporary society and giving European citizens a better quality of life by creating political union in Europe. I remember the Single European Act (1986), the first step towards the Treaty establishing the EEC, and then the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992. When we signed the Treaty of Rome in 1957, we couldn't envisage that this is where it would lead, but now it seems like a logical development. A Union Minister of Foreign Affairs who acts and speaks with one voice about the foreign policy of the EU will make it truly coherent.

With this upcoming scenario in mind, what role do you think Italy should try and play to strengthen its standing in European if not international geopolitics?

We have to exploit our rich historical background, not just to live on inherited glory, but in order to develop a constructive growth model and work with greater commitment, not only to build a strategic participated process but also to sponsor a Mediterranean dimension of the European Union. Italy could champion the "new centrality" of the Mediterranean as a factor of political, economic, and social growth in the European Union. The Union for the Mediterranean, the natural outcome of the Barcelona Process, presented in 2008 by Sarkozy in Paris, could be the perfect opportunity. The Secretary General still has to be chosen... Italy should get its act together. Thanks to our tradition and culture, Italy fits the bill. We have to make this a top priority. Cooperation and integration can only be achieved with an agreed, negotiated, and well thought-out plan.

Boosting the power of the European Parliament vis-à-vis the European Commission, and boosting the power of the Government in Italy vis-à-vis the Parliament. What do you think about this shift of power between the executive and Parliament in Italy and Europe?



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There's a logic in keeping on strengthening novelties, but at the same time safeguarding traditional values. Unlike each Member State, the European Union represents a community of different peoples, so we have to find a balance between the powers of supranational bodies and those of intergovernmental bodies. Quite rightly, this balance can shift towards greater integration only if the process goes hand in hand with an increase in people's sense of belonging to the community. The Lisbon Treaty increases the institutional balance of the Union because it strengthens the key functions of each of the political institutions, first and foremost the Parliament, the only Institution directly elected by European citizens.

How should we interpret the role of an MP, which appears to increasingly rely on personal links rather than on shared ideologies and programmes? Although the current electoral law has eliminated *local MPs* (with a constituency), the division of tasks between the represented and their representatives, and the way in which a balance is struck between different interests, as well as between short and long-term objectives, is increasingly less clear. The fact that this new electoral system hasn't *matured* partly explains people's nostalgia for mass politics and a desire for a local MP with a constituency. A past which will never return. Today, what is the meaning of parliamentary representation?

It involves constructive cohabitation between new experiences and traditional aspirations. I believe that without mediation by elected officials it would be very difficult to govern society, especially a society which has to not only tackle the present, but also lay the foundations for a better future. If I have one regret, it's not having done enough to explain to people what Parliament actually does. The public are absent-minded and forgetful, except when it comes to scuffles in the Parliament which are, luckily, fairly infrequent. But we never talk enough about the work we do every day.

The Law, the main tool used by Government, seems to have lost its bite. Laws are passed so slowly compared to the speed of social and technological change: when Parliament finally makes a decision, the problem has either become obsolete, been solved, or evolved into something new. How can we tackle this problem of the rapid senescence of a newly-approved norm?

On the surface the answer lies in your question about boosting the power of the Executive in Italy. A Government that passes Laws quickly, without the long-winded parliamentary process which in Italy is known as the equal and perfect bicameral system. But this would be a rather superficial answer. I don't agree with you when you talk about legislative senescence. Perhaps the Laws that age quickly are the ones which try and regulate scientific and technological progress, possibly by focusing too much on small details. But not the others. No. If a Law is to make a difference, citizens have to consider it important. So my answer is: we should never forget the maxim, *dura lex sed lex*, which is an open *invitation to respect the Law at all costs due to the benefits it produces for the whole community*.

Titbits

On various occasions Andreotti has talked about the fact that his generation grew up in a sort of cultural autarchy. When discussions began about the European Economic Community many people didn't even know exactly what it was meant to do: it was a shift from a local dimension to an almost unlimited one. He has frequently talked about how lucky he was to learn politics from De Gasperi who, like most people from Trentino, knew how depressing cultural autarchy was, and understood the importance of this vision of a United Europe. The fact it wasn't just a foolish idea. According to Andreotti, the conscience of being Europe is a state of mind, not just a set of beliefs which can be documented; he has often said that time would help strengthen this unitary movement and overcome any particularism.

He always believed that Italy's role was and is to act as a bridge between the two shores of the Mediterranean. And finally when people ask him: "Would you approve a reform to enact a Presidential Republic?", he answers: "I'd rather not. Anyone who's lived during a dictatorship should be careful not to avoid a relapse". But that was 60 years ago! The interviewer presses him... "All the more reason. If you've been very sick with pneumonia when you were 18, you still take care of yourself when you're 70".