

Discorso pronunciato dal Consigliere di Stato Manuele Bertoli
in occasione dell'incontro della delegazione del Consiglio di Stato con alcuni consiglieri
dei membri del Congresso degli Stati Uniti d'America
22 agosto 2017

– Fa stato il discorso orale –

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the name of the Government of Canton Ticino I warmly welcome you here in Lugano, in the Italian speaking part of Switzerland.

It is of utmost importance for us to have you here today as US Congressional staff members to reaffirm the importance of the bilateral relation between Switzerland and the United States. The relation among our Countries is strong in the commercial, scientific and cultural fields, among others. But our two Countries are also connected, more profoundly, by strong and long-lasting historical and constitutional ties. Both Countries are Federal States and, as you might know, the first Swiss Constitution of 1848 was largely inspired by the US Constitution. That is why, similarly to the US parliament, the Swiss parliament has two chambers: the Council of States, our Senate, and the National Council, our House of Representatives.

Switzerland is a small and proudly independent Country right in the heart of Europe, investing a lot in strategic fields allowing a sustainable economic development, such as infrastructures, mobility, clean energy supply, but also in top-quality education and high-end technology, among other fields.

Despite the fact that Switzerland is not part of the European Union, Ticino – with its 350'000 inhabitants – is certainly one of the most integrated areas in the continent. In Ticino there are more than sixty thousand cross-border workers travelling every day through the Swiss-Italian border. As you can imagine, for this reason, besides labor market worries, intensive regional traffic is one of the most sensitive political issues in Ticino.

This morning you had the chance to visit two important and strategic infrastructures: the Verzasca dam and the Ceneri base tunnel. The Verzasca dam, that has become a significant tourist attraction since appearing in the opening sequence of the 1995 James Bond film GoldenEye, is one of the tallest dams in Europe and a sustainable source of electric power. The Ceneri base tunnel, scheduled to open and become operational in 2020, is a crucial component of Alptransit, whose heart lies in Switzerland and in Ticino. The completion of the Ceneri tunnel, together with the opening in December 2016 of the 57 kilometers long Gotthard base tunnel – the longest railroad tunnel in the world – will allow completing a continuous flat route through the Alps, reducing travel time between Zurich and Milan by more than an hour. This strategic project will therefore have an impact reaching far beyond the Swiss boundaries.

I hope you enjoyed your visit and I warmly welcome you to come and visit us again, even just for holidays. If you wish so, we will have the chance to further discuss the role and the competences of the Cantons in the framework of the Swiss federal Constitution with my government colleague Paolo Beltraminelli and the others guests.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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