

Proposal for the initiative

MUSEITALIANI

in the context of bilateral cultural cooperation



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Edited by

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1. Background and objectives

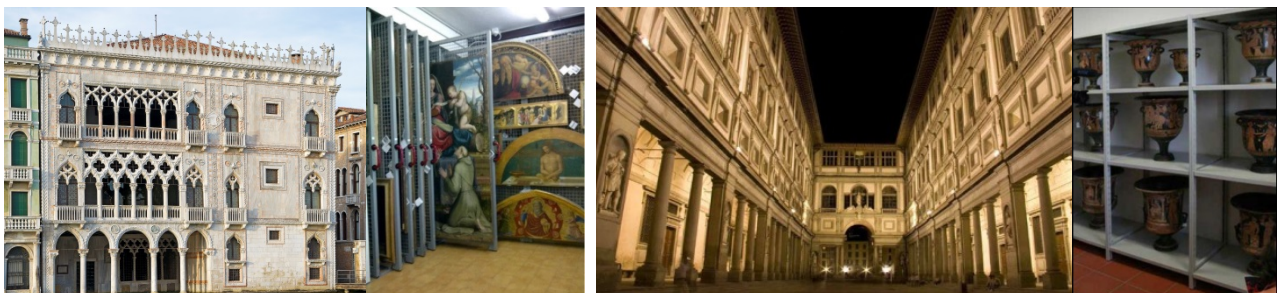
The recent reform of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism MIBACT (Prime Minister's Decree 29 August 2014, n.171) is an important and necessary reorganization that allows investing in culture and tourism as a driver of the country economic restart.

The reform establishing the new Directorate General of Museums deeply renews the field of Italian state museums, acknowledging the Museum, as an Institute with its own identity, budget and statute. With this reform we can witness the rise of a new "Italian museum system"¹.

The direction of this new organization is entrusted to the Directorate General for Museums which has the task to direct, coordinate and oversee the development, facilitate a continuous dialogue between the various public and private museum institutions, promote cultural agreements with Italian and international institutions, taking all appropriate steps to facilitate the international movement of works of art. In this new context we can envisage a renewed strategy of cultural and diplomatic cooperation with international museums.

MIBACT has a long and successful experience of collaboration with foreign museums. Collaborations underpinned by innovative agreements blazing new collaborative opportunities opening up new ways of lending and borrowing, long term loans of works of art (even whole contexts) from excavations and / or deposits, loans "on rotation" (for limited periods of time) of "iconic" works as per the Italian legislation².

These partnerships, underpinned by specific agreements in the context of a wider strategy of bilateral cultural cooperation, could be replicated, providing projects jointly developed by Italian and foreign experts and museum curators; creating "Italian sections" (MUSEITALIANI) housed in foreign museums (complemented by activities of study, research, cataloging, restoration), achieving the goal of a scientific, cultural, educational and diplomatic action.



¹ Within the overall strategy, 20 museums of national interest with special autonomy under the leadership of directors of international leading experts in the field of museum management, as well as 17 regional museums networks - which manage and coordinate museums, archaeological sites and monuments on state territory are identified.

² Article 67, paragraph 1, letter d) of the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape I. 42/2004



2. The project MUSEITALIANI

As part of the Italian initiatives aimed at strengthening cultural relations, an important role can be played by the promotion of our cultural heritage in the context of major development programs implemented by foreign museums. The present proposal aims to launch a possible collaboration with the managers of interested museums to set up in their museum a section of Italian artworks.

The working hypothesis, which we propose to start with, consists in the drafting of a scientific project, taking into account the requests of the management of the museums and the needs and preferences of potential audience/visitors. The aim will be to illustrate one or more historical periods of Italian culture through the presentation of high quality artworks, not always accessible to the Italian and international audience due to the relative limitation of space in Italian museums in respect to the large amount of artworks available. Therefore, through the presentation of works largely kept within our museum deposits, the project proposal will aim at illustrating our "Museum System collections" enriched through the historical collecting by the grand aristocratic families, the territorial heritage spread on the Italian territory and the relations with cultural realities at international level.

The lay out of the Italian section will include the presentation of the long-term loans, i.e. three to four years, supplemented by the presence of more high quality works of, from the collections on public display as part of a comprehensive program of thematic exhibitions of short duration (three months).

As an approximation, the project will rely on the presence of about 200 long-term loans, in addition to a limited number of "masterpieces" to be exhibited for temporary exhibitions. The display may also be realized by reusing part of the material already in the long-term display collection.





3. "Sleeping Beauty". The precious reserves of Italian museums.

The project Museitaliani gushes from an initiative launched by the Directorate General of Museums, aiming at creating a shared network of the resources within the warehouses of Italian museums. A systemic survey, launched in partnership with museums' directors and curators, allowed the creation of a solid works database, which accounts for the complexity of the Italian cultural heritage.

The quantity and quality of the data collected allows launching a fast and reasoned exploration, as well as tracing hypothetical "routes" within this heritage, while developing the possibility of leading this research towards the development of educational and exhibition projects.



For the first time the resources preserved in Italian museums, which - valued in their diversity- make the Italian case a wonderful and unique lab of cultural complexity-can be offered in organized and systemic forms. The project is based on the concept of sharing/partnership, through activities of research, conservation, restoration as well as promotion. Special attention is addressed to the selection of works preserved in museum warehouses; Works whose beauty might appear "blurred" by their state of conservation. In this perspective, the resources of Italian museums are not only thought for exhibition purposes, but they become a formidable opportunity for research and restoration for scholars and experts.

The project Museitaliani implies, as a whole, a modular development, achievable in progressive steps as well as through punctual interventions. In its full manifestation, the idea finds its apex in the realization of an Italian section within a foreign museum, with a mid/long-term time horizon, through the loan of artworks from Italian museums warehouses, organized according to didactic logics. The planning of temporary exhibitions, to be designed in close relation with the hosting museum regular/ordinary display layout, aims at maintaining and renewing interest in the project. The final level of development of the project will be the design of communication events related to the display of an "Italian icon", from the collections of top Italian museums, with the aim of raising the highest media attention around the project.

4. Program of the preliminary activities

Before proceeding to further steps in the development of the proposal it will be essential to submit this preliminary approach to the interested authorities at political and scientific level.

It will be important to submit this draft proposal to the management of every museum in order to comply with the mission and the cultural program of the museum. To this extent, it will be wise to schedule a meeting with the interested authorities to present the Italian proposal, in order to share the content of the scientific project to be developed before proceeding to concretize the proposal taking into account the information that may emerge from the meeting.

On a diplomatic level negotiations should be launched to reach the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding to be signed between the interested authorities stating the arrangements between the parties, their duration and the subsequent implementation instruments. This MOU should be duly accompanied by specific operational agreements. All the elements relevant to the drafting of the final project will stem from the above operational agreements.





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