

Briefs

Study finds that fewer students opt for university track

Fewer and fewer students are opting for university education, according to a study released Friday by the UIL labor union. The report said that 64 percent of today's high school graduates begin post-secondary education programs, down from 73 percent in 1994.

Final ciao to the euro

Commercial banks stopped trading euros for the lira on Friday, ending the currency's 142-year history. Savers of the old money have another 10 years to trade it for euros but only at Bank of Italy offices.

Managers change jobs every five years

Italian managers change their jobs on average once every five years, according to a new study by ASA Executive Search. Eighty percent of managers for larger companies said they felt obliged to switch jobs if they wanted to seek professional advancement. Each switch generally comes with a 20 to 30 percent jump in salary, ASA's Vito Gioia said.

Foggia woman loses her job for eating a peach

A 30-year-old woman in Foggia was fired because her manager caught her eating a peach during a brief pause, the local chapter of the CGIL union claimed on Friday. The woman had started working last week for a fruit-packing company.

Sardinians are offered prize for cutting down on water waste

Codacoms, the consumer group, announced that it would pay for a one-week safari trip to Kenya for the Sardinian family that managed to show that it had wasted the least amount of water over the year. The island is wracked by water shortage this summer, with many homes getting water only six hours a day.

Sheep malady is declared over

The Health Ministry decided Friday to declare the "blue tongue" emergency over, saying the sheep-ravaging disease that has damaged flocks in Sardinia for the past two years has been contained. The decision means that shepherds can return to their usual routes, moving their animals around the country.

Prosecutors ready to indict 11 for Linate air disaster

Prosecutors said Friday they will seek to charge 11 people, most of them air traffic controllers, with manslaughter and other charges in the runway collision of two planes that killed 118 people at Milan's Linate airport last October in Italy's worst civil aviation disaster. (AP)

President Ciampi meets with juvenile offenders

President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi told inmates in Rome's Casal del Marmo prison for minors that he did not believe they were criminals. "You're here for having broken the rules of civil coexistence, but I know you're not criminals," Ciampi said, adding that the jail was in fact a center of learning more than of expiation.

Quote/Unquote

"Making cars is Italy's core business even if one day it's not Fiat's main activity." - Former Industry Minister Pierluigi Bersani of the Democratic Left.

Biagi letters spark anger all around

By Anne Ruderman

The controversy over the absence of a security detail for former Labor Ministry aide Marco Biagi resurfaced on Friday morning, following a newspaper article that published several letters he wrote to government officials asking for protection.

Biagi, a socialist labor expert who drew up the conservative government's plans to weaken employment protection laws while extending benefits to a broader base, was assassinated while bicycling home in Bologna last March. A successor to the left-wing Red Brigades claimed responsibility for the murder.

The question of Biagi's security detail first came to the fore when his wife refused a state funeral to protest the withdrawing of his guards in 2001, even though he said he had reliable reports that his life was in danger. Biagi's predecessor, Massimo D'Antona, was assassinated by the Red Brigades in 1999, while working on similar labor market reforms for the then center-left government.

"My fear is that the D'Antona case will repeat itself with me," Biagi wrote to Pierferdinando Casini, speaker of the lower house, last July. "I must ask for your help for my personal security."

According to La Repubblica, which published the letters, Biagi also wrote to Labor Minister Roberto Maroni, the labor undersecretary, Bologna's prefect, and Confindustria official Stefano Parisi, saying things like: "My request is very specific. Change my protection (which is a joke) to a serious and true security detail. I beg you to help me with the maximum urgency."

The left-wing Rome-based daily reportedly obtained the letters from a magazine, "Zero in Condotta," which received them anonymously on a floppy disk.

In some of the letters, Biagi said Sergio Cofferati, head of the left-wing CGIL union and the loudest opponent of labor reform, was "criminalizing" him.

Cofferati, who did publicly single out Biagi as an adversary, expressed outrage at the report and accused ministers who picked up on it of defaming him.

Deputy Prime Minister Gianfranco Fini acquitted Cofferati of being the "moral instigator" behind the killing but criticized him for refusing to participate in talks with the government on labor reform.



Twelve people were injured in an explosion in southern Milan.

Milan man blows up apartment

By Anne Ruderman

Faced with an eviction notice, a 32-year-old man fired at police before exploding his apartment in Milan late Friday morning, injuring 23, including several policemen and his brother.

Two of those injured, Deputy Police Chief Paolo Scrofanini and the man's brother, Antonio Santoro, are reportedly in serious condition at a Milan hospital. The building also suffered sizeable damages from the blast, which gutted the man's second-floor apartment.

The incident began at about 11 A.M. on Friday, when an official arrived to give the man, Massimo Santoro, a final eviction notice. Santoro barricaded himself in his apartment, shooting at police and firemen who tried to enter before setting off a small-scale explosion in the room.

"When we arrived, we thought to turn off the methane," said Dario D'Ambrosio, head of the provincial police command, explaining why the entire building didn't blow up. He added that firemen had cut the electricity, too.

"It's likely that he started the explosion with a stash of gas he had left in the apartment," D'Ambrosio said.

Neighbors described Santoro as a slovenly and ill-kept man who walked about with an iguana on his back. He had also accumulated an excessive of parking tickets for illegally parking near the building.

Many neighbors agreed that his violent act was a "predictable one," with one neighbor saying that he had threatened to "blow up everything," if he was evicted.

News reports also said that Santoro, anticipating the eviction, had also told the baker beneath the apartment building of his Friday morning explosion plans, asking him: "What time do you close? Watch, tomorrow there will be a disaster."

Santoro was also reportedly known to police, with a record that included violence and resisting arrest.

In a separate incident of southern Milan violence on Friday morning, an unidentified middle-aged woman was found floating in the Darsena, at the meeting point of the city's Navigli canals at dawn.

Italy declares emergency to fight forest fires

By David Brough

ROME: Italy declared a state of emergency on Friday to fight forest fires which traditionally threaten vast areas of countryside during the summer.

Forest fires are a regular feature of Italy's landscape, burning tens of thousands of hectares of land each year, usually during the parched summers.

The cabinet unanimously accepted a proposal from Interior Minister Claudio Scajola to declare the state of emergency, which will enable it to authorize the

urgent deployment of aircraft to dump water on fires.

"Scajola said it was vital to be able to supply aircraft and personnel to face the prospect of more devastating forest fires," a cabinet statement said. "He has therefore proposed a national state of emergency in order to use extraordinary measures."

Although few fires have been reported in recent weeks, officials fear intense summer heat could stoke fires across vast stretches of countryside again this year.

In making his request for a state of emergency, Scajola said exceptional climatic conditions, no rainfall and record high temperatures had already wrecked vast areas of woodland.

Environmentalists and officials alike say arsonists are to blame for most of Italy's forest fires, often motivated by financial gain. Some arsonists intended to convert burnt woodland into pastures, some aim to adapt land to farm use in order to claim EU subsidies, and some reserve fire fighters have been known to set blazes in order to be called to work.

Some 2.7 million hectares woodland have been destroyed by forest fires in the past 20 years. Italy now has 8.7 million hectares of woodland, or 28 percent of its total area.

Baroque beauty makes the grade

The graceful late Baroque charm of eight towns in southeastern Sicily helped them land a spot on UNESCO's World Heritage List on Friday, bringing the total number of Italian sites to 36.

The UN's educational, scientific and cultural agency chose the towns in the Val di Noto, which were almost entirely rebuilt after a devastating earthquake in 1693, as they provide an "outstanding testimony to the exuberant genius of late Baroque art and architecture."

The eight cities are the stylistically homogenous expression of the final flowering of Baroque art in Europe, built in the space of a few decades after the earthquake that claimed some 100,000 lives.

Culture Undersecretary Nicola Bono said the foundation had now been laid to attract private investments that could encourage an "important and above all stable economic and occupational impact" and urged that policies be implemented to develop tourism in the area.

The towns on the list are Noto, Catania, Ragusa, Caltagirone, Militeo Val di Catania, Modica, Palazzolo and Scicli. In its justification for inscription on the list, UNESCO noted that the towns were permanently at risk from earthquakes and eruptions of Mount Etna. But in 1996 the dome of Noto's majestic cathedral collapsed as a result of cement-dependent restorations done in the 1960s. —E.P.

Adding new depth to archaeology

Vanguard 3-D and virtual reality programs offer boost to science and entertainment

By Izumi Otani

Special to Italy Daily

Soon, archaeologists the world over will be unable to do without 3-D models, according to Bernard Frischer, a professor of classics at UCLA and the director of the Cultural Virtual Reality Lab as well as of the Villa of Horace excavation project.

Frischer describes 3-D modeling — the reconstruction of buildings through computer technology — as the natural evolution of archaeological research, whose tradition dates back centuries to Piranesi's illustrations of ancient sites. It allows one to view a chosen building from all angles, move within it, zoom in and out and free the perspective from the traditional two-dimensional fixed position. It can also shed light on acoustics, ventilation, lighting, statics and other basic facts of structural engineering.

The CVRLab in UCLA is working on creating virtual models of architectural sites from all over the world. One of its leading projects is called "Rome Reborn," within which the Colosseum has been reconstructed in 3-D.

The third dimension has helped researchers make new discoveries.

The famous Roman arena built almost 2,000 years ago has long been an example of the efficiency of Roman architecture: Before UCLA created its model, it was a commonplace to claim that thousands of people could enter and exit from the building in less than 10 minutes.

Three-dimensional modeling, however, shed light on the upper hallways and Dean Abernathy, a doctoral student at UCLA, noticed that these narrow and dark upper passages might have caused congestion in the circulation of people and literally shut them in.

Is this an architectural mistake, the outcome of Roman architects' improvisation? Or did the Romans create labyrinth-like passages on purpose?

As a matter of fact, says Frischer, the upper seats were made for the "populace," whereas the upper classes were seated in the lower levels. Roman architects might have designed the arena in a way that the wealthy and powerful did not have to mix with the plebeian audience; they could come in and get out within minutes and avoid physical con-

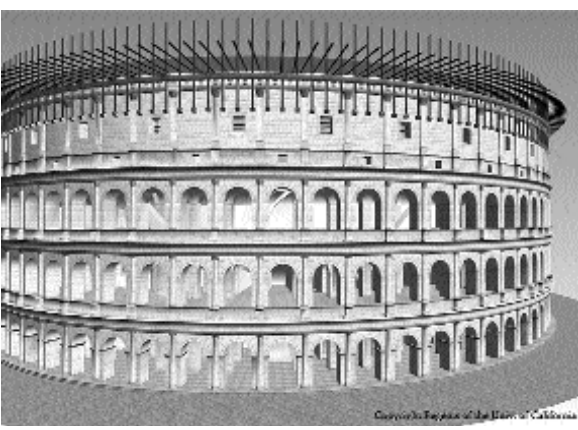
tact with spectators drawn from *hoi-polo*.

In fact, the Roman emperor had a personal tunnel that linked his residence to the arena.

These are hypothetical interpretations, but whatever the answer is, the computer modeling technology enabled scholars to detect an unexplored aspect of the Colosseum. Frischer emphasizes that much work needs to be done before these results are ready for publication. New discoveries are being made even now about the structure of the Colosseum, and the committee advising UCLA meets regularly with modelers from the CVRLab to report progress.

In the study of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome and the Cathedral of Santiago di Compostela in Spain — both intact buildings as opposed to the Colosseum — CVRLab researchers did not have to deal with hypothetical elements, as 3-D software permitted them to draw the line between the buildings' original structures and additions made throughout the centuries.

Yet faultless 3-D images created by the computer should not be regarded as



A three-dimensional reconstruction of the Colosseum reveals new features to scientists.

perfect re-constructions of the original models. The audience might fall under the delusion that archaeologists know more than what they can prove.

In order to avoid this problem, Frischer says labs all over the world are trying to improve the technological standard of 3-D modeling and develop more informative images. For example, notes and footnotes could be added to 3-D models, diverse colors could contrast

"facts" from "hypotheses," and "obscure" elements could be highlighted, he said. Frischer was recently elected president of a new international organization that is pushing these efforts.

At the moment, finished 3-D models can be viewed in different ways. The cheapest one is simply to print it out from the Internet, a process that obvi-

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Study suggests June budget figures will show slip

Italy's public sector budget surplus in June will be less than a year ago, despite an increase in receipts from self taxation, as a government swap contract closes and public spending remains high, studies show.

But analysts said data at the end of August would show more clearly how large an annual deficit the state budget is headed for as uncertainty over the payment dates of taxes will be out of the equation.

The June data, which traditionally show a large surplus because of seasonal tax receipts, is scheduled to be released July 1. "In June we expect a slight increase in self-taxation [receipts] compared with last year which will be reflected in a budget surplus at the end of the month of €13.5 billion compared with €12.4 billion in June 2001," said Prometeia analyst Cosimo Musiello.

But Musiello added that this figure does not take into account any returns from a government swap contract set up in April and expiring in June which was designed to smooth the monthly oscillations in the budget. The swap reduced the April budget deficit by €4 billion but is set to produce a negative effect by the same amount in June,

when most private individuals pay tax.

Including the swap, Prometeia estimates the budget surplus will fall to slightly below €10 billion, a figure in line with that of Andrea Brasili, an economist at Unicredit.

Lorenzo Codogno, chief economist at Bank of America, added: "On one side, growth is worse than the government's forecasts with a possible depressing effect on inflows, on the other, there have been no significant cuts in current expenditure."

Codogno said a courageous attempt to tackle health and pension spending "would be the only way to improve accounts" without raising taxes.

The government said it will sell €3 billion of bonds backed by social security contributions to reduce this year's deficit.

Next month's sale will be Italy's third of this type of bond. Past issues, in November 1999 and May 2001, raised €6.4 billion.

Consumer prices rose 0.1 percent from May and Italy's June inflation rate slowed to 2.2 percent, its lowest pace in 29 months. "Demand isn't strong enough to think about raising prices," said Enzo Urbani, CEO of Carlo Gavazzi, a Swiss maker of automated equipment with two factories in Italy.

Prices for fresh foods led the inflation rate lower, falling 0.3 percent from May. The cost of tomatoes used for making pasta sauce declined 30 percent on the month in Milan. Hourly wages for Italian workers were unchanged from April and rose 2.3 percent for the year in May, at the slowest rate in

more than a year as there were no new contracts signed, Istat said.

About 22 million working hours were lost to strikes so far this year, eight times the amount in the same period in 2001. Metalworkers saw the largest wage increases, up 4.6 percent on an annualized basis.

The planned privatization of Albania's No. 1 bank failed for a second time Friday as two Italian banks withdrew from the bidding.

Finance Minister Kastriot Islami said IntesaBCI and San Paolo-IMI, which had been expected to submit their bids for the Savings Bank of Albania, announced they were pulling out after having conducted a due diligence process in June, saying they did not want to commit the personnel resources that would have been needed.

In April, Albania failed to sell Albelekom, also due to weak foreign interest, causing a government revenue shortfall of \$70 million and forcing it to revise its budget last month.

IMI, one of the holding companies that controls Fiat, named Chairman Umberto Agnelli as CEO to replace Gabriele Galateri, who was appointed co-CEO of Fiat.

Telecom Italia co-CEO Enrico Bondi told Il Sole/24 Ore his company may join Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. in a bid to buy Tele+ from Vivendi for €1.5 billion in cash and assumed debt. Murdoch wants to merge the pay-TV company with its rival Stream, owned by News Corp. and Telecom. (Bloomberg, Reuters)

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NEWS

Ferrari's price problem

Reuters

It's set to be the reddest, raunchiest, raciest stock market listing of all time, but just how do you put a price tag on Ferrari, Fiat's factory of supercars and dreams?

Mediobanca came up with one answer Thursday as it announced it was leading a consortium that would buy 34 percent of Ferrari in a deal valuing the Maranello racing stable at \$2.4 billion.

Seemingly snatching a mandate to bring Ferrari to the stock market from a syndicate led by Deutsche Bank, Unicredit and IntesaBci, Mediobanca said it planned an IPO of the shares by June 2003.

The deal would bring Ferrari back into the arms of the powerful Milan finance house that bankrolled a number of historic Fiat deals before a series of recent spat.

"It's attractive to Fiat because the Turin-based giant will get a guaranteed €775 million for the stake and any upside for its remaining 56 percent holding if Mediobanca gets more than expected for the float.

Conventional wisdom suggests Ferrari could be worth about \$1.3 billion. The rest, as brand valuation expert Jan Lindemann of Interbrand put it, is all hormones.

"This is the ultimate testosterone brand," Lindemann told Reuters. "Ferrari goes way beyond the understated image of Aston Martin or Porsche. You can't really use all that engine power, you can't really lug it and you can only take one passenger — that's the whole point."

Lindemann says that if Ferrari, which also includes Maserati, really is worth \$2.4 billion, then \$1.4 billion of that is in a brand name reeking of the race track and high glamour.



Luca Cordero di Montezemolo shows off Ferrari's new Enzo.

"The actual car building is not that difficult. Ferrari is an iconic brand and there aren't that many of those around," he said.

Lindemann believes an independent Ferrari would need to make more affordable cars if it were ever to become financially viable without the cost benefits of being part of Fiat.

That's where the \$2.4 billion valuation gets rough. Mediobanca's price tag values Ferrari at 2.4 times 2001 sales, compared with 1.77 times for Porsche.

"Realistically, the valuation implied from the reports on Mediobanca, if true, make you think the bank might be thinking something else in addition to 'what a fantastic asset,'" one analyst said on condition of anonymity. "Mediobanca has a vested interest," he added.

"Looks like they've gone out on a limb," another banker said. "Even if people ultimately believe the [valuation] story, someone has to explain it."

Right now, Ferrari is making money. Maserati is not, and neither is the Formula One business, which will be vulnerable once an impending ban on tobacco sponsorship comes into force.

Mediobanca's dilemma that it needs to draw Gucci-type valuations to cover its exposure, but that for Ferrari to be a

viable stand-alone company, it needs to make cheaper cars and risk losing its remarkable cachet.

On Thursday, Mediobanca said it had agreed to sell a 12.5 percent stake in Ferrari to unidentified "foreign and Italian banks." Il Sole/24 Ore reported that Germany's Commerzbank was willing to step in, as might small Italian savings banks.

On Friday, leading Italian banks, including IntesaBci and Unicredit, shunned joining Mediobanca, perhaps stung by its torpedoing of their planned handling of the IPO.

Even Ferrari Chairman Luca Cordero di Montezemolo appeared put out. "I only knew about it once the deal was done and I didn't like that," he said while presenting the new "Enzo" car in Maranello.

The 12-cylinder carbon fiber Enzo, replete with a Formula One style incorporation of the gearing and other devices on the steering wheel, will sell at an unofficial price of €700,000. Only 349 will be made, and Ferrari officials said most had already been sold.

Montezemolo said he had achieved the goals he set himself when he took the top job at Ferrari in 1991, having turned the company into a financial and sporting success, but did not indicate he would resign and that Ferrari was "proud" to help Fiat.

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ously produces 2-D images. These can be used as illustrations in books or on signs in archaeological parks.

3-D software can also produce virtual scenes that can be taped in a video. This process is already used in documentary TV productions, such as the Italian program "Quark", where the presenter sometimes talks and moves within the virtual world. Even more interactive and immersive than television, however, are such true virtual reality spaces as the "Reality Theater" and the "CAVE."

A Reality Theater consists of a large, curved screen onto which the 3-D images are projected for an audience. The UCLA lab has used such a theater, which seats 40 and where Frischer and his colleagues can teach their classes.

Even more immersive is the CAVE — Computer Assisted Virtual Environment — which aims to provide total sensory experience by surrounding the audience with up to six screens, covering the four walls, ceiling and even the floor. Inside this screening-box, the audience wear special goggles and sensors, directing their view wherever they want to go in the virtual world.

There are very few CAVES in the world, which is not surprising since it costs more than \$1 million to build one.

In the U.S., Brown University, Iowa State and Virginia Tech have CAVES. In Italy, there is a Reality Theater in Bologna at Cineca, a consortium set up by 15 universities in 1969, as well as a few privately owned ones. The Cineca facility is very similar to UCLA's, and the two institutions have formed a close partnership to develop cultural virtual reality content.

"This situation is similar to the problem of the chicken and the egg: Without many Reality Theaters, researchers will get little financial support for the development of 3-D modeling," Frischer raved. "But without enough 3-D models, there is no need to build more Reality Theaters. It would be nice if some foundation or philanthropist, recognizing the great potential of this technology for education, would invest the money needed to break the logjam."

Still, 3-D modeling has received remarkable popularity among scientists in Italy, where Frischer says he has more collaborators than anywhere else in the world.

Already in 1997, scholar Maurizio Forte, together with Alberto Siliotti, emphasized the importance of 3-D computer models in their book "Virtual Archaeology: Re-Creating Ancient Worlds".

Franco Nicolucci, professor of architecture at the University of Florence, has written papers and dedicated seminars on 3-D modeling, and professor Daniela Scagliarini from the University of Bologna presented developments in virtual archaeology at the latest Futureshow in April.

Italian requests for financial aid seem to receive a more sympathetic hearing from government agencies, too, said Frischer, whose lab benefited from substantial donations by the Andrew Mellon Foundation of New York this year.

Regarding Italian archaeological sites, Professor Frischer and his colleagues are now in the process of developing 3-D models for the Forum Romanum, the House of Augustus on the Palatine in Rome, the Villa dei Misteri in Pompeii and three Etruscan tombs in Chiusi, near Siena.

Cultural Virtual Reality Lab
www.cvrilab.org

Villa of Horace project
www.humnet.ucla.edu/horaces-villa/

Travel

As many as 12 million Italians in at least 5 million cars will be on the move this weekend as the vacation season starts in earnest, a Milan tourism observatory said Thursday, forecasting that traffic would be particularly harrowing in Emilia Romagna, highways leading to Italy's northwestern border with France, all roads between Florence and the sea, and highways linking Rome to Naples and on to Reggio Calabria. Ferry boats heading for islands such as Capri, Elba, Sicily and Sardinia are likely to be packed.

Taxis will soon be cheap in Pontedera, a Tuscan town near Pisa. The city council ordered that cabs ply routes recently abandoned by the local bus service and charge the same price as a bus ticket.

Tollbooth operators for Autostrade plan to strike on June 30.

Railway workers in the CGIL union postponed a planned four-hour walkouts from July 5 to 9 in compliance with mandated cooling-off periods between public service strikes. Italian law requires 15 days between interruptions, and train station chiefs went on strike last weekend.

People

Italy is not only not going to win the World Cup this year, but in a certain sense it's going to give it away. The 4.9-kilogram trophy, 36 centimeters high and in 18-carat gold, is the 1971 creation of sculptor Silvio Gazzaniga. Gazzaniga, 81, will be in Yokohama for the final game. Describing his inspiration for the piece, which resembles two rejoicing athletes holding a globe up in the air, he said: "I was thinking of creating something symbolizing effort and exertion, while at the same time expressing harmony, simplicity and peace." He also said he had the mold for the trophy in his Milan home and could easily cast a new one if it should ever be stolen, as was the fate of its predecessor just before the 1966 finals in England. In a sign of just how coveted a World Cup trophy is, the man who found it under a hedge while walking his dog was awarded three times more than the players who won it that year, according to Reuters. There is space on Gazzaniga's cup for the name of more winners through 2038, after which it will presumably have to be retired.

The World Cup final between Brazil and Germany puts Ferrari in a bit of a fix. The Formula One racing team's lead driver is Michael Schumacher, a German, and the No. 2 driver is Rubens Barrichello, a Brazilian. Their hopes are clearly drawn. The company's chairman, Luca Cordero di Montezemolo, said he would cheer for Brazil, a team he applauded for its creative spectacles. But, alluding to Ferrari shenanigans at recent races, he said he had told team manager Jean Todt "not to give any orders, so that whoever's best can win."

The Naples house on Via Santa Maria Anteseclera where legendary Neapolitan actor Antonio De Curtis, better known as Totò, was born, sold at auction this week to a local schoolteacher for €25,000, despite protests from the elderly couple who have lived there for many years. When asked if they have accepted their fate, the couple responded angrily: "We are not moving from here."

The 45th annual Festival Of Two Worlds, better known as the Spoleto Festival, opened its 45th season Thursday in Umbria with a program that includes performances from singer Cecilia Bartoli and pays homage to the film career of Italian actress Claudia Cardinale.

Journalist Andrea Nicastro has written an investigative report chronicling the travails of hundreds of young Pakistani women who have entered post-Taliban Afghanistan to work as prostitutes.

Italian singing sensations Paola and Chiara Lezzi, whose angst-filled song, "Vamos a Bailar" raced to the top of the record charts two years ago have released a new album, "Festival". To promote it they have embarked on a junket covering half the world, with stops in New York, Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires. Among the pieces on the is the romantic ballad, "Beautiful Maria of My Soul" that was sung by actor, Antonio Banderas in the film, "Mambo Kings".

Comment

Is the EU dream dead?

By Lily Moretti
Special to Italy Daily

As an Italian-American who recently returned to Italy to live and raise my child, I am appalled by the recent proposals for change in European Union policy in general and Italian law in particular.

My husband and I decided to move from the U.S. to Italy for a variety of reasons. We were disillusioned with lifestyle trends emerging in America, and felt at odds with the overall values predominant in the country today. The fact that the American public did not significantly question the events that lead up to the current administration occupying the White House troubled us considerably.

We were sick of suburban sprawl, corporate hegemony, violence-based entertainment, and the overall lack of meaningful culture in American society. We wanted more for our 10-year-old daughter and for ourselves.

After finding out that we qualified for Italian citizenship based on my ancestry, we started seriously looking towards Italy and the EU to be our new home. The more I read about the emerging promise of the EU, the more convinced I became that this was the next "promised land," with values more consistent with those of my husband's and myself.

I was excited by the EU's collective stance on open borders, human rights, third world debt relief, fair trade, the implementation of the Kyoto Treaty, etc., along with its basic goals to preserve European cultural tradition.

I was also impressed with their collective attitudes toward a more multilateral foreign policy. In essence, I was proud of where the EU was headed, and I wanted to be a part of it.

We arrived here in May of 2001 full of hope and quickly fell in love with our surroundings and new community, despite the usual frustrations in dealing with the labyrinthine bureaucracy that Italy is so famous for. We chose a beautiful Tuscan community steeped in tradition, yet current and sophisticated.

Besides the small city's Italian population, we were delighted to find a thriving expatriate American community, whose members shared views similar to our own. All-in-all, life was good.

Then came the events of Sept. 11, and life became drastically different. Once the initial shock and terror I felt after the horrific events subsided a bit, I became concerned by the fierce nationalism that seemed to be occurring in America.

I took comfort in the fact that the EU, though appropriately appalled and supportive, seemed to be more balanced in their overall response to the attacks. I became ferociously hungry for news and background information regarding American foreign policy and the White House's imminent response to the attacks. My inherent and overall mistrust for the Bush administration became even more overwhelming than it was before the events on Sept. 11. The thought of having them be the orchestrators of America's response to the heinous, but not entirely surprising events of Sept. 11th, left me with a sense of dread that I carry around to this day.

As the weeks went by, I became obsessed with devouring as much information as I could on the subject, to the point where my husband said that my preoccupation with world events was interfering with our marriage.

But even in the midst of all my fervor and indignation, I secretly held on to my belief in the moral superiority of the EU. I believed when push came to shove that it would be the voice of reason. I was comforted by the fact that EU member states continued to question some of the policies of the Bush administration regarding the "war on terror," even as they showed their overall support for America.

I was pleased to see representatives of the member states often questioning U.S. rhetoric and objectives. When I found articles in the British press pointing out how U.S. foreign policy over the last several decades might bear some responsibility for the conditions that lead to the attacks, I remained hopeful that positive

introspection and change might ensue, despite my overall despair.

But almost nine months have passed, and my faith in the EU as a voice of reason is starting to wane considerably. After the electoral events in France and the Netherlands, and the passage of draconian anti-immigration legislation in Britain, my convictions of EU moral superiority have been seriously challenged.

The EU law that has recently passed regarding personal telecommunication data surveillance and the heinous anti-immigration law that just made it through the Italian Parliament have been serious blows to democracy and the rights of the individual.

The almost utopian plans for open borders, guaranteed human rights, and cultural integrity that comprised the EU dream just a short time ago seems to have been blown away like so many grains of sand, in a windstorm of reactionism, intolerance, and outside pressure from the U.S. government and others.

What happened to the plans for a kinder, gentler, more open minded Europe? A place where the conditions that breed terror and the many inequalities of the world could be analyzed, addressed and eventually eradicated?

I once believed that an older, wiser, more introspective Europe was emerging — a place where history and past mistakes were being examined, understood, and therefore no longer doomed to be repeated.

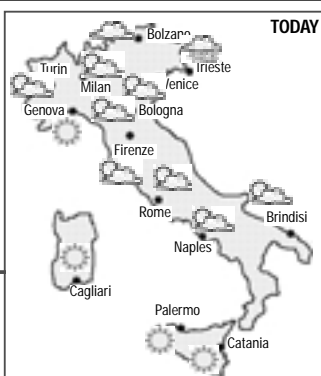
Now I am not so sure. As my personal belief system becomes profoundly challenged, I am wondering if I should throw my hopes in the EU dream away in the same trash bin where my once held beliefs in the American dream are currently contained.

I am also left to ponder whether there will ever come a time when the common citizen will not be left to suffer the consequences caused by the sins of the state.

Lily Moretti is a freelance journalist and jewelry designer. Comments to her can be addressed to Democracynow@aol.com.

Weather

temp	min c/f	max c/f
Bologna	17/63	28/82
Bolzano	15/59	23/73
Brindisi	18/64	29/84
Cagliari	17/63	28/82
Catania	17/63	31/88
Florence	16/61	29/84
Genoa	20/68	25/77
Milan	15/59	25/77
Naples	18/64	30/86
Palermo	21/70	26/79
Rome	15/59	28/82
Trieste	20/68	24/75
Turin	16/61	25/77
Venice	19/66	26/79



- SUNNY
- PARTLY CLOUDY
- CLOUDY
- RAIN
- THUNDERSTORMS
- SNOW
- FOG

temp	min c/f	max c/f
Bologna	17/63	28/82
Bolzano	15/59	27/81
Brindisi	18/64	26/79
Cagliari	17/63	28/82
Catania	17/63	31/88
Florence	16/61	28/82
Genoa	20/68	24/75
Milan	15/59	26/79
Naples	18/64	27/81
Palermo	21/70	24/75
Rome	15/59	27/81
Trieste	20/68	26/79
Turin	16/61	25/77
Venice	19/66	26/79



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